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# Women, Media and Democracy: News Coverage of Women in the Zambian Press

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**A Doctoral Dissertation Submitted, to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Studies in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies**

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**University of Wales, Cardiff**

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**Dedication**

To my father, Musonda Justin Chimba

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**Abstract**

This dissertation is a study of news coverage of women in the Zambian press since 1991. I argue that women in the Zambian press are represented in ways that fail to recognise their contribution to national development and therefore, encourage their continued marginalisation. The argument is based on the premise that the media are a major source of definitions and images of social reality, including the representation of women and definitions of femininity. They have the potential not only to reinforce the status quo in power arrangements in society, but also to contribute to new, more egalitarian ones. Zambia makes an interesting case study in this respect because as in several other African countries, the struggle towards development has led to democratic reforms both politically and economically. The political and socio-economic watershed facing Zambia has created more opportunities for women among others to organise, articulate and express themselves. This has led to the growth of mass mediated communication and a more open and independent media system, that gives the mass media the possibility to take a more active role in the struggle for gender transformation. However, this is not occurring in the case of Zambia. Instead, media liberalisation and commercialisation in most instances serve as a recurring explanation for the increased and widespread negative portrayal of women.

To establish how women are portrayed in the press, the dissertation offers findings from a content analysis of 1,050 news accounts of women drawn from three Zambian newspapers in 1991, 1995 and 1999. These findings are supported by a textual reading of a smaller number of news accounts examining how media construct women in politics as they are representatives of other women in general. The dissertation concludes that news accounts of women in the Zambian press to some extent contribute to their continued marginalisation in society.

**List of Abbreviations**

| | |
|---|---|
| **AIDS:** | Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome |
| **ANC:** | African National Congress |
| **EPI:** | Expanded Programme of Immunisation |
| **IMF:** | International Monetary Fund |
| **ORT:** | Oral Rehydration Therapy |
| **MMD:** | Movement for Multiparty Democracy |
| **SADC:** | Southern African Development Community |
| **UDI:** | Unilateral Declaration of Independence |
| **UNIP:** | United National Independent Party |
| **ZAMWA:** | Zambia Media Women's Association |
| **ZCEA:** | Zambia Civic Education Association |
| **ZNWLG:** | Zambia National Women's Lobby Group |

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## Chapter I: Introduction

This study examines news coverage of women in the Zambian press since the country returned to a democratic system of governance in 1991. It is based on the premise that in today's democratic society the media provide a forum where different interests are brought together in order to enhance national development[1]. The study questions the democratic role of the media in highlighting women's involvement in Zambia's development. It problematises ways in which journalists represent women in the Zambian press.

### Research Background

The main argument of the study is that women are represented in the Zambian press in ways that fail to acknowledge the place and importance of their voices in the development of the nation. Their voices are either ignored or placed in sections and pages in the newspapers that render them insignificant even in today's media which is supposed to act as a cornerstone of democracy by imparting information on public issues and conveying citizens' opinions to policy makers. Media today are expected to act as information carriers by giving voice to the people and therefore replacing the traditional face-to-face discussions that previously took place in the insaka[2].

[1] The term used to describe economic and social progress.
[2] A hut in the village where people, mainly men, gather to discuss important topics relating to the day to day matters in the community.

In other words, media today act as the mediators between policy-makers and the citizenry. Consequently, the media are expected, among other things, to report developments likely to impinge on the welfare of citizens; identify key issues of the day and set the political and public agenda, thereby acting as spokesperson of various perspectives and interest groups; facilitate dialogue between rulers and the public across a diverse range of views (Gurevitch & Blumer 1994:26). It is for this reason that, in discussing the subject of improving the status of women in society at the Women's International Conference in Beijing in 1995, the media were identified as one of the critical areas of concern that generally cuts across all issues. The Beijing Platform for Action called for increased participation and access for women to expression and decision-making in and through the media (Beijing declaration, 1995).

In Zambia today, the media are viewed as an embodiment of democratic values, providing a free, constitutional public sphere allowing a rational, well-informed conversation between equals capable of resolving their differences by non-coercive means. They constitute a 'public sphere' in which views from all people are discussed to eventually formulate public opinion. Habermas (1962/1989) defines the public sphere as a common space between the economy and the state in which private individuals get together to discuss issues and to challenge the state. The Habermasian public sphere is one that permits citizens to participate as equals, leaving their social status aside. During these discussions public opinion on issues emerges and this eventually influences the direction of decision and policy making in society.

Although the concept of the public sphere is contestable within social theory (Keane, 1991; Fraser, 1992), in the context of this study it stands for a formal political sphere represented through democracy, and of which the media form an integral part. As such, both democracy and media form an important relationship in the public sphere. In other words, a democratic society cannot function without a free media representing public interests (Keane, 1991). That is to say, liberal democracy and a free press go hand-in-hand. Therefore, since Zambia adopted this model of democracy, it might be expected to provide for the existence of a public space in which various views including those of women can be freely articulated.

In view of the expected democratic media role, I question whether the Zambian press applies similar principles in news treatment of information involving men as they do with women. Indeed, if media texts are embedded within the political and economic contexts in which they occur, why then is it that the Zambian press, which has supposedly espoused a liberal pluralist notion of the role of the news media in society, has tended to restrict coverage of women's contributions to this development? As Sreberny-Mohammadi (1994) contends, women have a great deal to say about various issues like poverty, environment, health, education, population and their civil oppression which democratic news organisations need to address. Do the media carry women's concerns on their agenda? Research reveals that issues on the agenda of the media have a fair chance of getting on to the agenda of both the public and policy-makers, whereas the issues missing on the media agenda tend to remain invisible and non-existent (Protess & McCombs, 1991; Nelson, 1994). This is so because the media are a powerful resource in

terms of influencing society. They are an arena where public affairs are played out. They constitute a source of varied definitions of social reality, changing culture and values and most importantly, they are a source of the 'public meaning system' which signals the public definitions of 'normal' and 'deviant' in society (McQuail, 1994:1). Curran (1991) asserts that the accessibility to this sphere and freedom to influence social reality is emancipatory in many ways. On the one hand, it provides an opportunity to question dominant ideologies and structures, and on the other, this freedom and accessibility promotes understanding and tolerance among people towards alternative perspectives. I also question why it is that even when women appear in the press, they are primarily portrayed as victims, wives/mothers, and sexual objects? For instance, studies by the Media Monitoring Project in South Africa showed that much of the reporting about women was on their victim status in a crime ridden society. Also, another predominant image of women that emerged in the press was that of the wife and mother living within the limited confines of domesticity (Media Monitoring Project, 1998). Finally, I pose the question of how such representations might undermine women's roles in the liberal pluralist public sphere.

The study adopts a multidimensional approach in an attempt to address the questions I pose. It has taken its reference points from various macro and micro frameworks such as culturalist approach and feminist media theory. This is because the varying concerns raised in the study require different theoretical models and feminist research since the subject of media representation in general, and of women in particular, is interconnected with broader fields of society. For instance, the culturalist approach in this study may

help specify the ways that cultural forms serve either to further social domination or to enable people, in particular women, resist and struggle against it. It analyses the gender arrangement by concentrating on the social values and norms that go hand in hand with a gender-specific division of labour that is in turn reflected in the media. The feminist media theory will provide a framework within which to show how these social relations are played out in the media.

In the quest for answers to the questions posed, the study examines news coverage of women who form 51 percent of the population in Zambia. The choice of news instead of other forms of information is based on the fact that in most instances the further development of any topic begins with its appearance as news. For example, news features and other feature articles usually evolve from issues that are raised in news stories that reporters consider need depth of coverage. Throughout the study, I argue that despite embracing the liberal pluralist notion that the role of the press is to encourage a free marketplace of ideas, the voices of Zambian women are rarely included. As a result, women's ongoing contributions to national development are largely unknown by most people in Zambia. When women do appear in the press, there is a tendency to undermine the importance of their ideas and activities in Zambian society. This situation has potentially detrimental implications not only for women's sense of self and social worth but also for the democratic development of the nation. To support my argument, I attempt to demonstrate that in the context of the third world traditional society, the relationship between democratic theory and practice in relation to women's rights is even more complex than in the west. These complexities are continually played out in media

content. This can be exemplified by an extract from an article by a journalist which appeared in the *Zambia Daily Mail* ( August 10, 1997):

> 'Women, I am beginning to fear, are up to no good. Yes, they are out to cause a lot of mischief with this equal rights campaign they have embarked on.
> Talk about equal rights, how possible is it for women to have equal rights with men? I say let women fight a good fight with all their might to maintain women's rights, such as ensuring that the kitchen remains forever their main domain' (p. 6).

Clearly such an article negates women's acts of contribution to national development in that it promotes the idea that women are not equal to men and therefore must not endeavour to challenge the rights men are granted. The extract also endorses the belief that women are most useful in the domestic realm and should limit their activities to that domain.

Indeed, although an explicit model of democratic theory guarantees most legal and political rights of women in Zambia, the state remains undemocratic and patriarchal in its practices. The situation is worsened by the fact that as a developing country, Zambia is faced with a multiplicity of other problems including poverty and illiteracy, which are considered as graver than issues such as democratic rights. Worse still, the rewards of development have remained largely confined to the elite sections of the population. Therefore, the majority of the country is grappling with the issue of basic needs, not fully comprehending that most are as a result of inequality stratification. Further, Zambia being a traditional society, old customs and values remain close to most of the people, which

indirectly hinder the intellectual development and progress of society. Women are worst affected in Zambia as the poor ones are oppressed both as workers, being marginalised in the process of economic development and as subordinates within the private sphere. On the other hand, educated middle class women are mainly confined to domestic culture, bearing the brunt of deep-seated prejudices and discriminatory practices hindering their development as independent individuals in their own right. As a result, women's roles continue to be largely defined through a hegemonious kinship culture at both societal and state levels. In such an instance, the culture and ideology of society is an important filter through which news is constructed. That is, the Zambian national press could make a significant contribution towards the existing order and support the social consensus by creating a meaning system in which women's concerns are 'invisible'. It could also work towards influencing change in the existing order by challenging the social consensus and by introducing different meanings to the system.

**Justification for the Study**

The motivation to research this subject dates back to my early years of teaching at the Evelyn Hone College in Zambia when I observed that journalism students did not seem to appreciate the importance of gender sensitive reporting in the media and how this kind of reporting could go a long way to empower disadvantaged groups such as women. For instance, most students, including females, saw the negative media portrayals of women as normal and usually questioned the motives of those who challenged the so-called 'norm'. Six years later, I observed similar tendencies in journalism students at the University of Swaziland. In more recent years, interest in the subject was strengthened by

my membership of Zambia Women's Media Association (ZAMWA). As a member I was on occasions assigned to represent ZAMWA at meetings with various stakeholders. At these meetings it was repeatedly pointed out that the media had failed its democratic role of representing women. It had lamentably failed to afford women adequate coverage as it was not gender sensitive and therefore did not promote a balance in reporting the development activities of men and women. It was also observed that women were continually portrayed stereotypically in the media. During such discussions, it became apparent that whilst the observation may have been correct in some respect, in most instances the people making them did not fully understand the underlying causes of the media's approach to reporting. They failed to situate the media in a broader perspective such as the socio-economic system, its development policies and strategies and how these work to legitimise lopsided, gender irresponsive and biased reporting. This kind of reporting is usually aimed at sustaining and perpetuating patriarchal mechanisms and institutionalised values and practices which keep females and other disadvantaged groups silent and dis-empowered.

My experience with journalism students and as a member of ZAMWA fuelled my desire to contribute to a better and broader understanding of press representation of women and its implications for women's everyday lives. With the growth of my conviction to make a contribution in this area and attempt to understand it better, I started conducting background research on the subject. This is when I discovered that Zambia media research lacked empirical studies on the news coverage of women in the press. Whilst in the developed countries there are several such studies dating back as far as the 1960s, in

the case of Africa and Zambia these studies are scant and have occurred only in the recent years after the adoption of democracy. I could have chosen to analyse representations of women in broadcasting news, or in community radio as recently there is a growing abundance of such institutions and it is interesting to know whether women have benefited from the content of the programmes. However, I chose to examine the Zambian national daily press because the press is still highly regarded as a more reliable source of information in the country despite the fact that it takes several days to reach certain parts of the country. The significance of this research to me is that it is the first empirical study about women, democracy and media in Zambia. An important aim of this study is to discern the existence of patterns or regularities in the reporting of women and how these may affect women's contribution to development. It is exploratory in nature, and therefore, it is my hope that the findings of this research will provide a useful starting point for scholars wishing to study other aspects of the women, democracy and media relationship.

The fieldwork was conducted between 2003-2004 in Zambia. I coded a few news stories in order to see whether the information elicited after analysis would provide information to answer the research questions. At this point I made adjustments to improve the coding sheet and went out to collect data for a large sample. The years included in the sample were 1991, 1994 and 1999.

**Map of the Study**

The study is composed of seven chapters including the Introduction. The second chapter is entitled 'Liberal Democratic Theory and the construction of women'. In this chapter I begin with a discussion of the principles of liberal theory and society. I contend that some of the notions of the worth of the individual are ahistorical, do not have cultural specificity, no class, ethnicity or gender consciousness and therefore are inadequate to explain contemporary societies. This is followed by a critique of liberal theory and the perception of women. I argue that as dated as some liberal theory concepts may be, they still to a large extent contribute to the continued marginalisation of women in contemporary societies. A typical example of this is the opposing binary view of the world such as, nature/culture, reason/emotion, mind/body and so forth, in which women happen to always fall in the categories considered negative such as nature, emotion, and body. Following from this categorisation women continue to be marginalised as it is considered 'normal' for them to be subordinate to men and therefore left out of mainstream activities such as politics and economics as these are considered as domains for the 'reasonable' and 'cultured' man (see for example, Pateman, 1988; Haste, 1993; Plumwood, 1993/1995; Lloyd, 1993; Grosz, 1994; Prokhovnik, 1999). The chapter further discusses the development of liberal feminism as a response followed by a discussion of liberal theory and its adoption in Zambia. In this section I argue that the existing culture in the form of certain values, practices, traditions and customs are the key determinants in defining the subordinate status of women. Whilst there could be a nexus between liberal democratic values as perceived in the West and the Zambian traditional

values, beliefs and norms, to a very large extent liberal theory has worked to reinforce the already existing gender discriminatory practices in society. For instance, in traditional Zambian cultural practice, women are always considered to be subordinate to men and have no direct access to land. In the traditional setting women could only inherit land through marriage or their male kin. Interestingly, in Zambia today, the land policy is silent on women, making it impossible for them to access it unless they have exorbitant sums to buy land in the urban areas. Though this may not seem to be important, the inability of women to possess land does not empower them to participate in discussions on land issues. As a result, women's contribution on land matters and others directly related to it, such as food security, is marginal.

The third chapter is one entitled 'Liberal Theory and the Free Market of Ideas'. In this chapter I begin by laying down a theoretical framework in which to discuss the relationship between the press and democracy, outlining the main functions assigned to the press in a democracy. Press theories are tackled within this chapter with emphasis on the libertarian theory which embodies the basic democratic functions of the press. Habermas's theory of the public sphere will also be analysed. The main argument in the chapter is that the news media do not adequately perform their so-called mediation role because they belong to a larger socio-economic and political structure such as government institutions, media owners and so forth which determines what is covered and how it is treated in the press. As such, even in a democracy the press may work to reinforce the status quo in which women are subordinate to men in many respects.

The second section of the chapter analyses the evolution of the press in Zambia to date. It begins with a brief historical background of Zambia, followed by analyses of pre- and post-independence media with a view to putting in perspective the democratic role of media that is discussed later in the study. The subsequent section is a discourse on the gendered nature of the media in a democracy. Although certain practices are expected from the media by society, in some instances the media fails to meet them because they remain gendered in their approach to news coverage. Here, the very principles under which news is gathered and produced are questioned.

Though there may not be a straight connection between the gendered nature of democracy and the absence of women's questions on the media agenda, however, the underlying argument concerns the marginalisation of women's interests in the public sphere of media and democracy – the representatives and guarantors of citizen's interests. The chapter draws largely from western thought and literature for two reasons. First, because the democratic model of governance has its roots in western societies and concerns regarding the relationship between women and democracy were raised first in this part of the world. Second and most importantly, because although Zambia is situated in the South, upon independence it adopted the western style system of governance, which makes issues of democracy as propounded in the west relevant. The purpose of the chapter is to provide an insight into the debate of women, media and democracy in general and in Zambia. I do not intend to make outright comparisons between the western situation and the Zambian context, or aim to directly apply the model to the Zambian situation. However, I intend that the debate helps in reflecting common concerns in

feminist scholarship and contextualising the three-way relationship between women, democracy and media, within the Zambian context where the democratic system and the free press are based on western models.

The other section of the chapter examines how Zambian democracy has treated the woman question within its own social, political and economic context. In this section, I intend to establish that a huge gap exists between theory and practice as far as women's rights and status are concerned. Whilst women like men have rights and access to social justice, property, political and economic power, the reality on the ground is different. In practice, the socio-economic system is driven by rules and regulations formulated by men and is characterised by a binary divide that distinguishes between those that make rules and those that observe them. While demonstrating a nexus between cultural practises and political practices, I argue that women's subordination has become a naturalised way of life in Zambia's set up, and thus, it largely remains unquestioned at both the societal and state levels. For example, in a paper comparing women's political participation in Zambia, Botswana and Zimbabwe, Geisler (2004) concludes that: unless women keep to prescribed spaces and roles in the political women's corner, they are where they are not supposed to be. Women are positioned within a complicated entwining of two rather different discourses; one based on western notions of democracy and citizenship, and one based on moral expectations associated with the traditional value system in which most relationships are deferential.

A typical example of this situation can be seen in how women's efforts and achievements in society and politics are put down. For instance, although 1991 ushered pluralists into office, by 1994 women still only made up a grand total of 6.6 percent of the 150 members of parliament, roughly comparable with the situation under United National Independent Party's (UNIP) one-party rule. The general climate in which this handful of women must operate is shown by the nickname 'women and children' given to a female Member of Parliament vocal in her advocacy of women's interests and rights by her male parliamentary colleagues (see, Geisler, 2004). The kind of witty put-down which, as any woman who has struggled to keep 'gender on the agenda' in mainstream context can attest, is all too effective in marginalising and ridiculing any political perspective which goes against the received hegemony. Thus this little anecdote is in fact a good illustration of one of the concrete meanings of hegemony and the kind of mechanism through which it operates.

The fourth chapter of the study discusses the methodologies and methods used in the study. Quantitative and qualitative content analyses are used to investigate news coverage of women in the selected press. Quantitative analysis offers the possibility of obtaining more precise, systematic and reliable observations about frequency with which given content characteristics occur either singularly or in conjunction with one another. The content analysis research method is widely used by mass media researchers because it is an efficient way to investigate the content of the media. The technique could involve the description of trends in communication content, development of scholarship, comparing media or levels of communication, discovering stylistic devices of features, revealing the

focus of attention, and exposing propaganda (Berelson, 1971). Many content analyses are reality checks in which the portrayal of a certain group, traits or characteristics is assessed against a standard taken from real life. In this case, the news coverage of women in the Zambian press. The congruence of media presentation and the actual situation is then discussed. Although accumulating numerical data is the primary purpose of content analysis, the quantitative data highlights the qualitative aspects of coverage as long as their significance in light of theoretical and substantive concerns is explained. That is to say, the frequencies or facts can be used as indicators of a phenomenon (Krippendorf, 1980).

Additionally, I also employ a qualitative approach to further analyse the thematic patterns that emerge from the quantitative study. Qualitative analysis is a form of discourse which places emphasis on both the structure and the social context of media text. It enables the critic to 'denaturalise', or expose the 'taken-for-grantedness' of ideological messages as they appear in isolated speech or text. Qualitative analysis stresses that social and political institutions, organisations, group relations, structures, processes routines, and many other relevant phenomena also need to be studied at the level of their actual manifestations, expressions or enactment in discourse as language use, communication and interaction. For instance, some men sometimes blatantly and subtly engage in sexist ways of speaking which prevail in their group. When doing so, they at the same time contribute to the reproduction of the system of gender inequality. In the case of this study, qualitative analysis will enable me to obtain more accurate and systematic results in the kind of language used to describe women in politics, and to count how many times

negative words reoccur in newspapers when describing them. That is, I employ qualitative analysis in this part of the study to look at coverage of prominent women in public circles in order to establish how media language is used to marginalise them. I chose to examine the representation of women in politics because they inhabit publicly acknowledged positions of power unlike most Zambian women. As such these women represent the larger picture of women in the country. Therefore, the kind of coverage given to them could provide an idea of how women are perceived in general.

The English language press in Zambia holds a significant status and plays the role of agenda-setter in the both the public and political arena. There are three national dailies in Zambia and five weeklies. The *Times of Zambia* and *Daily Mail* are both state ran dailies and the *Post* a weekly paper which later turned daily, were selected on the basis of high circulation in Lusaka and Copperbelt, and their regional representation and prominence in the rest of Zambia. Three different years have been used to study the content of the selected newspapers over a span of ten years which represents the period under study. These years are 1991, 1995 and 1999. The year 1991 was selected as a starting year since it was during this year that Zambia made a political shift to pluralist politics and it was in this year that the woman question was brought to the fore with the formation of the Women's National Lobby Group. The years 1995 and 1999 were non randomly selected to reduce the voluminous amount of data. Also, the scope of the study was further narrowed down through systematic sampling.

The two subsequent chapters are analyses of the findings of the study. Chapter five discusses quantitative findings whilst chapter six discusses qualitative findings of the study. The findings in chapter five support the argument that women in the press in Zambia are not given adequate coverage. This is demonstrated by the number of stories of women, the kinds of news and production sources, placement and so forth. In all three papers studied, only a small number of stories about women or in which women are key sources appear on the front pages of the dailies. News about women is sourced more from men than women. In instances where it is sourced from women, male sources are also used. Also, most news stories about women are produced by male reporters. Finally, most news stories about women are placed on the inside pages of the paper which works to their disadvantage, as they can easily be missed or ignored as insignificant (see chapter 5 for a detailed discussion). Chapter six is a discussion of the qualitative analysis. Findings reveal that the language used to describe women in positions in power such as those in politics in most instances works to negate their contribution to national development. They are portrayed as villains, irresponsible and in most cases unable to rise to the challenges of their jobs.

The final chapter is the Conclusion. Apart from summing up the study, it also provides an opportunity to reflect on the research. I conclude that the press in Zambia still do not adequately represent women because they are so tied in a system that thrives on having women marginalised. I should say that this study is exploratory; therefore I hope that further studies are conducted by other scholars in such interesting areas related to the media and women in Zambia.

In the next chapter I discuss how liberal democratic theory constructions women and how this works to perpetuate discrimination against them.

## Chapter II: Liberal Democratic Theory and the Construction of Women

### Introduction

In the course of the last century women throughout the world have made extraordinary gains, pushing back the boundaries of male domination, leading them to be recognised in their respective societies as important and necessary actors in various socio-economic and political sectors. For instance, to a greater extent than before, women have taken up positions in academia in departments of natural sciences and in politics which were previously monopolised by men; many have achieved successful careers and full economic independence; and the earnings gap between women and men is gradually in decline. Women in many parts of the world have gained a whole range of legal rights, opportunities and protections. For example, in many countries women are now able to control their own fertility through access to reliable contraception and legal abortion and a range of new reproductive technologies in countries where it was previously illegal or severely restricted. In many western nations, significant numbers of women have moved into positions of political power, and many women's pressure groups often wield formidable resources. Women are also making their voices heard in the media and throughout cultural and several other endeavours.

However, women are increasingly recognising that the minimised, formal political gains made thus far have in no way guaranteed the achievement of real equalities in the economic and social aspect of their lives. Significant gender gaps in earnings and career prospects remain universal, and all national workforces continue to be highly segregated

along gender lines. For instance, to date, women retain the primary and frequently the exclusive responsibility for domestic and caring work; this is, however, largely unpaid and unrecognised (Bryson, 1999). In Zambia, for example, women's work in subsistence agriculture produces more than one third of the country's food crop and yet their work effort is to a large extent unrecognised. Further, despite the publicity attracted by individual women leaders, women remain grossly under-represented in decision-making positions. The numbers of women in parliament has gradually been on the decline since 1991 when Zambia adopted democratic politics. There are now less than 15 female parliamentarians in a house composed of 150 members. Other sectors in Zambia are not excluded from this trend, for instance, key positions in mass media, publishing houses and universities continue to be dominated by men as are those in the judiciary, national bureaucracies and other professions. According to Bryson (1999), what all this means is that although women's roles and expectations may have changed dramatically in recent decades, the story is not one of simple progress. Instead, it is one of uneven, erratic and reversible changes. As such, the changing of women's status in society needs the continuous appraisal that scholarship can provide.

This chapter aims to make a contribution to that appraisal through its exploration of the cultural and political assumptions that discursively construct women in negative or dismissive terms and therefore continually render them subordinate to men. It questions liberal democracy's failure to recognise women's ongoing and significant participation in economics and politics, which are seen as belonging to the man's domain of public sphere. In a democracy, all individuals are supposedly granted equal freedom to exercise

their rights in order for them to realise their full potential (Sandel, 1984). For instance, modern western democracies have a widespread agreement that women have as much right as men to be educated, to vote and to stand for political office; that women are entitled to work outside the home whether or not they are married; that men and women holding the same positions should receive the same pay and that men are not entitled to use violence against women (Bryson, 1999). However, although similar agreements on the rights of women may exist in Zambia, the realisation of these democratic principles seems to continue to elude women folk in the country.

Whilst Zambian women pressurise male politicians to rewrite political agendas to encourage pluralism and to include in the public dialogue the interests and needs of women, the impoverished, and other diverse groups, the male politician's perspectives are that the pressure to 'democratise' and open up public participation to women is externally derived and produces female responses that do not grow naturally out of indigenous experiences and gender roles. This may be observed in different ways that women are denied opportunities to hold the same positions as men in employment, politics, education, to mention a few, and also through the attitudes that influential people or the so-called opinion leaders in society have towards women.

A typical example of the negative attitude towards women is evidenced by a recent presidential speech during an interview. He clearly points out that he is unable to appoint women to influential government positions because they 'fight' him, meaning they challenge some of his policies (5 FM Radio, cited in Post Newspaper, 14th February,

2005). Under such circumstances, how then are women expected to exercise their democratic rights when they are expected to remain on the sidelines of what is obtaining in society by simply complying and not questioning some policies put forward irrespective of whether they are detrimental to their wellbeing and society at large. Therefore, even after several interventions, women in modern democracies continue to lag behind men in many respects because today's interpretations of democracy are still very much influenced by classical values which tend to view women as sexually different and inferior to men. In discussing the influence of classical thought on modern democracies, Pateman (1988) contends that the existing system implies that democracy is based on the assertion that women are 'naturally' subordinate to men and that their consents hold no relevance. That is why even though women participate actively in various sectors of society; their contributions are not fully recognised. According to Pateman (ibid), it is as a result of this that it is overlooked that women, like men are, concerned with questions of democracy and citizenship, with freedom, justice, equality and consent.

This chapter examines the liberal pluralist idea that human society is binaristically and hierarchically divided along gender lines. For example, in the binary oppositions between culture/nature, reason/emotion, mind/body, public/private, the right-hand value is perceived as 'lower' and is mostly associated with women. In this chapter I support the argument that this approach of viewing human society is one of the main influencing factors in the marginalisation of women (see for example, Pateman, 1988; Lloyd, 1993; Mikell, 1997; Prokhovnik, 1999). Indeed, it is due to the persistence of the dichotomous

and hierarchical gendered association at the conceptual level, sustaining exclusionary social norms and practices that it is so difficult to extend genuinely equal opportunities to women. For example, in their investigation of problems associated with this kind of thinking, Prokhovnik (1999) and Lloyd (1993) postulate that this dichotomy can lead to exclusion in real practices, as it naturalises the marginalisation that takes place in social exclusion. I attempt to demonstrate that even in the Zambian perspective traditional norms and beliefs also play alongside the western genderised and hierarchised binarisms to naturalise women's marginalisation. For instance, in Zambian culture there is a clear division of women's and men's duties. Women are responsible for domestic roles which include, child rearing, cleaning and generally ensuring that all is well taken care of in the home, whilst in the public sphere men are at the helm, and women are only expected to play subsidiary roles to their husbands or men.

Consequently, the chapter explores the conception of women from culture/nature and private/public perspectives that legitimate the subordination of women by linking them closely with nature and restricting them more to the private domain. The first part draws on dominant strands of liberal democratic thought on women, and discusses how this kind of thinking marginalises them and their concerns. Women in most societies are subordinated to men, even in modern democracies; they are devalued in one way or another, as it can be seen in early philosophical thought. For example, the works of Plato (cited in Cooper, 1997; Osborne, 1975), Aristotle, and Rousseau followed by more recent work of Habermas on the public sphere marginalise women in one way or another. In most of these works the discrimination of woman is justified by women's supposed

closeness to nature. An exception to the early philosophers is Plato who unlike the others held an ambivalent position on the subject of women. In certain instances he claimed that women were of a lesser intellectual talent than men and in others he thought some women were more intelligent than men. Aristotle (1932) claimed that women are inferior to men naturally because of their inability to produce sperm. As such, he consigns them to the private realm of insignificance. He leaves no doubt as to who occupies the private realm, where 'mere life' is preserved and who acts in the public realm in pursuit of 'good life'. Rousseau, (1968) drew on thinkers that preceded him to advance the thought of women as inferior beings compared to man. While he made them moral exemplars, he at the same time provided a rationale for their exclusion from citizenship. In his view the containment of women in the domestic domain helped control the destructive effects of passion on civil society, while yet preserving it as an important dimension of human well being.

It is therefore the argument of this chapter that democracy as propounded in liberal pluralism has failed to recognise women as equal citizens as men in its theory and political practice. The notions formed to support liberal democratic theory on the worth of the individual as being a universal subject fully formed prior to birth are ahistorical, have no cultural specificity and are not conscious of class, ethnicity or gender. Each individual must be able to realise their full potential without much interference from the state. Therefore, the theory was established for propertied white men and has made a distinction between public and private sphere, which consequently have become associated with men and women. This can also be seen in Zambia where western liberal

democratic theory works alongside local traditional beliefs and norms to discriminate women. To advance this argument, the chapter is divided into three parts.
The subsequent section is a feminist critique of Liberal theory followed by an analysis of some elements of cultural ideology that explicitly devalue women and social-structural arrangements that exclude women from participation or contact with certain realms in which highest powers of society are seen to reside. I focus mainly on the concept of hegemony and how it is culturally utilised to maintain the status quo in which women are in the periphery of society. The next section examines the socio-economic position of women. As in the earlier section, the discussion begins from a more general perspective looking at the socio-economic position of women in societies around the world and later at the position of women in Zambia. Here I look at the socio-economic position of women in the pre- and post-independence period because it brings to the fore the main issues which encourage the marginalisation of women and that are of concern to women in that country. It demonstrates that indigenous Zambian cultural patterns, particularly gender roles and relationships do indeed continue to support the subordination of women as they provide symbolic reference points for them in their struggle to achieve equitable roles. In this section I put forward the argument that the patriarchal nature of the society and the state run parallel in the continued marginalisation of women.

My main aim in the discussion about Zambia is to demonstrate how various issues concerning women and structure of gender relations have remained irrelevant to the democratic polity. Thus, a wider and deeper consensus continues to traditionally define women's role and position at both societal and state levels irrespective of a formal

democracy. Apart from providing an insight into the socio-economic process of Zambian society, the section is concerned with demonstrating a 'process' through which social messages are constantly produced and which influence the status of particular categories of people in society. Evidently, although not through conspiracy, state institutions in Zambia have become instruments in maintaining the particular social order, flouting democratic norms and privileges. The chapter then progresses to engage with a feminist critique of liberal democratic theory.

Western philosophy has been used as the starting point for the ensuing discussion on the marginalised status of women in the world over and in Zambia. The reason is that although Zambia has a different social and cultural background from the one in which western political thought was conceived, like most developing countries it has been greatly influenced by western philosophies. As such, the country's social, economic and political systems have a western base that has been modified to suit the local environment. Western feminist critique has been mostly used here because so far a limited amount of feminist critiques have emerged from Zambia and, indeed, Africa more generally. Further, although Zambia may be situated in a different continent from where western feminism originated, and where a lot of headway has been made to lessen women's subordination, the concerns raised by feminists in those parts of the world are relevant to Zambia as well. For instance, many issues including equal employment opportunities, news stereotyping of women and so forth have been taken up by feminists in Zambia and Africa only after they have been highlighted by feminist scholars in western societies.

**Liberal Theory and Women**

The good society in Liberal theory is one that must protect the dignity of each individual and promote individual autonomy whilst providing equal opportunities for self-realisation (Sandel, 1984). Given this value, liberals have inferred that the good society should allow each individual the maximum freedom from interference by others and equal opportunities to achieve their full potential. As such, under these circumstances, the state is the institution that liberals charge with protecting persons and property and simultaneously with guaranteeing the maximum freedom from interference to each individual. However, it can be argued that although liberal theory purports to provide opportunities to individuals in an equal measure, some individuals in liberal society have lagged behind because the so-called good society has failed to adequately provide for them in many respects. For example, women in almost every liberal society continue to occupy subordinate positions to men in economics, politics and so forth. Whilst the numbers of women working outside the home in the aforementioned areas could have increased, in most instances they receive lower remuneration than men and are mainly outside decision-making. Several attempts are made to explicate liberal democracy's failure to achieve equality. For instance, Pateman and Brennan (1979) argue that the failure has been due to the fact that liberal theory focuses on the abstract individual and ignores groups, therefore is unable to relate to group interests. Additionally, in discussing the individual, although the term 'man' is used to embrace both man and woman, in reality it focuses on man alone. This abstraction of the male individual ignores groups in society, which may have different needs and require varied attention. For instance,

women as individuals have for a long time now been perceived as equal to man and granted equal rights, but as a group, their interests have been marginalised. Further, in practice women are considered as different to men (man = normative, woman = other to man) and as such have not been afforded equal opportunities as men to achieve their full potential because men are used to define the norm.

Women's position in society is closely associated with a bipolar view of the world, where one (masculine) element is generally considered positively, and the other (feminine) negatively regarded (see for example, Lloyd, 1993; Plumwood, 1993; Grosz, 1994; Prokhovnik, 1999). Liberal theory has always viewed the world in a dichotomous manner that has several negative connotations for women. For example, the dichotomy of nature/culture. In this divide nature, which is closely associated with the feminine is considered negative and abounded with the masculine culture positive. This dichotomy plays a significant part in classical liberal theory and is among other complex interpretations of the masculine man and feminine woman distinction in society. It has been made a useful tool amongst a range of tools in theorising, perfecting and honing discriminatory distinctions and definitions of women. Though its scope is said to be greatly exaggerated, the role it has played in arresting the meaning given to persons and qualities, and consequently in systematically promoting the marginalisation of certain social groups can not be underestimated. Rogers (1988) provides a valuable definition of dichotomy in which she emphasises the element of rigidity. She sees dichotomy as 'polarisation with continuity that ignores overlap' (1988:44). In this way distinctions are seen to be more interesting than similarities and there is a tendency to see these

distinctions as complete, as such, limiting the scope of understanding things. Haste (1993:6) provides an explanation of this dichotomous thinking which suggests that women and the feminine exist as 'that by which men define themselves as not being' – and that this non-identification is a positive one for men.

Provknik (1999) discusses dichotomy as a hierarchical opposition having four important defining features: an opposition between two identities; a hierarchical ordering of the pair; the idea that between them this pair sum up and define a whole; and the notion of transcendence. Significant among these features is the opposition between two identities and the hierarchical ordering of the pair. For instance, reason is seen to be a higher form in hierarchy as it is purported to have positive attributes, which are equated with logical principles such as non-contradiction, consistency and comprehensiveness. On the other hand, emotionality has largely negative connotations such as disorder, formlessness and subordination. In the first instance, dichotomy takes on the quality of distinction, that is the capacity to distinguish between things, and extends it into evaluation. It is this distinctive ability adopted that is clearly cardinal to being able to make evaluations, and is the reason why the notion of a differentiation is synonymous with a virtuous attribute. This leads to a supposition that is habitual in dichotomous thinking and in turn to the established and presumptive expansion of distinction into opposition, to a phenomenon Plumwood calls an 'alienated form of differentiation' (Plumwood 1993). Butler (1993) extends the discussion by noting that in dichotomous thinking, oppositions are, after all, part of intelligibility; the latter is the excluded and illegible domain that haunts the former domain as the spectre of its own impossibility, the very limit to intelligibility, its

constitutive outside. This results in what Plumwood (1995:157), discussing the conceptions of 'human' and 'nature' calls the 'discontinuity problem', that is, "the Differential Imperative" in which what is proper in the human is taken to be what increases distance from the merely natural'. In terms of the specific human/nature dualism with which Plumwood is concerned, she argues strongly that the 'upshot is a deeply entrenched view of the genuine or ideal human self as not including features shared with nature, and as defined against or in opposition to the non-human realm', such that the 'human sphere and that of nature cannot significantly overlap' (Ibid).

Grosz, (1994:3) identifies the central significance of the hierarchical feature of dichotomy when she contends that the binary divide is not simply a neutral segregation of an otherwise all encompassing descriptive field. For dichotomous thinking necessarily hierarchises and ranks the two polarised terms so that one becomes the privileged term and the other its suppressed, subordinated, negative counterpart. Lloyd, (1993:103) supports the point when she notes that 'the male-female distinction has operated not as a straightforward descriptive principle of classification, but as a declaration of values'. In the same way Plumwood (1995:157) notes with respect to the human/nature dualism, 'nature is sharply divided off from the human, is alien and usually hostile and inferior'. Grosz (1994:3) also draws out the negative social effects of hierarchical patterns informing thinking when she comments that, 'dichotomies are inherently non-reversible, non-reciprocal hierarchies; and thus describe systems of domination'.

It follows therefore, that hierarchical ordering necessarily involves a form of oppression, through the inevitable abatement of one term. So long as an object represents what is socially and intellectually valued, then the same negative effect occurs to the other that is not the object. The other aspect of the oppressive form of hierarchy is the explication of truth in terms of exclusion of the subordinate term. Grosz (1988) underscores that the secondary status of subordinate terms in binary pairs, is the condition for dominant terms, namely, reason, mind, culture and public. Hierarchy is also central to dichotomy in another sense. For instance, there is a deeply entrenched belief in the western cultural tradition that activities related to nature such as child bearing and nurturing are more uncivilised, foundational and rudimentary. On the other hand, the 'civilised' include, intellectual, artistic, political, cultural, and linguistic practices. As such, this view upholds the extremely powerful and pervasive culture/nature hierarchical dichotomy. It follows therefore, from the exclusive disjunction of dichotomy that it sets up inequalities of power through the hierarchical structure. It is clear for instance that the binary oppositions with which this chapter is centrally concerned -- nature/culture and private/public – are not only theoretical points. But both imply hierarchical power relations in actual social and intellectual practices.

The subject of 'nature' is crucial to understanding how it is that some groups in liberal society have for a long time been perceived as subordinates, whilst others are dominant. Its influence on social constructions of women is understood by looking at how philosophers articulated the concept from the outset. Human nature was approached through a divide between the mind and body. In this way of thinking, the mind is

assigned more importance than the body. To date, everyone is gauged by his or her ability for rational thought. Early liberal thinkers perceived rationality as the 'mental' capacity that distinguishes each man from the other. Based on this distinction, they assigned some a more prominent status whilst relegating others to the margins of society. It is also believed that the human mind and body represent quite different kinds of beings, each irreconcilable to and linked only coincidentally with the other. In other words, the defining feature of the abstract individual of the liberal tradition is rational consciousness. Rationality is placed in binary opposition to the body. For instance, liberal philosophers make three basic assumptions about rationality. The first assumption is that rationality is a 'mental' capacity. This assumption harbours the belief of 'normative dualism' which asserts that what is especially valuable about human beings is a particular 'mental' capacity, the capacity for rationality. Secondly, there is the flawed conception of rationality as being a property of the individual rather than of groups. This notion discourages liberals from conceiving of rationality as constituted by or defined by group norms, let alone as being a property of the social structure.

Consequently, human individuals are considered basic constituents of social groups, their capacities and desires given independently of their social context and not fundamentally altered by that context. Thirdly, rationality is assumed to be a capacity that is possessed in approximately equal measure at least by all men and not women (Jagger, 1983). In direct relation with rationality is reason, which is seen as the highest human virtue since it distinguishes 'mankind' from beast, rendering the individual worthy of respect and responsible for his or her choices and actions. The radical implications of these principles

provided the basis for the liberal belief that as rational beings individual men have rights that must not be violated by arbitrary power, that any authority must rest upon the consent of the governed, and that the individual should be as far as possible self-determining and free from government control. For instance, Rousseau and Kant (cited in Okin, 1979) saw the essence of reason as the ability to grasp the rational principles of morality. Hobbes (1998) saw rationality in instrumental terms as the capacity to calculate the best means to individual ends. Locke (1964) asserts that the freedom and equality of individuals stems from their possession of reason. It is by the use of their reason that individuals are able to act as independent agents.

However, it is worth noting from this kind of approach that although philosophers use generic terms such as 'man' and 'mankind' and the allegedly inclusive pronoun 'he', their theorising did not really include women. Okin (1980) views 'human nature' as described and discussed by philosophers such as Aristotle, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Locke, Rouseau, Kant, Hegel and many others, as a social construct that refers only to males and their experiences of the world. Therefore, all the rights and needs that they have attributed to humanness have not been perceived as applicable to the female part of humanity. There has been a pervasive tendency in political philosophy to make allegedly general statements as if humanity was not divided into two sexes, and then either to ignore the female sex altogether, or to proceed to discuss it in terms far from consistent with the assertions that have been made about 'man' and 'mankind'.

Historically, woman has been symbolically associated with nature, unlike man who is identified with culture, and therefore woman has been assigned certain roles that are deemed suitable for her. Ortner (1974:72) argues that the only way to explain why the value universally assigned to women and their activities is lower than that assigned to men and their pursuits is that women are 'a symbol' of all 'that every culture defines as being lower order of existence than itself.' A woman's body and its functions place her in social roles that in turn are considered to be at a lower order of the cultural process than mans'. For instance, from the beginnings of philosophical thought, femaleness was symbolically associated with what reason supposedly left behind – the dark vague indeterminate. In the Pythagorean table of opposites, formulated in the sixth century BC, femaleness was explicitly linked with the unbounded – the vague, the indeterminate – as against the bounded – the precise and clearly determined. Maleness on the other hand, like all other terms on its side of the table, was construed as superior to its opposites; and the basis for this superiority was the association with Pythagorean contrast between form and formlessness. As similar symbolic association of femaleness is applied in the Zambian society. Women are associated with, earth, fire and water and men to air, an element used to verbalise.

Over decades the specificity of the argument from nature in relation to women has acquired several themes; however, biological and anatomical difference is central to all of them. On the one hand, this argument suggests that biologically there is something in man that makes them the naturally dominant sex, and that something is lacking in females. As a result women are not only 'naturally' subordinate but in general quite

satisfied with their position. On the other hand, women are identified or symbolically associated with nature because of their physiological functions as opposed to men who are identified with culture. Since it is always culture's project to subsume and transcend nature, if women were considered as having a close link with nature, then culture would find it 'natural' to subordinate them. That is to say, nature is inferior and is transcended by rational man; therefore, those perceived as closer to nature are in turn treated as inferior.

Based on this approach, interconnected themes emerge concerning women and their proper social political role. Moller (1992) posits that the most significant element affecting the philosophers' conceptions of, and arguments about women has been the outlook that each of them held concerning family. Those who have considered the family as a 'natural' and essential institution have defined women by their sexual, procreative, and childbearing functions within it. This has led to the prescription of a code of morality and conception of rights for women clearly distinct from those prescribed for men. Evidently, the 'arguments from nature' have an ideological centrality in the subordination of women, particularly because their reference point is always biological and anatomical – natural – difference. The supposition of the requirement of the family has led theorists to then regard the biological differences between sexes as overcoming all the other conventional and institutional differences in sex roles which the family, especially in its patriarchal forms, has required. However, Mitchell (1974), challenges this argument by differentiating structures of sexuality, reproduction and socialisation of children, pointing to their historical, rather than necessary, combination in the modern family. Perhaps the

most important 'argument from nature' for women is that which reads gender difference as the natural expression, rather than the cultural constitution of sexual difference (Oakley, 1997). The centrality of this argument, which underlies and reinforces others, is in the way it permeates every aspect of our understanding of sexual difference.

Dated as this explanation of man and woman's unequal social relations may be, such modes of thought about women that are similar to those of some classical philosophers are still prevalent in writings of modern thinkers, and in the ideologies of modern political actors and institutions. For instance, in the renowned work on the public sphere Habermas (1962) is silent on the role of women. That is as if to suggest that women are non-existent or insignificant to the occurrences in this domain. I should point out that Habermas (1998, 2003) has acknowledged and attempted to correct his omission in his later works.

Further in the contemporary world, women are mostly still designated work positions that are closely related to their nurturing role whilst men on the other hand continue to hold key positions of decision-making in most economic and political institutions. For instance, women more than men take up professions such as nursing, caring and teaching. Evidently, the traditional view that women are more closely associated with the body and men with mind has been further reinforced if not regenerated by a sexual division of labour. For example, men have dominated the intellectual fields of politics, science, culture and religion, which belong to the public sphere. By and large, women have been assigned the primary responsibility for many day-to-day tasks necessary for physical

survival, tasks which include food preparation, psychological nurturance and care of infants and young children mainly in the private sphere. Even when women engage in professional activities outside the home, they are likely to be in areas such as teaching, nursing and so forth, which are seen as an extension of their nurturing abilities.

Therefore, even today the domestic orientation of women and public orientation of man is among the critical factors in understanding their social position. Though it does not determine cultural stereotypes or asymmetries in the evaluation of sexes, it rather underlies them. It has direct consequences for the nature and degree of economic and political involvement of women in society. The divide is structured by patriarchal as well as class relations and obscures the subjection of women to men within an apparently universal, egalitarian and individualist order. By virtue of belonging to the domestic sphere, women's economic and political activities are constrained because they do not have experience of formal institutionalised roles. The constraints experienced by women also affect their capacity to establish and expand their financial or material base, which makes it difficult for them to gain equal recognition in society. Thus since women are closely linked to family, it is difficult for them to manipulate or control their public image.

As a response to this flawed process of conceptualising society, a feminist critique has emerged over the years founded upon the belief that women suffer from systematic injustices because of their sex. In the next section of this chapter I shall discuss a feminist critique of liberal theory and its position on women.

**Feminist critique of Liberal Theory**

Feminist theory has never had a united body of thought. Its many strands have evolved from a wide range of 'male stream' theoretical perspectives and also from diverse experiences of different groups of women. Various tendencies in feminism explain the subordination of women differently (Randall, 1982; Mies, 1986; Walby, 1990). By the 1980s, scholars identified liberal, socialist/Marxist and radical feminism as its three main branches, however, other categories such as African feminism have since emerged. Although several categories of feminism have emerged, the basic belief of the various strands is that women suffer from systematic social injustices because of their sex. Therefore it is the primary role for feminists to counter these injustices.

Since the 17th century some women publicly argued that they were just as intelligent and rational as men, and that if they appeared inferior this was as a result of their upbringing and lack of education rather than a quality inherent in their nature (Bryson, 1999). This approach is what has been referred to as liberal feminist. It follows a long tradition of campaigning for improved rights and opportunities for women without seriously questioning the existing organisation of society. For instance, early feminists such as Mary Astell (1666 –1731) argued that women's ability to reason meant that they should be educated equally and that they should be enabled to live independently if they wished, rather than being forced by economic necessity to become, in legal terms, the property of a man through marriage. Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97) also expressed her disagreement with some principles articulated by liberals such as Rousseau at the time. Her argument

was fourfold. First, like other feminists in late 18th century she refused to accept that women are less capable of reason than men are, or that vanity, weakness and frivolity were natural attributes of her sex. Secondly, Wollstonecraft contended that if men and women are equally possessed of reason, they must be equally educated in its use. Women must be given knowledge and education so that they can make rational choices, for it is only then that it makes sense to talk of their goodness. Third, men and women's common humanity is based on their shared God-given possession of reason, then virtue must be the same for both sexes, that is, must be based on reason and must be freely chosen. Fourthly, the idea of equal worth distinguishes Wollstonecraft and her contemporaries, which now is firmly linked to equal rights.

In the 19th century feminists, such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815 –1902) and Susan Anthony (1820-1906) in the United States and Harriet Taylor (1809-58) and John Stuart Mill (1806-73) in Britain, pushed for women's equal rights. Here too, feminists used the existing arguments about individual rights to argue that women should be treated as autonomous, self-determining individuals, rather than simply as daughters, wives and mothers to be owned, controlled or protected by men. Women's autonomy would allow them to transcend the limitations of their 'womanly condition' and lay claim to citizenship rights on the same basis as men. These ideas were further extended in the second half of the twentieth century, when feminists insisted that women were entitled to participate in the public worlds of politics and paid employment, whether or not they also chose to get married and have children (Richards, 1982:14).

Over several decades the issues that were problematised by liberal feminist have since been attained to a large extent. In the more recent years it could be said that women enjoy equal rights to those of men. For example, nowadays there are more women going out to work than there were before, and also to some extent, women are getting an improved wage. However, the liberal feminist approach has been said to be inadequate because it simply extends to women theoretical principles that are essentially male. For instance, some feminists argue that the importance that liberalism attaches to rationality, self-determination and equal competition are attributable to a masculine perspective which denies the values of qualities traditionally associated with women such as empathy, nurturing and co-operation (Bryson, 1999).

Whilst liberal feminism has focused mainly on issues of equality, radical feminism points out that the sex-differences or biology of women is the principal basis of men's domination over women. The biological vulnerability of women leads to dependency relations between men and women, and thus forms the basis of women's subordination. Another strand of feminism stresses that biological differences between women and men are not sufficient to explain a woman's inferior status in cultural value systems, which deprive women of authority while giving it to men. That is to say, the biological differences between women and men become significant only within cultural systems in which particular social roles and psychic structures of women take shape (Rosaldo, 1974; Ortner, 1974). Socialisation produces masculine and feminine identities, sexual divisions of labour and private—public spheres whereby women are confined to the domestic and men are closely aligned to public roles. For instance, a woman's 'giving birth to and

raising of children leads to a differentiation of domestic and public spheres of activity that can shape a number of relevant aspects of human social structure and psychology' (Rosaldo, 1974: 21). Such a perspective is also shared by psychoanalysts like Chodorow (1974) who attributes the construction of a feminine personality to the universality of female socialisation experience born out of universal features of family structure which relegates early child care responsibilities to women.

Marxist feminists also challenge many of the assumptions of liberal feminism, as unlike liberals they attribute the subordination of women to various modes of capitalist production of which family structure and domestic labour form an integral part. Mies (1986: 37) has named this phenomenon capitalist-patriarchy, 'to denote the system which maintains women's exploitation and oppression'. While 'the term patriarchy denotes the historical depth of women's exploitation and oppression, the concept capitalism is expressive of the contemporary manifestation or the latest development of this system' (p.38). Interestingly, Marxist feminists extend this approach to Africa, arguing that African women's roles have varied in accordance with their access to control over resources, and control over their own sexual lives. Recently, Marxist feminist views have focused on reproductive value as the under-analysed but crucially important element in accounting for gender roles within the relations of production and within various classes in African societies.

Critics of Marxist theory, however argue that this view constitutes class reductionism, wherein all social subjects necessarily become class subjects and other social relations

like sex, race, nationality and so forth, become insignificant (Mouffe, 1979). In Mouffe's words:

> 'All social relations can become the locus of antagonism insofar as they are constructed as relations of subordination. Many different forms of subordination can become the origin of conflict and struggle. There exists, therefore, in society a multiplicity of potential antagonisms, and class antagonism is only one among many. It is not possible to reduce all those forms of subordination and struggle to the expression of a single logic located in the economy. Nor can this reduction be avoided by positing a complex mediation between social antagonisms and the economy. There are multiple forms of power in society that cannot be reduced to or deduced from one origin or source' (ibid: 91).

Although an economic perspective is important in analysing women's position in society, it is not sufficient to explain oppressive practices like 'foot binding and chastity belts inflicted upon women in history of human society', according to Rubin (1975). 'The analysis of the reproduction of labour power does not even explain why it is usually women who do domestic work in the home rather than men' (ibid: 163). Explaining women's usefulness to capitalism is one thing but to say that 'this usefulness explains the genesis of oppression is quite another' (ibid.). Mackinnon (1987:116) also argues that 'we cannot talk about everyday life without understanding division by gender, or about hegemony without understanding male dominance as a form of it'. In the case of Africa, Marxist feminism fails to understand that women's relations are more open to considerable symbolic manipulation. The progression of ideas in analysing the roles of African males and females does not deny the role of biology, but focuses upon

understanding how these biological differences are used or ignored in African social structures and relationships. Accordingly, women themselves may accept symbolic gender distinctions that incorporate naturalist assumptions about femaleness and maleness, while nevertheless challenging the subordination of women as an intricate accompanying feature of cultural constructs. In sum, Marxism does not somehow take into consideration the role of various other kinds of powers in society or hegemonic forces which are significant in the subordination of women.

While a debate on the origin of women's oppression remains contestable, the fact that women have a subordinate status in most human societies is indisputable. In the context of this study, I am not concerned with the 'root cause' of women's secondary position, I am concerned with demonstrating a 'process' through which social messages are constantly produced, impinging upon the status of particular categories such as women. Although not through conspiracy, the state and corporate institutions become instruments in maintaining the particular social order, flouting democratic norms and privileges. I wish to define this process following Gramsci (1971), as hegemonic. Introduced by Gramsci (1971), the theory of 'hegemony' is about 'the naturalness of a way of thinking about social, economic, political and ethical issues' (Bocock, 1986:6). The theory argues that power is exercised in various institutions in society, which are run by people. They are neither part of material production nor state-funded organisations. Such forces include traditions (certain practices and values), institutions (church), family, education, socialisation and so forth, which form the foundations of hegemony. Resultantly, it works through those 'loosely inter-related set of ruling ideas permeating a society, but in such a

way as to make the established order of power and values appear natural, taken-for-granted and common-sensical' (McQuail, 1994:99). Williams (1976/83) defines hegemony as a lived system of meanings and values which, as they are experienced appear to be reciprocally conforming. For him, it is a sense of reality for most people in society because they cannot think beyond that reality in most areas of their lives. It may be differentiated from rule in the sense that rule is expressed in directly political forms or direct coercion in times of crisis, while a more normal situation is a complex interlocking of political, social and cultural forces. That is to say, hegemony emphasises the wholeness of the process and therefore goes beyond ideology. In the strongest sense, it is a 'culture', but a culture which may be perceived as the lived dominance and subordination of particular categories (ibid).

'Culture' has no single unproblematic definition. As Hall (1980) posits, it has no single term, 'the domain of culture refers primarily to essential aspects of collective social life, especially to meanings and practices, that is, social customs, institutional ways of doing things and also personal habits' (McQuail, 1994:61). Fiske (1989:1) defines culture as 'the constant process of producing meanings of and from our social experience'. According to Carey (1988: 34) 'social life is more than power and trade, it also includes the sharing of aesthetic experience, religious ideas, personal values and sentiments, and intellectual notions – a ritual order'. A feminist perspective describes culture as a 'process of generating and sustaining systems of meaningful forms (symbols, artefacts, etc) by means of which humanity transcends the givens of natural existence, bends them to its purposes, controls them in its interest' (Ortner, 1974:22).

Derived from Latin for 'cultivating' or tilling the soil, 'culture' indicates ways of taking care of things (Hall and Neitz, 1993). The concept of culture has passed through various stages of development and still carries a variation and complications. Initially, society was an active fellowship, company, common doing, before it was viewed as a general system of order; economy was the management of a household and then the management of a community before it was described as a perceived system of production, distribution and exchange; culture was the growth and tending of crops and animals, and by extension became the growth and tending of human facilities (Williams 1977). But owing to developments in society, the definition of culture underwent changes. For instance, the notion of civilisation was first expressed as being 'civil' and later extended to the concept of civil society which meant opposition to barbarism, and was an indication of historical and social progress. Civilisation and culture were also used interchangeably at one stage. However, at another stage, the concept of civilisation was attacked on the grounds of its being superficial, artificial or unnatural, 'a cultivation of external properties – politeness and luxury – as against more human needs and impulses (Williams, 1977: 14). A different concept of culture then introduced was the development of inner or spiritual developments against external developments. As a result, the concept of culture became associated with religion, art, family and personal life against civilisation or society.

Further developments like liberalisation and secularism gave rise to newer forces of materialism, commercialism, democracy, socialism, etc, which further influenced the concepts of civilisation, civil society and culture from various angles. For instance, Marx

(1978) defined civilisation and society simply as a bourgeois concept. The relationship between society and economy, and the idea of material conditions determining class relations by Marxism turned cultural history into a 'superstructure', that is, 'a realm of mere ideas, beliefs. Arts, customs, determined by the basic material history' (Williams, 1977: 19). Culture as a constitutive social process determining the ways of life did not develop much in Marxism because it stressed the importance of economy as a base in class relations and did not attach sufficient importance to the cultural and political sphere.

Drawing from materialistic accounts of Marx on the relationship between 'men and nature and between 'men' themselves embedded within the material production, Hall (1977) eloquently describes the emergence of an 'ideological' form of 'culture' from within the material culture. According to him, 'men' intervened in nature with the help of certain instruments or tools and reproduced their material conditions of existence. This process involved collaboration of 'men' in terms of divided labour, exchange of tools and goods, and led to the formation of social individuals and finally to social organisation. Therefore, the relations surrounding material production formed and determined the basis of social structures, that is division of labour, type of society, civil and political associations, type of family and state, 'men's' beliefs, ideas, theoretical constructions and social consciousness appropriate to the existing situation. It rendered a materialist understanding of human history and social development. This whole process of organisation of labour, circulation of goods, development of associations, family life and so forth determined a way of living among the social individuals and groups. In his words, this pattern of living was 'the result of the interconnections between different

levels of social practice. The pattern also expressed how the combined result of these interconnecting levels was 'lived', as a totality, by its 'bearers'. This seems to be the best way of grasping, within a materialist theory, where precisely culture arises. Thus 'culture' refers to the arrangement – the forms – assumed by social existence under determinate historical conditions. If the term 'social' refers to the content of the relationships into which men involuntarily enter in any social formation, then 'culture' refers to the forms which those relationships assume' (ibid: 317 – 18).

There is no doubt that women must also have produced the material conditions for their existence (Slocum, 1975). However, most women would have been dependent upon men and therefore in a rather vulnerable position economically. Women's physiological functions restrict their social movements and confine them to the domestic sphere. This in turn determines their social roles from which their activities are circumscribed and a gendered division of labour is constructed between women and men. This women's dependence would have determined their role and status corresponding to the situation and inscribed into the definition of culture. This given matrix would have produced elaborate forms of social structure. Women's dependence and exclusion from producing material conditions leading to particular social structures can be seen in terms of gendered division of labour, women as mothers/wives and men as producers and earners. Thus, the history of human development can only be hypothesised on the basis of existing evidences, social structure, and forms of associations and power relations. It can be further argued that the particular social formations of viewing women as dependants would have assigned specific roles to women, and would have formed the basis of

contemporary culture. Gradually, early human history became objectified and social relations became culturally encoded, ideologised and natural.

Material culture thus leads to an ideological culture containing meaningful symbols and values which determine the behaviour of individuals and through which social actors communicate (Hall and Neitz, 1993). The 'way of life' gets integrated into 'ideas' and through social practices culture becomes a 'whole way of life'. In this sense, 'culture is not a practice; nor is it simply the descriptive sum of the 'mores and folkways' of societies. It is threaded through all social practices, and it is the sum of their inter-relationship' (Hall, 1980: 60).

I argue that in the Zambian context, the existing culture or the cultural consensus in the form of certain values, practices, traditions and customs may be perceived as a key determinant in defining the subordinate status of women. The role of culture as a 'superstructure' might have been relevant at one point in time. However, in its present form culture may be perceived as a 'given', and 'natural' phenomenon which is strengthened by internal (family, community, religion) and external (state) patriarchal forces. To make it clearer, many practices might have had a material base at one point in time e.g. bride price, child marriages, denial of property rights to women and so forth, but such practices have become naturalised and taken-for-granted, i.e. a practice over the material at one point in time becomes a cultural practice over time.

I will discuss at greater length in the final section of this chapter how various practices which put women in a subordinate position, and which have an impact on gender relations by and large remain unquestioned at both societal and state levels thus showing an interlocking nature of social and political patriarchal forces. In Zambia, for instance, at the societal level, male children are more welcome. A son is a blessing and is given preference, and a daughter is seen as liability. For example, male children are favoured, especially in land allocation as it is said that daughters leave their natal homes to settle elsewhere with their husbands. As daughters grow older their confines start getting narrower. Family is the foremost institution which denies fundamental rights to girls in the form of restricted movements, associations, education, career opportunities, right to property, right to work and so forth. It also dictates codes on sexuality, poses marriage as an ultimate goal for women, enforces practices like dowry, a gender division of labour, inculcates the values of chastity and honour, morality and immorality, thus also defining the codes of 'normalcy and deviance'. Girls are largely not encouraged to enter any other profession except marriage. For instance, a female child can be withdrawn from school at any point and be married to an old wealthy man willing to pay a huge bride price (Women and the Law Report, 1997). Most girls do not oppose the cultural conditionings because they are not aware of any other course of life or for the fear of annoying their parents or inviting a social backlash. They also do not find anything concrete 'out there' except a confusion and abstractness for which they have not been trained and there are not enough role models to be followed. In most circumstances, after spending their early years in their parental home, girls are taken to another set-up. The protectors and defenders change but the scene remains the same. In the new set up they get the

responsibility of retaining the institution of family. They play good daughters-in-law, wives, and mothers for fear of criticism, or seek a protective environment. It might be because they get accustomed to a life of dependence and security in the early years of life and hence internalise it. The socialisation process has the effect of creating an image of women as inferior subservient beings and results in lack of confidence. Family is the foundation of a social order, which keeps women in place. If women do not play the given roles, the institution of family would not survive for long. Such roles and expectations certainly hinder a woman's development as an independent citizen.

Outside the family comes civil society, i.e. a social space comprising the wider neighbourhood or community. The community guards the family norms and even promotes them further by remaining silent over various critical issues happening in its vicinity and knowledge and thus maintains the social consensus. It avoids interference in the 'private sphere' and in practices like domestic violence, dowry, and denial of various fundamental rights to women and so forth, thus rendering them a 'natural' phenomenon. For instance, the law in Zambia provides for and is expected to defend every right of a woman. However, the reality on the ground is different, policy-makers seem to reluctantly implement statutory law, and instead promote the cultural value system by engaging in polygamous customary marriages. Polygamy is an offence at a legal but not community level. As such, many politicians who frame and pass the laws against acquiring a second wife conveniently follow traditional custom and marry even more than two other wives. Among the many reasons advanced by perpetrators for marrying

another wife is infertility, or the inability to produce a male child to carry on the father's name.

In most cases, because a woman's body is different than man's, and the functions of that body are different, it is somehow convincing to attribute gender to natural laws, which become rational laws with time. Constrained by family, religion, social customs, and fear of the world out there, women become dependent upon men and easily internalise the ideologies which propagate that division of labour and women's dependence are a natural phenomenon. In the words of Ortner:

> 'Indeed the fact of woman's full human consciousness, her full involvement in and commitment to culture's project of transcendence over nature explains woman's nearly universal unquestioning acceptance of her own devaluation.... As a conscious human member of culture, she followed out the logic of culture's argument and has reached culture's conclusions along with men' (1974:74).

The state remains beyond the purview of these levels with an obvious implication that personal is not political. Male-dominated institutions and structures are sometimes considered a normal order, and in some instances, the sexual subordination of women falls outside the realm of political thought rendering such issues irrelevant to political equality. In a 'weak' patriarchal state, women are anyway more removed from the state because such a state makes provision for 'welfare' and lacks political will to disturb the social order (Rai, 1996). In the case of Zambia, this may be because of high illiteracy levels of above 60 percent (Central Statistics Report, 2003) among women which hinder

their access to the state. This also means that most women depend upon the 'private' – the family and community – for their resources, their identity and even their strength. Since they are closer to the community and are bearers of culture, they follow societal norms and customs without questioning them. The state remains an 'imagined' one for many who do not come into direct contact with it.

However, within a wider perspective, the state produces loud messages about appropriate gender roles and promotes a cultural consensus. Such consensus is reflected in the biased decisions of the judiciary in cases of rape, in the silence of police in cases of domestic violence and so forth. The police often violate women's rights and act as custodians of patriarchal culture. Constitutionally, freedom of religion impinges directly on women's rights because it allows people to associate themselves with religions that promote gender based discriminations. In the name of political liberalism and democracy, new laws are introduced, amendments made, women representatives are consulted over various issues in consonance with the active nature of hegemony against a static system or structure (Williams, 1977). However, at the practical level the policy of non-intervention and non-implementation is largely followed. Thus the core of hegemonic forces is somehow retained through common sense in the society. The prevailing order gets strengthened with this social political nexus. Most of these discriminating practices against women or the forces which hinder their development as citizens receive no special attention in discussions of democracy thus indicating that the natural subordination of women lies at the root of the patriarchal democratic order, and that the provision of constitutional rights can in no way guarantee gender equality or individuality to women. In the following

section, I pay close attention to how the phenomenon addressed here affects the status of Zambian women in society.

**Liberal Theory, Zambia and Women**

Zambia is primarily a patriarchal nation characterised by ethnic diversity with over 73 ethnic groups. Its socio-economic system is based on a combination of traditional patriarchal customs, and the liberal masculine democratic principles embedded in Western philosophy and history (Bbuku, 2001). The pre-independence Zambian society practiced kinship systems or forms of socialisation such as matrilineal, patrilineal and bilateral lineage. Zambia today claims to be a modern democracy, however, customary law is still used to a large extent as the basis for all intents and purposes of the day to day practices of all 73 ethnic groups. It is unwritten and relies on customary practice, and as such it has acquired a certain amount of rigidity that prevents it from responding to ongoing changes. In this section I analyse how the unwritten law of customs and its practice has affected women by confining them to marginal sectors of society.

Material presented in the section draws heavily from Ndulo and Osei-Hwedie (1989), Longwe 1986, Sikaneta, 1991, Mutukwa 1991 and Bardouille, 1992. I approach the subject historically and mainly concentrate on establishing the reasons why women continue to fail to make entry into the public sphere, the source of power and influence in liberal models of democracy. The section aims to provide an insight of the cultural processes of a society and how they work to undermine women's full participation in it. It

examines different aspects of inequalities in the status and opportunities of women and their wider implications for women's participation in modern Zambian society.

Much of the available literature relating to gender and development in Zambia emphasises the negative impact that both social-historical and contemporary forces have had on women compared with their male counterparts. For example, during the process of European colonisation, the political economy was tied as an appendage to the West and Zambian men were given increased recognition relative to women. Therefore, although women constitute 51 percent of Zambia's population, they have not yet equally benefited from the development process in comparison with men due to the gender imbalances in the social, economic and political spheres. These inequalities and discrimination must not be seen only as symptoms and indices of underdevelopment, but also among the causes.

**Women in Pre-Independence Zambia**

In traditional Zambia, before colonisation, it is generally argued that women enjoyed a high status in society and played a pertinent role in decision-making. However, this changed after the arrival of the colonialists and gender hierarchy and female subordination evident in traditional culture became more pronounced. According to Munachonga (1989) after colonisation and the introduction of religion, women were assigned an inferior status. Traditionally, several factors affected the relative power

positions of spouses in matrilocal Tonga[1] as was the case among the matrilineal Bemba[2]; the wife tended to be in a relatively stronger position vis-à-vis her husband. While a Bemba man stayed with his wife's family and worked for them as a form of marriage payment, he tended to have less influence in family decision making because his father-in-law acted as head-of-the-family. Moreover, his food was prepared in his mother-in-law's' kitchen since married daughters had no independent kitchens but prepared meals under the mother's supervision (Munachonga, 1989). Similarly, Colson (1958) reports that the husband-wife relationship among the Tonga tended to reflect an accent of equality. In general, the matrilineal kinship system that predominates in Zambia tended to enhance the relative position of women particularly with regard to decisions about custody of their children. In a matrilineal kinship system children are considered more the responsibility of the mother, and therefore she has more control over them than the father. Also, the inheritance lineage in the system favours the children of a daughter more than a son. For example, when the family head passes on, it is his sister's children who inherit the wealth or whatever is there for inheritance.

[1] An ethnic group in the Southern part of Zambia. In the Tonga tradition the man is the head of the family and makes all decisions. For more information see E. Colson, 1958. Marriage and the Family among the Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia. Manchester University Press: Manchester

[2] An ethnic group in the Northern part of Zambia

Munachonga (1989) notes that in traditional Zambian society, the power of the husband was not automatic -- it depended on a number of factors including his experience or knowledge and his ability to fulfil his roles to his wife and members of his household. Even where marriage payments were made in the form of goods, his power was not absolute; the payments did not represent the exchange of women for goods. Moreover, the payments were raised by the man's whole family and distributed widely among the woman's family. This implied the dispersion of power and authority over women rather than concentration in the hands of husbands and fathers of the women concerned.

Nevertheless, the relative autonomy of African women in traditional society should not be overemphasised. Male dominance existed at many levels, including the domestic level and the level of popular culture. A façade of egalitarianism was created by allowing women a voice and autonomy within their own spheres of responsibility (the household). This means that at points of social intersection, for instance when the husband's and the wife's sphere of responsibility merged –women were expected to come under the authority of men. The wife was expected to defer to her husband as traditional head of the household in such situations. Even in matrilineal societies, it is the uncle or brother who is mandated to make decisions. Girls were socialised to become wives, mothers and caregivers and to submit while boys were groomed to take up roles as providers and leaders. The socialisation process has the effect of creating an image of women as inferior subservient beings and results in women who lack confidence and who are willing to take second place in society. The belief in male supremacy underpins

customary laws and provides the ideological basis for male domination of both domestic and public life.

The gender inequalities in Zambian society can be viewed partly in terms of colonial policies, which discriminated against women and partly in terms of traditional social and cultural norms and practices which persist in modern urban society. According to Munchonga (1989), the introduction of the cash economy through colonialism has altered not only the economic roles of men and women, but also the basis of family decision making. That is to say, the introduction of the cash economy altered not only the economic roles of men and women, but also the basis of family expectations (or ideals) and the actual relative power positions of husbands and wives in Zambian households. As such, the introduction of new systems of economic household and kinship organisation through colonialism led to radical changes in the relative positions of men and women. A brief historical background of economic development will show how this has affected men and women in Zambia.

Zambia's wealth was founded on copper mining, an industry that thrived on cheap African male labour. The dynamics of the colonial regime were such that they proceeded to separate men from women as the regime moved from initial operations of penetration and building infrastructure to the economic and political integration of the colonial area into the sphere of the metropole. For instance, colonial employment policy excluded women; labour migration was for men only. Women were expected to remain in villages producing food crops for subsistence. Although the mining authorities themselves tolerated the presence of women in workers' compounds to offer their domestic services,

they were not permitted by colonial administration to provide family accommodation. The administration used traditional rulers to enforce strict regulations against the urbanisation of women. Even when later women were allowed to join their husbands working in towns, they remained outside the industrial labour force. Consequently, through the successive processes of forced labour for colonial projects, induced wage-labour migration to pay taxes, male urbanisation, mining and resource extraction, and rural cash cropping, the colonial regime created a sexual division of labour and of community that is still present today. It is clear that despite a lack of conscious attention to women, colonial regimes were able to achieve their aims only by using, building upon and furthering the gender hierarchy already present in Zambian culture. In both domestic and economic realms, the inseparable processes of colonial domination and capitalist development interacted with traditional culture to further entrench sex roles by increasing the workload for women relative to men, and also created the social dynamics of individualism, which clashed with the traditional communal compact and resulted in significant gender inequality for ordinary women.

Discrimination against women in wage employment was reinforced by discrimination in the field of education. During colonial times, the role of education was to prepare girls to assume the role of wives in marriage. Education for girls was not for obtaining credentials or preparing them for skilled jobs. For example, at independence in 1964, in the whole country, only 77 women compared with 884 men had a secondary school certificate. There were fewer school places for girls than for boys, especially at secondary school level (Elliot, 1971). Even when schools for girls were increased, the curriculum

emphasised domestic sciences which reflected the role that girls were expected to play in adult life i.e. that of housewife and mother, who would be dependent on her husband economically. Evidently, those girls who went to school during the colonial period invariably found suitable men to marry and no girl left the school unmarried. For example, education during the pre-independence years mainly included domestic science, cooking child care and hygiene. These subjects were taught in the vernacular language. Boys, on the other hand, received education to prepare them to assume low to middle level occupations, for them the teaching was in English. Several scholars observe that the kind of education for girls was not intended to promote women's emancipation or independence, but to reinforce patriarchy and the class system (see for example, Idemalm, 1989; Longwe, 1986; Morrow, 1986; Munchonga, 1989; Schuster, 1987; Chewe, 1989).

Although since independence girls' educational opportunities have been increased through a policy of free education, and more recently, affirmative action policies aimed at promoting the education of a girls, girls continue to lag behind boys to date. There are still more boys starting and completing formal education compared to girls. In most instances the girls who enrol in schools drop-out for various reasons, including pregnancy, lack of resources and failure which is as a result of the limited time they spend doing their school work. As a consequence, gender differences in education are found not only in level of education but as well as in fields of specialisation. For example, female students at university tend to be concentrated in the humanities and social sciences whilst boys are mostly in the natural sciences and engineering.

The issue of gender disparity in education should not only be examined by taking into account historical, in terms of colonial, policies which discriminated against women only, but also through cultural and socio-economic differences between the sexes. Gender difference in education may be attributed to the combined effects of: first, parents' preference to educate sons rather than daughters, particularly in times of difficulties. Their decision in favour of educating sons is explained in terms of the fact that there are better job prospects for boys than for girls. Second, the system of division of labour between boys and girls within the home by which girls are given time-consuming and routine work which gives them little time to study. Consequently, they perform badly in school. Third, teachers' attitudes against girls enrolling in science and mathematics because they are believed to be weaker than boys in these subjects (Munachonga, 1989). This means that girls are not prepared for industrial jobs. Fourth, public attitudes against free movement of girls may influence the parents' decision against sending girls to school located far from parental control. Generally, men are accorded freedom of movement but women are not. Education is an important resource on which personal status and power are built in modern society that values educational credentials. Through education, women can change from childhood dependence on kin to early adult independence. Otherwise, economically dependent women, overwhelmingly poor and uneducated, remain life long dependants on blood kin and spouses.

The above discussion reveals that factors such as the migrant labour system, unequal educational and employment opportunities in favour of males and the weakening of the

traditional sex-division of labour which suddenly elevated the husband's position to that of chief breadwinner for his family have all combined to weaken the relative power position of women. It has also made her dependent on her husband economically, a situation that was unknown in traditional subsistence economic system.

Although women's power position had been relatively weakened by colonial administration, during the independence struggle Zambian women played a very active role alongside men. They organised demonstrations and protests against the colonialists. For instance, women on the Copperbelt stripped in protest against British rule. Though this act could under normal circumstances have been considered an abomination as women are considered as bearers of all that is sacred, carriers of cultural values, in this instance it wasn't, because exposing their bodies showed the seriousness of the situation. Not long after this protest, Zambia was granted independence by the British government. However, women did not gain equality with men upon independence. The Zambian men at the helm of the regime continued to marginalise women. For example, since Zambia's independence in 1964, there has been a wide gap between women and men in decision-making positions.

**Women in Post Independence Zambia**

In post-independence Zambia women have continued to participate in various activities, but their participation remains either marginal and to a large extent unrecognised. Longwe (1986) argues that the under-representation of women in different walks of life is

the combined result of discriminatory practices such as legal, social, administrative and administrative regulations. That is to say, women's subordination emanates from their unequal status – social, legal, political and economic. For example, the customary law of inheritance in Zambia leaves a widow and her children totally destitute (this has been recently revised to better protect the rights of widows). Even with the passage of new laws of succession, which abolished the application of customary law, customary law is still being applied. Widows are often in an extremely weak position because upon the death of their husbands, their possessions do not remain with them but are passed on to relatives. The widow may even be deprived of the simplest implements to support herself. This is another form of subordination of women. Another form of subordination may be seen in the system of exploitation of women's labour by the husband.

The exclusion of women from control over their labour and production and economic resources is a result of continued patriarchal subjugation of women. For instance, in rural Zambia, the burden of food production is dominantly the preserve of women who are engaged in production of maize, groundnuts, pineapples, millet and vegetables. But in several rural communities, the production of cash crops, the running of a small homestead, the extension service, the credit system, are regarded as a 'man's affair'. Though the current land law is gender neutral, government, in its land policies, fails to recognise that women still lack security of tenure compared to men. This is because of customary and traditional values that treat women as perpetual minors. For example, under Zambian custom women are discriminated against in terms of accessing land as land rights are normally given to the head of the family who is always a man. Customary

law does not recognise women as heads of households. Consequently, women do not generally inherit land but are part of what is to be inherited. Women usually gain access to land through their husbands and not through their paternal or maternal kin. The dependence on the husband for land makes women vulnerable in cases of divorce or separation, as women lose their rights to land they jointly used with their husbands.

Also, since women do not own property, such as land, which may be used as collateral by lending institutions, they are unable to obtain credit to improve their financial standing, and in turn improve their opportunities in a market economy. For instance, only recently have financial institutions stopped insisting on the husband's consent to a wife obtaining credit. Due to their traditional socialisation, many women also tend to regard credit as a male preserve. Women's access to credit for enterprise growth or capital is also constrained by both lack of knowledge about financial markets and financial management. As such, although women's representation and involvement at the production level are significant, they have little control of the proceeds resulting from it. Worse still, women also lack adequate training in management related skills. For example, while women are able to identify project ideas, they do not know how to prepare project proposals. As a result, most women are not involved in profitable businesses and lack negotiation skills and confidence in the market place. They are engaged in informal sector activities not for profit but in order to meet the immediate practical needs of the family, such as food production. Women tend to be engaged in low productivity business that are simple and home-based and with little potential for growth.

Women are also expected to adhere to their gender roles and therefore restrict their income generating activities in the framework of cooking, knitting and baking.

The tension between ancient and modern is best illustrated by the recent history of Zambian governments which maintain customary law and patriarchal practice at home, while at the same time ratifying international conventions and declarations on women's rights. For instance, despite the ratification in 1985 by Zambia of the ILO's Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, discriminatory aspects of the law of marriage still exist. Mutukwa (1991) asserts that though women's rights are human rights, women in Zambia are marginalised due to the dual legal system. According to Mutukwa (Ibid), the effect of preliminaries, e.g. lobola[3] to marriage, and rights within marriage, is inconsistent with Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Cultural practices such as polygamy, initiation ceremonies, payments of bride price (lobola) have perpetuated the subordination of women at society and household level. For example, the marriage regime: under customary law girls are required to marry on attaining puberty, this could even be at ten years old. Under custom, when a girl reaches puberty she is ready for a sexual relationship, and therefore marriage. It is the customary law regime, which also subscribes to forced marriages through abduction, which gives victims no choice. Further, customary law allows polygamy, which has a negative effect on both the children and women in those marriages.

[3] This is the equivalent to the bride price. Traditionally, lobola was a token sum of money to show the grooms appreciation to the bride's family. Nowadays, huge sums of money are demanded as lobola.

In rural areas women in polygamous marriages end up becoming labourers for the man. In addition, sexual intercourse is viewed as a crucial element of marriages under customary law. Whereas, statutory law provides that if sex does not take place, then the marriage has not been consummated and may be annulled, customary law makes the denial of sex a breach of primary conjugal right and therefore a marital offence.

Women are taught to respect and please a man from a very tender age. This is further elaborated during pre-marital celebrations and initiation ceremonies. Emphasis is on pleasing the man, because if they do not, he can justifiably walk out and go to another woman. In this way, a woman is educated to see herself primarily as a sex object, and an instrument of sexual pleasure. That is to say, the traditional form of marriage is rooted in the principle of male control over the sexual relationship.

Lobola has a negative impact on women where it is practiced. It endorses male dominance in marriage and results in the total ownership of a wife by a husband. The woman loses all her rights, and becomes a legal minor in the custody of her husband. She has no say about her income, job, children or any other aspect of her life. Among the Tonga, for instance, even if the family grants divorce a woman is not truly free from her former husband until part of the lobola is returned. Lobola also has the effect of making the woman the 'property' of her husband, which in some cases can extend to everything that she owns being subject of her husband's authority, on account of him having paid lobola for her. As such, women's decision making at community and household levels is generally poor, as it is mainly the men make decisions concerning them. The lack of authority and power experienced by women in the home affects their position in the

public sphere Bbuku (2001). It is even the case that gender role stereotypes are also undoubtedly believed to a large extent by women who see themselves as less capable than men, and that men have a right-to-rule domestically, and by extension – in the field of national politics.

The domestic oppression of women has other ramifications, which are reflected in the wider social and political infrastructure. For instance, the subordinate position of women in the workplace, and their relegation to mainly support roles may be understood as a reflection of their domestic subordination. It is rooted in the principle that man is master of the home, and that women are concerned with childcare, domestic maintenance and subsistence food production. The constant dawn-to-dusk labour of women leaves most of them little time to engage in public activities such as politics. Sikaneta (1991) relates the low representation of women in the public arena to the socialisation process, which encourages boys and girls to view areas such as politics and business to be the domain of men. For example, although women played an important role in the struggle for political independence of Zambia, their political participation in terms of representation in parliament is negligible. In the last 40 years of Zambia's political independence, out of the total 1,130 elective parliamentary seats, there have only been 75 seats occupied by female Members of Parliament compared to a total of 1,055 occupied by males (these figures include the current members of parliament 2001 elections) (Zambia National Women's Lobby Group Report, 2002). Right now, there are only 19 female Members of parliament representing a mere 12.2% female participation. A widely known male argument used against a woman standing for political office is likely to be that she has a

husband who is in charge of her and will be the one who really takes decisions (Geisler, 2004). Conversely, if she is not married, she is likely to be branded as a prostitute, who should be under the control of a man.

The above dismal picture of female representation in decision-making can also be observed at other levels. For instance, very few women have held the cabinet positions of minister or even deputy minister. In 1995, there were only two females out of a cabinet of 22 and in 2002 there were three female ministers out of a cabinet of 24 (NWLG Report, 2002). Sikaneta (1991) attributes the under-representation of women in politics to three reasons. Firstly, women lack an economic power base of their own to raise funds for a political campaign, which is very expensive. Secondly, the prevalent apathy and indifference as well as discouragement towards women seeking political office. Finally, the lack of support from women and men for female candidates. As result, although women constitute about 51 per cent of the total population in Zambia, there is no true democracy since the majority do not fairly and effectively participate in the political process.

However, the rise of the women's movement in Zambia in the past decade is an indication that patriarchal gender self-images are beginning to break down, especially amongst educated females. To an increasing extent, women are not willing to confine their struggle against male oppression to the traditional domestic level, or to confine their activities to a system of patriarchal control. Women feel they are now challenged to verbalise and demonstrate their vision of women's roles for their future. Zambian women

have a growing determination to put forward their own socio-political agenda forward so that they do not 'miss the boat' as they did at independence.

Consequently, the last decade has seen the emergence of a women's movement which challenges the patriarchal system, and has moved the struggle out of its domestic context into the political arena. In 1991, about 100 women came together to assess the interventions that were being implemented. During the assessment it became apparent that there was no institution to design and implement interventions to do with the role and participation of women in decision making. As a result of these findings, a National Women's Lobby Group (ZNWLG) was formed in July 1991. With the formation of the ZNWLG, women in Zambia formalised the fight for their participation in political affairs and became one of the forces that campaigned for a return to a democratic system of governance. The women's struggle for increased participation in shaping Zambia's destiny is a sensitive issue, however, and the leaders perceive it as externally generated and therefore respond without the enthusiasm it requires. Also, Zambian leaders are reticent about broaching topics of women's interests and involvement because gender topics pull back covers that conceal societal instability, flux, inequitable relationships, structural duality of institutions and social indeterminacy, all which exist just below the superficial layer of visible government. Men's ideological perceptions of women frame them as supportive, nurturing, acquiescent, subordinate, and familial, not as political persons and authority. As such, Zambian women know that male politicians feel pressured to rewrite political agendas to encourage pluralism and to include in the public dialogue the interests and needs of women, the impoverished, and other diverse groups.

According to a report profiling women in Zambia, one sign of the instability of the patriarchal control at the domestic level is the high level of domestic violence. As ideological control wanes, so violence is used as a means of subjugation (ZARD, 1998).

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, it may be said that a wider cultural consensus in Zambian society has impinged heavily upon women's rights as civil and political citizens and that formal democracy has failed to break into this consensus at a practical level. Instead, consonance between the cultural and political practices can be observed in terms of defining women's status and place in society. The state may not have adopted an anti-woman stand openly because of the ideals of equality it has promoted since the inception of democracy, but it can be observed that at various crucial occasions it has framed biased policies, has chosen to remain silent or ignored women's interests for political gains and has helped sustaining the patriarchal order and wider consensus. Today, unlike before, Zambian women are asserting that it is the vulnerability of the state that renders it incapable of addressing their needs. Women increasingly view their major responsibility as participating in local, public, and political processes that bring them and other groups of ordinary citizens into a dialogue with government – one that challenges it to more assertive and positive action.

In the next chapter I discuss the role of the media in democracy, in particular Zambia. It builds the primary thesis of this research that the press is a medium through which relations between socio political structures of control and individuals are played out and adjusted.

## Chapter III: Liberal Theory and the Free Marketplace of Ideas

### Introduction

Over the past four decades, Zambia has gone through many crises: the failure of male-dominated, multi party politics or state socialism in the aftermath of independence; the economic instability that culminated in the collapse of the national economy; the imposition of controversial, Western-mediated structural adjustment programmes; and finally, the pressures to democratise governance processes so as to involve the 'people'. Zambian women have borne the brunt of the crises of their state as is evidenced by the apparent lower educational levels of women across the country, the continuing presence of women in agricultural and other rural activities rather than in the professional and other income-producing activities. In an effort to transform the situation, Western economists and political advisers have used statistical evidence of women's status as proof of the absence of 'women in development', and as an indicator of the areas in which the society needs to change.

Consequently, contemporary developments in Zambia anticipate outlines of a more equitable set of gender relations in the state and in the social life of its communities. Zambian women also recognise that the gender-state dilemmas now operate on new levels, so their actions are directed at bringing existing sociocultural ideas of gender into the open and defending suggestions for finding acceptable resolutions (National Women's Lobby Group Report, 2002). They are now challenged to verbalise and demonstrate their vision of women's roles for the future. Under the circumstances, the political growth, future economic and social development of the country demands that the people are well informed about the choices to be

made. For, in a democracy, the choices will be theirs. Under these circumstances the media are charged with a responsibility of bringing to the fore whatever is happening and to some extent interpreting how it affects the public. Women will need to interact with each other and other citizens through the media, to bring a successful future from the new social processes of Zambia. The press constitute a vital information resource in any society, and perhaps even more so in liberal pluralist ones where there is a strong emphasis on the need for an informed citizenry to nurture the ideals of democracy. Here, the centrality of the press is rooted in the assumption that democratic governance is impossible when the populace is poorly informed. Democracy can only thrive if the majority of the people are well-informed and take an active part in civic affairs which have a direct or indirect bearing on their welfare.

This chapter discusses the press's role of disseminating information in order to promote awareness among the people in liberal democratic society. The overall chapter looks at the various conceptions of the expected press role in a democracy globally and in Zambia, and how in performing this role they establish a system whereby citizens are adequately informed and equally represented. It analyses the various interactions between the press and other institutions (social, economic and political) which in one way or another influence its operations. I argue that although the press are assigned a mediation role in society, they are unable to fully perform it because of the influence of certain powerful cultural, economic and political forces. In other words, the press tends to operate in line with dominant cultural, economic and political values which privilege those who already have a great deal of power. As such, they tend to preserve the existing order, and fail to provide a platform for dissenting views to be heard, which might eventually bring about greater social, economic and political

equality. As a case in point, although Zambia adopted pluralist politics in the early 1990s, the press has been unable to provide adequate news coverage to women about the issues which most interest them. Consequently, contributions that women have made to the development of the nation have been largely ignored or underrepresented in the press. Women, as a result, have been side-lined and not treated as equal partners to men in nation building. To support this argument I begin with a discussion of some theories of the role of the press in a democratic society such as media as watchdog; the liberal theory of a free market place of ideas; and the theory of the public sphere. In so doing, I intend to establish that although many theories have been developed to explain the role of the press in a democracy, most are media-centric, and therefore are unable to sufficiently articulate intricate relations that influence the role of the press.

Jurgen Habermas's (1962) theory of the public sphere is helpful in explaining the place and importance of the news media in democratic societies. Unlike other theories that are media centric, he considers media interaction across a range of institutions. Although Habermas's theory of the public sphere best explains how the press is expected to operate in a democratic society by providing a platform for discussion of dissenting views outside the state and the economy, in practice his theory has a number of shortcomings. This is because the Habermasian public sphere is insensitive to several important issues at play in society, such as the inequalities of gender, class and race. Moreover, his theory does not adequately consider the importance of the private sphere. In effect, by demarcating the public and private as separate spheres, Habermas' theory has perpetuated an artificial divide that is a feature of liberal pluralist theory. For instance, in the press, certain issues have been ignored or left out

of most news coverage, such as news of women and children; it is left out mainly because it is considered as belonging to the private sphere, and therefore less important than issues that pertain to male news actors as they inhabit public space. In the case of Zambia, although it may have adopted pluralist democratic politics that embrace economic liberalisation and promote a free market-place of ideas, this has not been achieved in practice. Women are still closely associated with the private sphere of domesticity and family. The binarism of public = masculine and private = feminine, which forms a central part of liberal political theory, coupled with the sexist assumptions underpinning cultural and traditional values in Zambian society have firmly positioned women in an inferior position in contemporary Zambia. Finally, I argue that the western news ideologies do not provide an adequate basis for the equal representation of men and women in the Zambian press, because they are based on a male perspective.

The chapter has been subdivided into four sections. The first of the section discusses the role of the press in society in general and in democracies in particular. Various theories relating to the role of the press are reviewed in this section. In the second part, I discuss news coverage of women. In so doing, I review the discourses that shape how women are covered in the press, and why they are covered in that way. I then discuss the role of the press in recently democratised Zambia. A historical approach is adopted in discussing the role of the media in Zambia since the introduction of multi-party democracy in 1991. The final part of the chapter discusses the limitations of the media in the Zambian public sphere. It analyses the various factors that influence how women's news is covered, for example, cultural values; economics; politics and news ideology, production and reporting.

**Role of the Press in Society**

The role of the press in society in general, and in democratic societies more particularly, is one that is taken for granted because of the belief that they have an obligation to reflect society back to itself. A central responsibility is to make people aware of important facts so that they are able to make informed judgements and decisions. They identify problems in our society and serve as a medium for deliberation. They are also watchdogs that we rely on for uncovering errors and wrongdoings by those who have power. However, the actual role of the press in society is highly contested by media researchers, (see for example; Gurevitch, 1990; Lichtenburg, 1990; McQuail, 1998). Most of the debate centres on the consideration of the press as a power resource, which possesses potential means for influence, control and innovation of society. That is, the extent of power wielded by the press in the public arena where many affairs are played out. For instance, McQuail (1998) considers the press as a major source of definitions and images of social reality, thus also the place where the changing culture and values of societies and groups are constructed, stored and most visibly expressed.

In another instance, the press is perceived as a source of an ordered and public meaning system, which provides a standard for what is normal, empirically and evaluatively; deviations are signalled and comparisons made in line with this public version of normality (McQuail, 1998). Political economy media critics on the other hand claim that commercial mass media controlled by a few multinational conglomerates have become an antidemocratic force supporting the status quo (Herman and McChesney, 1997; Alger, 1998; McChesney, 1997; Herman and Chomsky, 2002). They argue that the news is more

entertaining than informing, supplying mostly gossip, scandals, sex and violence. Political news is more about personalities than about their ideologies. In the absence of serious debate, voters are left with paid political propaganda containing only meaningless slogans making them disinterested and cynical about politics (Bagdikian, 1997; Bennett and Entman, 2001). The media hunt for scandals in the private lives of politicians and their families, but ignore much more serious consequences of their policies. For instance, the Zambian press is more interested in publicising scandal in female parliamentarians' lives, rather than policy ideas they propose. As a result, women's activities are trivialised and mostly ignored, therefore neglecting their contribution to nation building. However, it is widely accepted that the press play an important role in bringing together the different stakeholders in order for them to arrive at the best approach to development. Several theories have been posited to explain how the press perform this role although the precise nature and extent of the press's role or influence still triggers a lot of interest today.

The dominant view of this relationship has oscillated widely from the belief that the press heavy-handedly shapes human opinions and behaviours, to great scepticism about its effects, and back again to a belief in press power. The predominant view of various scholars is that the press exert great power: not simply economic or political power, but the power to shape how we think about the world. As such, the press not only provides information, but also the conceptual frameworks within which information and opinions are ordered – not just facts, but a worldview (Lichtenburg, 1990). As a result of these perceptions about the press, academic debate centres on the extent to which the different

newspapers have come to interpose themselves between people and any experience of the world beyond direct sense of observation. It also focuses on how the press provides the most continuous line of contact with the main institutions of society in which people live to an extent that they have inevitably become very dependent on the press for a large part of their wider 'symbolic environment'. Although a lot of people are able to make their own meanings of things, the media are likely to forge the elements which are held in common with others, since people now tend to share much the same media sources and 'media culture' (McQuail, 1998).

The most basic view of the relation between press and society is that of an established social institution, with its own distinctive set of norms and practices, but with the scope of its activities subject to definition and limitation by wider society (McQuail, 2000). In other words, the press is essentially dependent on society, especially on the institutions of political and economic power, although there is a scope of influence in return, and the press institution may be gaining in autonomy, simply as a result of the extending volume and scope of their activities. This relation between press and society also depends on circumstances of time and place. That is to say, press institutions are part of the structure of society, and their technological infrastructure is part of the economic and power base, while the ideas images and information disseminated by the press are evidently an important aspect of our culture (McQuail, 2000). That is why, to a certain extent, the press may be considered to mould or reflect society and social changes. Consequently, the press can serve to repress as well as to liberate, to unite as well as to fragment society, both to promote and to hold back society. For example, the Zambian press in the second republic was owned solely by the government, with a content supporting the party and

government goals even when it worked to the detriment of the individual's welfare. More often than not, the press controls, initiated in the name of nation-building, were actually designed to maintain political power and to deny access to information to the masses.

Central to the presupposition relating to questions both of society and culture, is that the press is essentially concerned with the production and distribution of knowledge which enables people to make some sense of their experience of the social world. Even if people attach meaning to the information received from the press in relatively autonomous and diverse ways, there is subtle influence emanating from the press. For most people, the images and ideas made available by the press may be the main source of an awareness of a shared past and of their present social location. It is said that press also store memories and maps of where we are and who we are, and may also provide the materials for orientation to the future (McQuail, 2000). It is this role of the press that has been referred to as mediation. I shall adopt this approach in analysing the role of the press in Zambia's democracy where by repeated unrepresentations and stereotyped portrayals of women, their contributions in nation building to a large extent are ignored, and women fail to appreciate their self-worth as a result.

The notion of mediation, in the sense of the media intervening between people and so called 'reality', is one that invites the use of metaphors to characterise the nature of the role played by the media. The media have been viewed differently at different times including as a window of events and experience, enabling us to see for ourselves what is going on, without interference from others; as a mirror of events in society and the world,

implying a faithful reflection of society; and as a filter or gatekeeper, acting to select parts of experience, (McQuail, 2000).

**Role of the Press in Democracy**

Liberal theorists largely agree that in democratic societies there must be a clear separation between the press and government. If this independence were to be compromised in any way, democratic governance would no longer be possible, (see for example, Entman, 1989; Garnham, 1992; Gunter & Mughan, 2000; Curran & Gurevitch, 2000; Allan, 2004). Many such arguments have been advanced in support of the ideal of press freedom, it is seen as the only means to attaining truth; a precondition of personal autonomy; as enabling journalists to operate as watchdogs of the government. That is to say, democratic mechanisms and a free press guarantee that the best interpreters of interests – the interested parties themselves can sift through various options and decide for themselves. An enlightened society is one where public dialogue and debate enable a balance to be struck between conflicting interests. In other words, enlightenment is inseparable from the democratic processes.

At the core of classical liberal theory is the view that every person must be accorded unrestricted access to a mass medium of choice to impart, propagate or receive ideas without any undue obstruction. Its chief exponents argue that man is a rational animal who should be accorded unrestricted opportunity to exercise his powers of reasoning in his quest for truth. They also believe that man's pursuit for truth can only yield positive results if free speech engenders a diversity of ideas in an atmosphere free of any restraint.

The key tenets of liberal philosophy in relation to the functioning of the press pertain to the high status placed on the individual in relation to society, the reliance on powers of reasoning and the perceived inviolability of man's natural rights, which include freedom of the press.

According to Becker, (1941, cited in Siebert, 1956) the democratic theory of freedom of speech and the press is based on four assumptions: firstly, it is assumed that people always strive to know the truth and are inclined to be guided by it; secondly, that the truth can only emerge from a free competition of ideas; thirdly, it is assumed that since people's opinions will invariably differ, everyone must be accorded an opportunity to try and convince others to accept his/her opinion. The fourth assumption is that from this mutual toleration of views will emerge the most rational idea which will be accepted by the majority.

John Milton (1643) is credited with the concept of 'open market-place of ideas' and the 'self-righting process', both which constitute cornerstones of liberal doctrine. He believed that every person was sufficiently endowed with reason to distinguish, between right and wrong. Even more importantly, he argued, was the need to accord every person an opportunity to be heard, notwithstanding the perceived absurdity of a particular argument. The self-righting process of truth was rooted in the belief that truth would always triumph over falsehood if the truth were left to interact freely in the 'open market-place of ideas' The government could not be trusted to correct the imperfections of the press because of vested interest. It assumes that the market will provide appropriate

institutions and processes of public communication to support a democratic polity, (Calhoun, 1992). That is to say, only the market can ensure the necessary freedom from state control and coercion. It is argued that the press, through the market, are driven by the satisfaction of individual consumer choice.

This individualistic rational-choice model of economic interaction has been widely criticised within economics for its 'unreality' (as discussed later in the chapter), and in particular, for overlooking the realities of unequally distributed economic power. It concentrates upon distribution at the expense of production; therefore, it is static and ahistorical. Further, it ignores externalities, and makes assumptions of perfect information that neglect the costs to the individual or group of information acquisition. Secondly, this approach ignores the complex institutional processes of mediation, and along with them, the problem of the existence of media workers as a distinct socio-economic group with its own interests. In fact, it also overlooks that sources of information circulated on the free market are limited to a privileged few who have the means and power at their disposal.

The most important quality of freedom of information and democratic procedure is that they enable the approval of decisions of interest to the whole collectivity, or at least to a majority of citizens. As such, freedom of the press in democratic societies is a nearly unchallengeable dogma. It is essential to the enhancement of individual autonomy and self-expression and as an indispensable element of democracy as well as a means to the

attainment of 'truth'. The press also perform the democratic function of providing information to the electorate and fostering debate on issues they would be voting on; in this respect, freedom of public discussion is an extension of arguments for freedom of parliamentary debate. After all, the rights and duties of a citizen are in large part defined in terms of freedom of assembly and freedom to impart and receive information. Without such freedoms it would be impossible for citizens to have access to the views of others necessary to reach agreements between themselves. Based on this perspective, the basic functions of the press in a democracy are coverage of political campaigns and public issues.

As Altschull puts it:

> 'In a democracy, it is the people who rule. The voice of the people is heard in the voting booths. The decisions made by the people in the voting booths are based on the information made available to them. The information is provided primarily by the news media. Hence the news media are indispensable to the survival of democracy' (1984: 19).

Clearly, the existence of a free press enshrines the democratic concept of political accountability of power holders to ordinary citizens. It implicitly supports the assumption that readers, viewers and listeners are offered a range of news out of which they can make up their own minds as to the 'truth'. Through such occurrences, the press bring developments in distant and difficult arenas within the reach of an average person in terms that he or she can understand. To adequately provide information, the press must be free to publicise the actions of government. This is necessary to perform the watchdog function of protecting against the tendency of the state to aggrandise its power and abuse

the rights of its citizens. This watchdog role is said to override in importance all other functions of the media, and inevitably dictates the way in which the press is organised (Curran, 2000). The basis for this is the belief that by anchoring the press to the free market, it is possible to ensure the press's complete independence from government. Presumably, by so doing, the press can freely expose government in an effort to make it accountable to the public. This kind of liberal view is especially well established in the United States where scholars have argued that any reform to the media, however desirable, is unacceptable if it is 'at the cost of the watchdog function' (Kelley & Donway; 1990:97). Accordingly, a press that is licensed, franchised or regulated is subject to political pressures when it deals with issues affecting the interests of those in power. However, looking at the press from this perspective seems to consider government as the only institution that can hamper press operations. Little or no consideration is given to the possible effects on media content from the unrelenting demand for profitability. The media also have to sustain public legitimacy in order to avoid societal retribution; and they are also influenced by the professional concerns of their staff. All these factors could potentially work against the subordination of private media to political commitment and economic interests of their shareholders.

Blumler and Gurevitch (1995) have argued that the press provide a wider scope for the press role in a democracy as surveillance of the socio-political environment. This involves reporting developments likely to impinge, positively or negatively, on the welfare of citizens. Second, the press is supposed to meaningfully set the agenda – identifying the key issues of the day, including the forces that have formed and may

resolve them. Third, the press is a platform for an intelligible and illuminating advocacy. Fourthly, the press provide a dialogue across a diverse range of views, as well as between power holders and mass publics. Finally, the press is seen as an incentive for citizens to learn, choose, and become involved, rather than merely to follow the political process.

A free press is needed everywhere, no less in the 'developing' countries than in advanced industrial societies. For example, in a country like Zimbabwe where there is ongoing civil unrest, a press able to report and reflect upon popular discontent with national policy or with the government of the day could serve as an important warning system, identifying early issues that require solution if political stability is to be maintained. A free and robust press could actually promote conciliation by encouraging the discussion of controversial issues before they reach a volatile or explosive stage. In this case, instead of functioning strictly as an adversary of the government, a free press may provide an effective forum for public debate, a mechanism for precious two-way communication between the people and their leaders, thus encouraging national stability.

Habermas (1962/1989) too presents a complex and embracing theory of media operations in a democracy. According to him, the health of a democracy in the twentieth century was increasingly linked to the health of systems of communication, though of course democracy can not be reduced to issues of the media. The dynamics of democracy are intimately linked to the practices of communication and societal communication increasingly takes place within the mass media (see for example, Arendt, 1958; Habermas, 1989). Democratic procedures become a way to organise and mediate the

varying competing interests, projects and values within plural societies, while at the same time the perceived limits of the liberal tradition are identified and contested. Walzer (1995) states that only a democratic state can create a democratic civil society; only a democratic civil society can sustain a democratic state. Thus, citizens' political power is necessary, but not sufficient; there must be a viable social dimension beyond the political. This view appreciates that civil society has a particular relationship with the public sphere. In short, civil society constitutes the socio-cultural preconditions for a viable public sphere.

Whilst liberal discourses on media and democracy normally do not use the category 'public sphere', they nonetheless underscore the citizens' need for useful and relevant journalism with access to reliable information from a variety of perspectives. With a diversity of opinions on current affairs, citizens will arrive at their own view of important issues and thus prepare themselves for political participation. The public sphere retains an anchoring in critical theory questions of political identity. To use the term incorporates the media within a critical perspective on democracy, and questions existing assumptions. The model and reality of the public sphere evokes wide-ranging critical reflection on social structure, the concentration of power, cultural practices, and the dynamics of the historical political processes. And all these factors affect press operations in one way or another.

Although the concept of the public sphere is widely accepted as a powerful and general explanation of the media's role in a democracy, several frameworks recently have been developed to specifically analyse operations of the public sphere. These include analyses

of media institutions, representations, social structures and sociocultural interactions. First, the dimension of structural factors defines not in the least the 'political ecology' of the media. It sets boundaries for the media's institutional and organisational profile as well as for the nature of information and forms of representation and expression which they circulate. Consequently, a society where democratic tendencies are weak and the structural features of society are highly inegalitarian cannot give rise to democratic institutional structures for the public sphere. Such structural features translate into mechanisms whereby the basic patterns of power and social hierarchy detrimentally shape the character of the public sphere. These mechanisms operate institutionally to delimit the public sphere as such. For instance, the state together with vested interests can pursue media policies which hinder the flow of relevant information and constrict the range of opinion. In Zambia, the government's silence on the subject of gender in its media policy provides for various translations of its importance in the public sphere. Alternatively, such mechanisms may operate through the public sphere to hinder democratic development, for example, 'news plants', disinformation, and trivialisation. In this instance power and social hierarchy can shape the public sphere at the level of interaction, impacting on the sites and settings where such contact takes place. Further, the commitment to serve and represent the interests of all citizenry is increasingly displaced by policies that aim to introduce or expand the commercial sector, thus undermining citizens' democratic participation in society.

The dimension of representation focuses on media output. It is concerned with what the media portray, how topics are presented, the modes of discourse at work, and the

character of debates and discussions. In this sense representation has to do with both informational and extra-informational aspects of media output, such as symbolic aspects and rhetoric. It points to such basic questions as what should be selected for portrayal and how it should be presented. The media themselves can be manipulated by powerful and organised sources, which can result in distortions and disinformation (Ericson et al, 1989). It is alleged that arguing for a standardised public sphere subordinates minorities to the discursive and social power of dominant groups, as in the case of women. In the next section I shall discuss how women are portrayed by the media in society and the possible effects it may have on them.

**Liberal Theory, the Press and Women**

The subject of women and the media is one that is widely discussed in feminist scholarship (See for example, Epstein, 1978; Robinson, 1978; Rice, 1978; Molotch, 1978; Pingree & Hawkins, 1978; Gallagher, 2000; Rakow & Kranch, 1991; Van Zoonen, 1991/1994, 1998; Bailey, 1994; Van Dijk, 1996; Norris, 1997; Bathla, 1998; Meyers, 1999). Academic work on the subject is based on the arguable assumption that there is a relationship between what is reported as news and what individuals and groups think of as socially and politically important. Although the media cannot change how people behave in society, they can at least sensitise them to issues of importance such as discrimination of various kinds. That is to say, news coverage is considered a significant variable affecting public opinion, and how reporters frame a problem frequently signals what is causing a problem. Debatable as this assumption may be, considerable research indicates that media images do affect us, that they work cumulatively and unconsciously,

to create and reinforce a particular view or ideology that shapes our perspectives and beliefs about the world, our neighbourhoods and ourselves. Findings in the field make it clear that the media play an important role in defining issues, including the status of women. Therefore, understanding the relationship of the press to society in general, and to women more specifically is justifiably important.

Early studies of women and media originated from the West and are closely linked to the women's movement, and focused mainly on misrepresentation or under-representation of women in the various media including television, fiction and advertising. In the 1960s these studies questioned the manner in which women were represented. Women were either invisible, or when they were in media content, their representation reflected sex role stereotypes. Studies during this period advocated equal media participation for women, but did not question the socioeconomic structure, the political economy of media, and the cultural context in which media operate. However, research conducted in the 1970s and beyond expanded the studies beyond just analysing the nature of women's representation to include the context within which they occur. As a result, since the late 1970s work on media representation of women has revolved around the critique of the ways in which media content projects women as objects rather than active subjects, and an analysis of the institutional and social structures of power through which women are systematically marginalised within media organisations (Gallagher, 2001). In Africa and Zambia discussion about women and media emerged in the eighties and became stronger in the nineties with the adoption of democracy. Studies on the subject of women's media representation have increased as Zambian women more than ever before have become more aware of their rights and are more vocal about how discrimination affects their

socio-economic and political participation. The studies have questioned the media's failure to capture women's contribution in nation building in their coverage as in most instances it continues to ignore or misrepresent their efforts. It is through such studies that it is becoming increasingly evident that women's treatment in the media has underlying reasons that go beyond the manifest democratic principles of equality, and are deeply imbedded in socioeconomic and political contexts. For instance, in Zambia, female subordination takes intricate forms grounded in traditional Zambian culture.

Research in later years began to analyse news coverage of women through a wider lens, and has strived to look for explanations for the marginalised coverage of women. Many explanations have been advanced by scholars regarding the marginalisation of women in the news. These include, for instance, the role of news frames and social stereotypes as a news criteria; low status of female news personnel; association of male newsmakers with politics and economics; male domination of media organisations; lack of women in power positions; ideology and organisation of news itself; women as a powerless category in society, and many more. A frame is the central organising idea for making sense of relevant events and suggesting what is at issue. News and information has no intrinsic values unless embedded in a meaningful context which organised and lends it coherence (Gitlin, 2003).

Most of the early research into sex-role stereotyping, as well as much of the more recent academic work in this area, has involved quantitative or qualitative content analyses. These studies have concluded not only that women are under-represented in the media in

both content and production, but that 'the women that do appear in media content tend to be young and conventionally pretty, defined in relation to their husband, father, son, boss and other men, and portrayed as passive, indecisive, submissive, dependent and so forth' (Van Zoonen, 1994:17). In media news, research indicates that women are mostly absent. According to Gallagher (1981:77), in a global overview of the representation of women in the media, no country with available data reported that more than 20% of news about women, in most cases the figure was even lower. This has not changed much since 1981. For example, in a later study of news coverage of women conducted under the Women, Men and Media Project in the 1990s in America revealed that news coverage of women had gradually improved from 11 percent in 1989 to 15 percent in 1993 in the papers studied (Bridge, 1995). However, a more recent study Global Media Monitoring Project (2000) which looked at the extent to which the news stories included women as subjects in areas such as business, politics and government, which in the past have been considered a male domain does not show significant change in the news coverage of women. Results of this project reveal news portrayal of women as subjects with the lowest figures in Asia – 14% and highest in North America – 27% (Gallagher, 2000). News coverage of women continues to focus on the more personal and sometimes trivial issues. To date, most existing news about women's activities are trivial – related to family status or appearance. Where important women's activities are covered, they are often simultaneously undermined and demeaned (Steeves, 1993). Women are simply incidental 'fill', curiosities or marginal 'décor'. That is to say, women are not really looked as important individuals who deserve their own recognition and not just by association.

The portrayal of women is not so different in Africa where the sparse studies that have been conducted on the continent reveal that women are largely ignored in news. In Ghana, for example, pressure from the all-male editors forced women's articles to disappear although there were more news stories of women outside the home involved in social, legal and political rights (Gallagher, 1981). In other parts of Africa, the rare articles which exist centred on urban women and the themes of these news items were fashion, new trends, social events, crime and prominent women. Take for example an anthropological study conducted in Zambia analysing two daily newspapers, *Times of Zambia* and the *Zambia Daily Mail* between 1971 and 1975. This study concluded that an intense ambivalence towards women in the wider society was reflected in the media's portrayal of women (Gallagher, 1981). Women were portrayed as both 'folk devils' and 'folk heroes'. As folk devils, women were presented as a threat to traditional values and interests and a symbol of loss of control of those values. They were portrayed as immoral, tough, unsentimental, materialistic, expensive and cunning. To describe this 'devil' such words as 'prostitute', and 'call girl' were used interchangeably with more up to date terms like 'fun girl', and 'late night girl'. As mothers, women were seen as positive and strong, providing comfort and security to a population facing rapid change. As folk heroes, women were depicted in at least three different ways. In the image of equality, women were shown as equal to men in their potential for contributing to national development. As the indigenous pin-up, women helped overcome a collective national self-image of inferiority and become partially cleansed, sanitised versions of folk devils. However, the treatment of women as folk heroes is itself ambivalent, carrying

within it many contradictions. So, while pin-ups were applauded, girls in mini-skirts were condemned; although professional women were praised for their initiative and independence, they were condemned for being unmarried. This ambivalence about women reflects the ambivalence felt in wider society during a period of rapid change (Schuster, cited in Gallagher, 1981). Confusion and conflict led to scapegoating, and women were particularly vulnerable targets, given their economic and political status and their lack of access to media. Women were expected to change their position in society and at the same time uphold morality, peace and cultural traditions. A similar point is made about newspaper coverage of women in Uganda, where intriguing contradictions run through portrayals of women. For example, they were seen as both unwelcome competitors in the job market and as a wasted resource, as the upholders of traditional ways of life and those most vulnerable to Western influence (Gallagher, ibid).

More recent studies about news coverage of women in Southern Africa have revealed that women are still under-represented in the news compared to men. For instance, a Media Monitoring Project in Namibia (2002) found that women constituted only 15.3 percent of all known sources. The research also found that female sources consisted mainly of civil society representatives and government officials, compared to men, who were mostly ministers and deputy ministers. In a larger scale study research of news coverage of women in the Southern region, it was revealed that women constituted 17 percent of news sources in the media monitored across the region (Gender and Media Baseline Study, 2003). Angola had the highest proportion of female sources at 26 percent and Malawi was lowest with 12 percent, a figure below the regional average. In all cases,

women were much more likely to be identified as a wife, daughter or mother than a man is likely to be identified as a husband, son or father. In Zambia, 5 percent of women included in news stories were portrayed as wife, daughter or mother. The regional average for women is 11 percent compared to two percent for men. Although these figures are lower than the global average of 21 percent for women and four percent for men, they still point to inherent gender biases in the regional media. These findings suggest that as far as the media in the region is concerned, men 'shed' their private lives while they are working in the public domain while women perpetually split between the two, and are expected to 'carry their private identity with them.

The portrayal of women in the media is linked to a larger social framework which makes it multi-dimensional and more complex. It is closely related to what culture has already defined, and tends to perceive that which is picked out in the form stereotyped by our culture. That is to say, the basic significance of cultural exclusion, or partial representation of women can be found in the relationship of cultural processes to the socio-economic system and in the economic determination of cultural practices and products. In support of this argument Gallagher (1981) views the communication industry and its output as another link in the claim binding women in their particular relationship to socio-economic structures. In other words, news values are embedded within the social economic stereotypes. And women make news only when they meet certain criteria. For example in the case of Zambia, women are symbolically linked to earth, fire and water, three of the four elements of traditional culture. This gives women responsibilities for food preparation, acquisition of cooking materials, and tilling the soil, in addition to other

productive and reproductive tasks. There is ample documentation of gender division of labour which also gives men responsibility for the fourth symbolic element air, which carries speech and verbalised ideas. That way, women in Zambia are best represented performing these roles, making it difficult for the media to portray them differently.

Tuchman (1978b) earlier showed that news stories are structured in ways that convey value-laden messages about issues central to news events. She uses the framing analysis to explain the underlying meanings in stories by identifying which facts are included or omitted, which persons are used for sources, and how information is arranged. It enables one to trace the ways that news stories adopt, negotiate, or reflect philosophies and meanings about women that the feminist movement has sought to institutionalise. Norris, (1997) defines news frames as interpretative structures that set particular events within their broader context. That is, news frames give stories a conventional way to arrange the narrative, to make sense of facts, to focus the headline, and to define events as newsworthy. Frames provide contextual cues for giving order and meaning to complex problems, actions, and events. Frames guide the selection, presentation, and evaluation of information for journalists and readers, by slotting the novel into familiar categories (Entman, 1991; 1993; Gitlin, 1980, 1994). Robinson (1978) notes that, women in the 1960s were considered newsworthy if they had political significance, were performers in the arts or athletics; or were sexually stereotyped as having an important husband, have beauty, showed ability as homemakers or held 'first woman' status or in the third case when they were victimised, which added a sensational dimension to the perception of women. Within these social stereotypes, women were framed as less newsworthy because

they were homebound and less important as a group. To further the stereotype, articles that had to do with women were placed on the women's pages. As such, women were accepted as housewives, and therefore the male dominated media function within the parameters of this stereotype and do not respond to women's interests (Pingree and Hawkins, 1978).

However, more realistically, in the 60s women were more complicated than any stereotypes that the newspapers had fenced them into on the women's pages (Rice, 1978). As feminists in the 1960s and 1970s pointed out, placing a story in the women's pages made a difference in who read it and how it was perceived. The 'ghettoization' of women's pages diminished the worth of the story, indicating it was meant for women and was of no concern to men (Epstein, 1978:221). As result, although women made great strides in politics and as professionals they were not taken seriously and could only achieve some recognition 'as freaks, as unusual, or even as a personality on the woman's page, but could not have the equality of being taken seriously in the news analysis section' (Rice, 1978: 46). Such reporting deals with people in their private rather than their public capacities and thus reinforces the prevailing opinion that women engage in the lesser pursuits (Robinson, 1978).

In more recent years, women are framed differently depending on the media's intention. Women are sometimes framed as hard-working and successful professionals, and balancing well their parental and professional roles (Meyers, 1999). On the other hand, sometimes, women are depicted as passive, and sexualised, agents to be defined in

relation to male actors (Rakow and Kranich, 1991; Cameron, 1992; van Zoonen, 1994; Mills, 1995; Hartley, 1998). Results from a content analysis across six media used heavily by teenage girls showed that the media play a dual role by both presenting both positive and negative images of women (Signorielli, 1997). Many female characters in Signorielli's study were strong, independent, intelligent, and honest; however, physical appearance and relationships were of primary concern to them. In the political arena, it has also been argued that structural biases in practices of news reporting have frequently led to journalistic frames which provide oversimplified, and sometimes misleading, coverage of gender differences among voters and candidates (Norris and Carroll, 1997). Although findings of recent studies on women's portrayal suggest it is still restrictive and though serious coverage is now assured, it is generally couched in a less prestigious mode (Meyers, 1999; Steeves, 1993). Social control today is exercised through a relatively narrow selection of women's issues and through what may be called trivialisation. By belittling women, the social activities and contributions of women, the priority of men in society is implicitly upheld. Where as in the past 'symbolic annihilation' may have been used to describe media coverage of women, currently, this may not be fully applicable. For, instance, women today receive news coverage which reflects multiple and often contradictory images. However, these images of women are intended to maintain the ideological status quo in which men belong to the dominant group (Meyers, 1999).

Clearly, as shown by earlier studies in the 1970s, news business was not only the powerful talking to less powerful but also 'it was essentially men talking to men' (Molotch, 1978:180), since news was predominantly a mans world and was also



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controlled by men. In support of this idea, Hartley (1982b:146) argued that during the 1980s, 'news was not only about and by men; it was overwhelmingly seen through men'. A typical example of this can be seen in the choice of news sources and spokespersons that were overwhelmingly male, despite the growing numbers of female politicians, public officials and other professionals. This choice of sources and spokespersons is later explained as reflecting the personal networks of male journalists (Van Zoonen, 1998). Many other scholars like Smith (1980); Bailey (1994); Ross (1994) also found that news in the 1970s and 1980s was largely produced, directed, edited and shot by men and hence news was what was considered newsworthy by men. Scholars of the time suggested that there maybe a direct link between the male domination of media and the non-coverage of women. For instance, the male lack of interest in covering women has been associated with the fear that women might abandon their traditional roles and femininity if they were given prominence by the media (Molotch, 1978). At the time, the fact that media organisations were dominated by men or were basically male establishments also explained the representation of women as passive victims in the media, although a connection between the two has not been explored by feminists from this angle.

Similarly, Rakow & Kranich (1991) argue that women not only are less frequent speakers in the news, rather they also appear as passive reactors or audiences to public events. They hardly appear as participating in public events (see for example, Ross, 1994; Bailey, 1994). Ross (1994:3) argues that 'nowhere is the articulation of power so clear as when the media show women as victims of male violence and aggression'. To accept the media's response that they merely reflect real life is to say that conflict is a natural and

normal component of relations between sexes, rather than a symptom of the way in which men and women are socialised into viewing each other. It is also argued that women are automatically excluded from the organisation of news because they do not form part of powerful people whose activities matter to the media, a phenomenon Byerly (2004) has called 'masculine newsroom hegemony'. It is accomplished not through a sheer exercise of authoritarian control by those in charge, but rather through institutionalised hiring and promotional practices that privilege men over women. They rely on masculine 20th century criteria to determine which events should be covered (from what perspective), which facts and sources should be included in the story, and how headlines should be written and laid out.

Apart from the news professionalism as ideology, other factors responsible are news as a masculine narrative, personal attitudes of journalists towards women, bureaucracy and budgeting and so forth (Tuchman, 1978b). Rakow and Kranich (1991) argue that any improvements in women's treatment in news will require not simply more coverage of women but a fundamental change in news as a narrative. The understanding of news must begin with its essential gendered nature as a masculine narrative in which women function as signs and not as speaking subjects.

The implicit symbolic message carried in the news in terms of women's absence in news or presenting women in terms of social stereotypes may serve to reinforce cultural stereotypes about the insignificance of women and their 'proper place' (Meyers, 1999). It also can be harmful in terms of its effects on the journalists themselves, in the sense that

news definition or criteria tell journalists to operate, within a system of conventions which limit the coverage of women. Such conventions provide symbolic messages about women that can easily be incorporated into reporters' own social attitudes.

Another approach utilised to study news coverage of women in the media has been closely related to the role of women employed in the media (see, Gallagher, 1981; Van Zoonen,1988, 1989, 1994, 1998; Rakow, 1989; Flick, 1989; Beasley, 1993; Werner, 1994; Bailey,1994; Lont, 1995; Christmas, 1997; Weaver, 1997; Mills, 1997; Steiner, 1998; Ross, 2001; Byerly, 2004; Allan, 2004). As democratic societies have evolved, journalism is believed to have the task of production and distribution of balanced and fair information. It was and is often said that the minority position of women in journalism affects the quality of the news product, because the news made by men is thought to reflect the interests and values of men. Debates on the subject of women's employment in journalism have oscillated between a mere increase of numbers, and the increase of numbers in decision-making positions. The main concern has been women's employment and argues for a development of job opportunities at all levels in order to ensure equal participation within news industries where news is defined, formulated and distributed. It also argues for the advancement of women to influential media positions. Since the number of women particularly in creative decision-making positions in media was for a long time severely imbalanced in relation to men. The assumption is that the representation of women disseminated in the media reflects and expresses male concepts and interpretations. Scholars advocating the intake of more women in media, particularly in decision-making positions, believe that increased numbers of women in media

organisations would make a significant difference in the coverage and promotion of women's issues. In other words, gender can have an influence in bringing new perspectives and ways of presenting news. The implication of this assumption is that by opening up media to women workers on a larger scale, the images which have given cause for concern will gradually change for the better. For instance, there is a limited number of women working in the Zambian media. Put together, there are 12 female reporters working for the three publications included in the study, and only 8 are in decision making, compared to 22 male reporters and 20 in decision making respectively. Only the *Daily Mail* is an exception in having a female managing editor. It is assumed for example, that the content of information disseminated by these media will change and become more gender sensitive if there was more of a balance in the numbers of men and women.

Extensive research between the 70s and 80s in a number of countries has highlighted the severe under-representation of women in the upper echelons of media organisations. For instance, Gallagher (1981) found that at the time, throughout the world women were virtually absent from top executive positions, and at lower levels, women were segregated into lower paying clerical occupations. Even when differences of educational level, length of service and range of experience are taken into account, women remain disproportionately excluded from key decision-making posts. The few women in news positions typically handled traditional 'women's' features and less important assignments. Quinn (1993), Topping (1993), Allen (1993) and Smith (1980) advocate that women in media organisations need to be in top executive positions in order to bring

change, to sensitise management and to fight discrimination. Marzolf (1993) in a similar vein as Smith (1980) in a study on the treatment of women in the national press in the 1980s (USA) observed that women with real decision-making power were extremely few in number.

Many feminist scholars would argue that efforts to increase numbers of women employed in media ignore patriarchal structures that are unlikely to change with the simple addition of women. However, scholars like Eisenstein (1981), have argued that patriarchal structures and products cannot help but change as increasing numbers of women participate in them and appeal to them for support. Arguments emphasising the special role of women journalists also suggest that women journalists have different perceptions as far as general reporting is concerned, and with reference to women's issues in particular. Some scholars (Skard, 1989; Flick, 1989; Marzolf, 1993; Castellon and Guiller, 1993; Quinn, 1993; Allen, 1993; Werner, 1994) believe that there is a strong correlation between the gender of news journalists and the content of news coverage. For instance, Skard (1989) in a study of female journalists in Norway, argues that women often add a different perspectives than men on matters presented. Women tend to use another language, other words and expressions than those used by men. Flick (1989), is convinced that increased numbers of female journalists had caused change in the content of the media. For example, focusing by the media on women's living conditions and violence against women turned these issues from private affairs into public matters. Castellon and Guiller (1993) contend that women are better at interviewing since they were more relaxed and less formal. Quinn (1993) posits that women are better

communicators. Werner (1994) has documented a few studies in support of the idea that women approach media communication differently from their male counterparts. In line with this argument, Castellion and Guiller (1993) discovered that female journalists helped alter the media agenda in Chile by introducing topics such as increased attention to the Chilean family, concerns and needs of children, marital relationships, women's issues, quality of life and other lifestyle issues. However, they are quick to point out that despite these gains; women have yet to make inroads in the areas of opinion writing and hard news editing.

In recent years, research has revealed that there are more women working in the media than before. However, the effect of this increase in the number of women on media output is debatable. As Rakow (1989) pointed out earlier, the a mere presence of more women will not have a substantial impact on media industries unless those women are feminists or are at least politically activated towards collective change. Some scholars argue that the incorporation of women journalists into a largely male profession has the effect of 'normalising' what are essentially male-identified concerns and male directed agendas, so that acceptance of journalistic practice and convention is made on the basis of routinisation, in which male perspectives are constructed as unproblematic (Ross, 2001). They also argue that the 'style' of journalism remains predominantly male determined, and that underlying structural inequalities still exist in terms of access, culture and real decision-making. For example, discrimination against women in the newsroom still exists in the underlying sense of inadequacy or having to prove one self. Van Zoonen (1998: 35-41) provides a critical analysis on the issue of relationship

between more women journalists in the media industry and media output. She notes that those who assume women will produce different content sometimes make mutually exclusive assumptions: some assume that there will be less sex-stereotyped material as women share more equally in producing hard news, while others assume that higher value will be associated with 'soft' 'feminine' news. However, Van Zoonen finds no empirical support for the thesis that news output changes when the share of women journalists increases. Studies have established that, for instance, the female editors of women's pages are on the whole informed by the same traditional concerns and priorities as their male counterparts, and the women's judgements about news worthiness resemble those of men. In an opposing argument, Christmas (1997:3), postulates that even when women select the same news content as men, they write it in a different manner. In her view:

> 'Women want news that is 'relevant', news you can 'identify with', news that is explained in terms of their lives. Issues therefore are 'personalised', or 'humanised' in order that the reader understands the relevance. This move recognises: that women prefer to communicate with the reader; they put readers' needs above those of policy-makers and other providers of news; that women tend to be more 'people' oriented rather than issue orientated; that women place greater importance on seeing news 'in context' rather than in isolation; and that women like to explain the consequences of events.' (Christmas 1997:3)

Mills (1997) also argues that the increasing number of women journalists has had a real impact on news processes and structure, by forcing an expansion in the very conceptualisation of what news is, and in widening the scope of what issues, events and stories are now regarded as newsworthy. Part of that widening-out process has meant not

just that a more diverse range of issues is now covered, but as importantly, that many of these new news story types are of particular interest to female audiences. The changes in content reflect not just the reality of women's' presence in the newsroom in terms of simply being there, but also their influence in forcing a change in tone and voice, (Mills, 1997:46). However, Mills admits that though the climate in the newsrooms may well have changed to the point of accepting the legitimacy of newsworthiness of stories that touch women's concerns, interest in actually covering these stories is still confined to women journalists.

Despite this enthusiasm, most evidence still suggests a deep ambivalence about gender as a driver for change. Gender alone will not make a difference in changing the culture of newsrooms or types of news produced, inasmuch as a journalist's sex is no guarantee that she or he will either embrace sentiments that privilege equality or hold specific values and beliefs that promote more equitable and non-oppressive practices. Journalists' output has been found to be conditioned by the reward system and political preferences of their employers (Tunstall, 1971). At another level, problems arise from the complicated system of attitudes and practices which constitute media professionalism. It is difficult for media women to resist ideas and attitudes associated with success in their profession, even if such ideas demean them as women in the eyes of the audience. Professional beliefs may indeed undervalue women and women's interests, for instance, certain topics may be defined as unimportant or uninteresting, but professionally ambitious women are unlikely to go against and risk being identified with marginal or minority interest.

In sum, feminist scholars identify several factors which obstruct the coverage of women's news. Among the reasons why women do not get into news is because media work within stereotypes. These stereotypes show to a large extent that women are powerless and mainly homebound, and the strategies which reporters use in the social organisation of news cannot capture women because they are lacking in powerful positions, and therefore, they do not easily fit in their routinisation.

Further, media are dominated by men who have no interest in raising women's concerns. As such, news carries a masculine narrative or male viewpoint, which needs to be changed. As a part of this strategy, women's perspectives are either completely ignored or ridiculed by the media. Some scholars see the role of women in media organisations as particularly significant in raising women's concerns. But at the same time, it is argued that objectivity and neutrality in news cannot allow journalists to bring in their subjectivity into news. Although women journalists have been able to raise numbers of women-related issues, their concern or role as advocate journalists remains debatable.

Within the framework of feminist media debate, the present study will investigate the coverage of women's news in the media. It will examine the coverage from a culturalist perspective which categorises the media as one of the institutions in the social structure together with the church and family, which actively define and redefine gender roles. For instance, in Zambia's democracy, these institutions provide the 'guidelines' of what is 'acceptable' or not, and on occasion they may provide a basis for society to challenge what is obtaining in society. For, example, in 1991, prior to the election that brought

democratic governance, the church led the debate on the failures of the government through pastoral letters which were published in the media. The study will also explore other factors that may impinge upon the coverage of women's news in a developing country.

**The evolution of the Press in Zambia**

Zambia is a country situated in south central Africa with a population of approximately 10 million. It obtained independence from Britain in October 1964. At independence, Zambia adopted a system of plural politics with at least two active political parties – African National Congress (ANC) and United National Independent Party (UNIP). However, this changed in 1972, when, overnight, President Kenneth Kaunda banned all other political parties apart from UNIP, a party in power since independence. The justification for this shift was that Zambia was still relatively too young for pluralism. As such, in the interest of sustaining stability, only UNIP (the party in government) existed for a long time. To this effect, Zambia was among the few countries in Africa that exemplified a relatively stable single party state in which one leader dominated the post independence period. Together with the changes in the political system, a state of emergency was declared and remained in situ for 17 years. During the state of emergency, the executive had many powers to interfere in almost all sectors of society. Political appointees were placed in strategic positions in order to closely monitor activities in institutions. At this point, it could be said that there was almost no freedom in

whatever form. For example, it was permissible to detain people without trial for more than forty-eight hours, and in most cases, even longer. As indicated earlier, the government sought to control all strategic institutions including the media which is considered as a vehicle to bring issues to the public's attention. Among the important rights that diminished was freedom of expression. Article 24 of the constitution was altered, and granted only the government the right to decide which assemblies and expression were permissible. Consequently, media houses were put under strict government control.

The press in Zambia has a long history that dates back to 1906, when the first local newspaper, the *Livingstone Pioneer* was launched. It was, however, in 1944 that a more active or larger scale newspaper industry started, with the launching of *Bantu Mirror*, published by Bantu Press, a subsidiary of Southern Rhodesia's (now Zimbabwe) African Newspapers, and the launching of *The Northern News* (later known as the *Times of Zambia*) by Mr Roy Welensky in Ndola. The Zambian press has played various roles at different political and economic times since the first publication. For instance, the early publications were mainly 'white' papers that aimed firstly at keeping the white settlers informed about what was happening in England and in other British colonies. At this time the press was used as a 'device to maintain the status quo' (Kasoma, 1986) by legitimising the rights of the colonial masters to rule Zambia. The press also provided a channel for social communication among settlers in Zambia from different parts of the country. In other words, it was used to entrench the social, political and economic power of white elites at the expense of the majority population of blacks. With time, this role

evolved into one that was meant to sensitise the black community about the activities of the colonisers in other colonies including Zambia. Gradually this role changed, and the press began to play a more influential role in the black society, such as disseminating information about agriculture and hygiene to the Bantu stands[1]. However, it should be pointed out that at this stage only a small fraction of black community could access information contained in the press because of extremely high illiteracy levels.

At independence in 1964 and until 1972 (First Republic), the press was expected to play yet another important role of reflecting the new government's thinking. Articles published during this period mainly focused on nation-building and spreading government propaganda (Chirwa, 1996). Newspapers were expected to mobilise support for the newly elected government. For instance, Zambia's first president, Kenneth Kaunda, at independence propounded the philosophy of Humanism, which he launched at the United National Independence Party (UNIP) national council in 1967 (Kasoma, 1986). It became the country's official political philosophy.

Zambian humanism had its roots in the inclusiveness of traditional African society that was characterised by the extended family in which people helped one another as members of one big family. Humanism put 'man' at the centre of all activity, but man did not exist for the state. Rather the state and all similar social structures exist for man, and are considered his tools for building a better life.

[1] African (black) reserves in urban areas during colonisation

Humanism was not liberalism. It abhorred the individualism, exploitation and selfishness often found in liberal societies where the concept of family is considered too narrow to fit the African pattern (Kasoma, ibid). In this instance, the state was the custodian of humanism and it took such steps as it saw necessary to prevent human exploitation in any form. One way of achieving this was the nationalisation of key elements of the economy such copper mines, media and organisations in the manufacturing industry. To this effect, the press functioned as a government tool and constantly inculcated the philosophy of humanism. This kind of press role is dominant in authoritarian systems. In such systems, the *'Press functions as a tool of the state, and much content is determined by 'the power figures' in charge of government at any given moment.'* (Siebert, 1956:3). Another important role played by the press was that of conducting both formal and informal education. It was believed that education in whichever form would in some way lead to development. In other words, the more literate citizens there were in the country, the better positioned they were to respond to development demands.

In the Second Republic, 1973 –1990, the era of the one-party State, the supremacy of the ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP), government control of the media became much firmer. Insofar as the print and electronic media were owned by the government, the heads of these media were appointed by the president. Any erring head of media or even any journalist who wrote any article critical of either the party or the government was either disciplined by suspension or dismissal by party machinery.
In such an environment, the role of the press was limited to that of government mouth-piece.

However, by the early 1980s authoritarian rule had plunged to country's economy into a dire state. Most people were living in poverty and spent long times queuing for essential commodities such as cooking oil and maize meal that were in short supply. Key infrastructures were run down, for example, media houses had obsolete equipment which hampered production, hospitals lacked medication, schools did not have sufficient teaching materials and main roads even in the city centre had potholes. Big industries such as the mines, which are considered mainstay of the country's economy, were on the verge of collapse. There was 10 percent inflation, and the IMF finally decided to withdraw or withhold all the loans that Zambia was supposed to receive. The system failed, as could be seen by mounting tension in the country, and clearly, there was a need for a change in the system (Chirwa, 1996). It also became evident that there was a need for some other media to promote free expression of political thought and speech as the government owned and run media concealed the extent of disrepair that the country was in, and to grant dissenting voices an opportunity to be heard. It is against this background that plural politics re-emerged in Zambia.

In 1989, a formidable opposition was quickly appearing on the political scene. During the time of the Second Republic, agitation for free expression of speech and thought was manifest in the growing number of newspapers and magazines that were registered in 1990 and 1991 by the National Archives of Zambia. Between January and October 1991, a period of ten months and effectively prior to the start of the Third Republic, not less than 25 newspapers and three magazines were registered by the

National Archives of Zambia (Chirwa, 1997). Groups that were denied access to the media in the past became more vocal than before. For instance, in 1991 with the formation of the National Women's Lobby Group (NWLG), the woman question was put on the political as well as media agenda. With this new development, Zambian women are now asserting that it is the vulnerability of the state that renders it incapable of addressing their needs. They place their major responsibility as participating in local, public, and political processes that bring women and other groups of ordinary citizens into a dialogue with government. Therefore, in these circumstances the media was faced with the challenge of reflecting women's participation in all the said activities.

By October 1991, the advent of the Third Republic ushered the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) into government after it convincingly defeated UNIP during the Presidential and Parliamentary elections. On inception, the MMD government acknowledged that the existing patterns of media ownership reflected the dictatorial nature of single party rule. They also acknowledged that the existing media patterns were incompatible with the spirit of political pluralism which thrives on the diversity of opinion. Therefore, the challenge before government was to loosen media from the grip of the state and promote the establishment of free, independent and pluralistic media structures which could best serve the new democracy. To meet the challenge, the MMD included a clause recognising basic human rights which included freedom of expression is in their manifesto. According to the MMD Manifesto (1991), the party was *'determined and fully committed to ensuring that basic and universally recognised human rights are enshrined in the Constitution – the right to life; privacy of property;*

*freedom of conscience and the freedoms of expression, association and worship'*. With specific reference to the mass media, the Manifesto states:

> 'The MMD believes that freedom of expression and the right to information are basic human rights. As such, journalists will have to play an important role in promoting democracy and development in an MMD-led government. All bona fide journalists, both local and foreign will be accredited to perform their duties without hindrances. Under the MMD government, state-owned media will serve as vehicles to promote national unity, reconstruction, development and international co-operation'. (MMD Manifesto, 1991)

According to the MMD Manifesto, the role of the press can be perceived as safeguarding the rights of the individual, fostering political awareness and enlightening the public so as to make it capable of self-government. Firstly, for the press to effectively perform the above stated roles, there was a need for constitutional review which would allow the press to gather information in a freer environment than was the case before the adoption of pluralist politics. It became commonly accepted in Zambia that a free press is an essential part of democratic society because it enables the people to make informed choices. Secondly, the press itself had to change its approach and become all-inclusive by allowing dissenting views to be published in the press. Since society is not homogeneous and consists of groups and individuals with different interests, some that may be conflictual and even contradictory, the press provides information for all these views to be heard before the formation of public opinion (Chirwa, 1996). For example, the voices of women, children, political parties and so forth should be heard in the press. With this kind of approach, the press would be better placed to play a pivotal role in a democracy.

**Liberal Theory, Press and Zambia**

The press is said to play a very important role in a democratic society, however, different countries have interpreted this role differently depending on the obtaining cultural, political and economic setting. For instance, on the one hand in a totalitarian regime, the press is viewed as a government instrument, disseminating propagandist information to retain the system in power. On the other hand, in a liberal regime, the press is seen as a forum in which individuals and groups of individuals are able to discuss and debate issues of public interest and thereafter arrive at informed decisions. That is to say, the press is seen as part of the ideological apparatus of society, providing for the expression of competing ideologies within a relatively free competitive or pluralist society. Generally, most agree that the very pervasiveness of the press has given it an important role in the formation of political and social consciousness and attitudes, (see for example, Mytton, 1983; Kasoma, 1995; Wayande, 1996; Gunther & Mughan, 2000). The significance of the press to democratisation processes arises from its unique position and characteristics compared to other organs involved in the process. Though in an emergent democracy like Zambia, democratic institutions such as parliament, the judiciary and the press are very weak and therefore easy to manipulate. The press, unlike other democratic institutions, is by definition publicly oriented and can reach a wider audience than any other means of communication. As such, the press is seen to act as a bridge between varied sectors of society. For example, in Zambia where the influence of state machinery is experienced widely, it is important for civil society to throw itself behind or work together with the media in order to counteract the ongoing debate about issues of public

concern. This way, democratic governance could rest on consensus that can only be arrived at after dialogue and debate by the citizens.

The role of the press in Zambia is highly contested, just like in many other countries on the African continent to have recently adopted democracy. Some countries perceive the press as playing that crucial role of providing information that will enable citizens' dialogue thereby participating in national development. Others have retained a strong grip over the press to ensure that dissenting voices are silenced. In this section of the chapter I seek to establish to what extent the media have assisted in empowering the rest of civil society, and women in particular, by providing adequate information to enable them to play their rightful role in the advancement of socio-economics and politics of multiparty democracy. In this section I build on the argument that access to media is critical for the success of any individual or group involved in competitive socio-economic, political and development endeavours, and that the media in Zambia have hampered women's contribution to national development because of the way they represent them.

Zambia's adoption of liberal principles that see freedom as central to the success and sustenance of a democracy has meant that it emphasises the role of the press in providing information on all matters of public interest. This serves as a measure by which institutions and government and all others in positions of authority are held accountable to and by the public. Also, the press in Zambia is expected to facilitate democratisation in a number of other ways. These involve erosion of the credibility and legitimacy of non-democratic regimes; the development of pluralism in political attitudes, preferences, and

partisan alternatives; and eventually, resocialisation of masses and elites to the new democratic rules of the game. According to IPU, a United Nations body:

> 'The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementary, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences' (http://www.IPU.org/english/surveys.htm).

However, it has often been argued that the greater liberties inherent in free-market economies to facilitate the development of pluralism in political expression do not always work for the benefit of a society. While the greater pluralism inherent in market economies and the proliferation of new media outlets can open up new avenues for the expression of dissenting opinions, this argument is insufficient as an explanation of broader political liberalisation. For example, Zambia's adoption of pluralism in politics in 1991, did not automatically mean that all voices were granted the freedom to express themselves. This is because, apart from changes in the political and economic system, a lot of things remain the same the indigenous culture, and culture to a very large extent influences how pluralism is interpreted in the Zambian context. In the case of this study, I particularly set out to find out whether the press in Zambia grant women adequate coverage to enable them to participate in what is happening around them, and thereby in nation building.

A consequence of media liberalisation is its contribution to the development of pluralism with regard to attitudes and beliefs as well as visible alternative elite and partisan options.

Initially, this tends to involve the appearance in the press of representatives of the moderate opposition, as well as reformist forces from within the regime itself. The public presentation of their respective visions of the future, programs and symbols contribute to the pluralist differentiation of a mass public that competitive party systems require. That is to say, liberalisation of the press helps foster the kinds of pluralism that functioning democratic systems need.

However, the realisation of this role is more difficult than it seems because of the many factors other than the market that in one way or other influence operations of the press. Also at a more complex level, relations with other institutions impact a lot on how effectively the press is able to play this role. For example, Boafo (1985) argues that news values of the Third World are broad and varied, due to the great diversity of Third World countries. In effect, therefore, some press institutions in Africa use the western value yardstick such as human interest, proximity, conflict, unusual events, personality and education to determine what to work with as news material. At the same time the media in Africa and Zambia, are increasingly used by governments as channels for the propagation of the country's ideological stand on particular matters as well as being used as channels to disseminate the ruling party matters. Most importantly, the media in Third World democracies are also charged with the responsibility of disseminating information to the populace to enhance development.

The media in Africa have a political and economic role to play in the continent's pursuit of political and economic justice and peace at both national and international levels. That

is, the media have a key role to play in the political, economic, social and cultural transformation of the society. The media have a crucial role to play in the promotion of democracy and development in Africa, more so in nations like Zambia, which have for a long time been under single party rule, and in which the party was not distinguished from the government (the party and its government). For this role to be achieved, the media in Africa must provide a forum for collective discussion and evaluations of options to enable the public to arrive at well considered decisions. It is against the above background in relation to the nature of the political system in Zambia now and the country's historical development of the press and its relations with government that provides me the basis for analysis. I analyse whether the press are making efforts to include women on the public (media) agenda in Zambia's emerging democracy by including material of interest to them in the press. It is interesting for instance, to establish whether the press represents women by including their concerns and contributions to development on the public agenda.

According to Ansah (1992), the role of the media has been enhanced by the current realisation that old paradigms of development that tended to equate development with modernisation are wanting. This approach was characterised by the 'diffusion of innovations' and the 'extension' of knowledge and service from change agents to the people. In this context the role of communication was to transfer knowledge or technological innovations from change agents to recipients and thus create a climate for an appetite for change among the people striving towards development. This kind of approach has since been found to be elitist, top-down and paternalistic to the extent that it

excluded people from participation in the planning and implementation of desired development programmes (Ansah, ibid).

The current desired approach, which is human and people-centred, presupposes the placing of confidence in the people's ability to discern and define their own needs and to learn to do things themselves (Ansah, 1992). Ansah argues, that this approach places greater emphasis on the significance of the media's role in the whole question of development. For instance, the media in Africa and Zambia continues to play a critical role in the promotion of better health for children and the promotion of various sound environmental programmes. For example, UNICEF has continued to popularise the concept of social mobilisation and advocacy under its various child survival, protection and development programmes. Under these programmes the use of Oral Rehydration Therapy[2] (ORT) and the Expanded Programme on Immunisation[3] (EPI) have been extensively promoted by media by encouraging their use, as well as the promotion of collective participation of government, communities and various social organisations. The immunisation of children between the ages 0-23 months against diseases such as tuberculosis, poliomyelitis, diphtheria and measles has led to a very significant reduction of infant mortality and increased levels of commitment to child survival by government and by the Zambian people (WHO Report, 2003). It is interesting to establish whether women's contributions in all these ventures have been captured, and if the multiplier effect has been interpreted by the media. If women's participation is highlighted in the

[2] Treatment for diarrhoea-related dehydration in which an electrolyte solution containing vital fluids and vital ions is administered.
[3] A programme to eradicate, eliminate or reduce diseases to the lowest levels possible through sustained immunisation of all susceptibles as an essential component of Primary Health Care.

media, there is a better chance of them moving to the centre unlike when they are confined to the periphery irrespective of their activities.

The role of the media in development has also been discussed by scholar Mohammadi (1995) under the specific component of development support communication. He posits that early works of scholars like Schramm (1964) on the relationship between communication and development focused on messages of the mass media, and how they could be utilised to create a sense of national identity, foster attitudes favourable to fulfil goals or campaigns such as those of family planning, disease prevention or agricultural development projects.

The various goals of development support communication include, firstly, determining the needs of the people and giving political credibility to the expression of those needs. In other words, provide sufficient citizen access to communication systems to serve as effective feedback to the government concerning development goals and plans. Secondly, raise people's awareness of development projects and opportunities and help foster attitudes and motivation that contribute to development. Thirdly, provide support for specific development projects and social services including health care delivery, agricultural or vocational skills training, public health and sanitation for family projects. Clearly, women who compose more than half of the African population make great contributions to the realisation of democracy and development. For instance, women in rural Zambia work very closely with donor agencies in rural water supply and sanitation. Women are made overseers of communal water pumps in villages. Some of their

responsibilities include ensuring that the facility is good working condition, water disinfectants are administered properly and regularly, and the surrounding areas are kept clean.

Generally speaking, in the African context, one key area where the role of the media is most crucial is in the expected contribution of the media to the process of establishing open, democratic and stable societies (Ansah, 1992). But this resides in the media's ability to expose and criticise bureaucratic incompetence, corruption, abuse of power and the violation of human rights. Ansah adopts the position that the media constitutes the institutional framework for exercising a regular scrutiny on the activities of government to see how performance matches promise or how programmes are being implemented. In a democratic society the actions of government, which is only a trustee of the collective will and power of the people, are expected to be regulated by the force of public opinion and the press is the most appropriate medium for gauging and reflecting opinion.

The position of Ansah (1992) and the now widely accepted conceptualisation of development puts a premium on the human factor, human dignity and active participation of the people in the development process. Such participation will not be possible if people are denied the means to express themselves, to share experiences and ideas. If people don't learn what is going on in their own country, in their region, or the rest of the world, if they cannot openly discuss and formulate strategies to strengthen their economies and improve their lives, then change will be slow with limited participation and with benefits for only a few.

Despite these fundamental roles of the media in Africa, Zambia included, a number of obstacles still stand in their way, seriously and negatively impacting on their roles. These are political, economic, cultural and financial problems. For example, the predominant patterns of state ownership, management and control of the media in Zambia prevents free access to information for the media and the expression of critical or opposing viewpoints. Excessive political and legal and extra-legal constraints also have a debilitating impact on the extent that these measures undermine the capacity of the media to appropriately and effectively fulfil their functions in building democratic societies and protecting and defending the basic human rights of people. Apart from legal and extra legal constraints, media operations and content are also affected by cultural factors.

**Conclusion**

In summary, the discussion has shown that media are a product of society. They reflect power relations, values, ideas, attitudes, culture, practices and impact on, influence and shape society. They also reinforce and entrench power relations and gender stereotypes. This is done by what they report or not, who and how they report.

Entry of women into public space and decision-making arenas is a problem for Zambian society and the media, the reflector and reflection of societal stereotypes. Zambian women become a problem because they challenge the social fundamentals of patriarchy and masculine authority. They throw overboard all that they have been socialised into believing. This is why women are directly or indirectly labelled negatively. The labels reflect the underlying assumptions about where they should be – in the private sphere.

For instance, women in politics are either completely ignored or where they are not, they are projected as either foolish having entered the decision making sphere by default, through nepotism, 'horizontally' or through their beauty. In reporting about such women the media will either patronise them, ridicule them, treat them as impostors to the decision making throne, as bodies not minds, appendages (wives, partners) and not independent individuals or as tokens or beauty objects giving colour to the decision making sphere. On the rare occasion that some of them are recognised, they are projected as superwomen, exceptional, and rare species. At those moments they are accepted into the male world as 'honorary' men.

There is an intrinsic relationship between democracy, gender equality, governance and the media. A complex web of patriarchal relations, interactions, intersections and pretences governs these systems. Government regulates society and the media moulds society's attitudes. The two act as untouchable, neutral benevolent agents keenly interested in governing and informing society. And yet they are neither neutral nor above society. Governance operations exclude women from its institutions and the media confirms to society that they neither belong nor have a contribution to make there. While there may be no conspiracy between these patriarchal institutions, the outcome and consequence of their operations is the marginalisation of women from decision making and the entrenchment of gender relations in society. As such, although women work very hard to promote activities that enhance democracy and nation building, their contribution is often neglected as it is not brought into the media lime light.

The next chapter is one in which I discuss the methodology and methods utilised to analyse news coverage of women. It discusses the use of both quantitative and qualitative uses of content analysis. By using content analysis in such a way, opportunity is created to analyse the patterns established by figures.

## Chapter IV: Research Methodology

### Introduction

The role of Zambia's free press in living up to its commitment to represent women in order to bring their issues of concern to public attention can be best judged through what newspaper content seem to convey. This is because newspaper content to some extent reflects what is obtaining and in a very large way affects or shapes our world view of women and their role in a given society. Therefore, as Pingree and Hawkins (1978:117) assert: 'in order to determine in reality the definitions of 'women's news' or how news definitions affect women, the more direct way is to 'examine implicit definition in actual content and layout of the press than it is to rely on the stated intentions of reporters and editors'. For instance, whilst an editor may claim to have written a story on women's political participation in the interest of women, its presentation will to a great extent influence how it is received and interpreted by the public. A typical example of such a story is one that appeared in the *Post* newspaper (September, 2004) in which a leader of the opposition party claimed to have political support from women. The politician thanked women for their support and went on to describe them as being different from men. He said 'Women are not like men. When men who promise to love you see another lady with good legs, they change' (Post, 2004). Whereas this may seem like a positive example of women's level of commitment, it also sends across a message that women can only be better understood in relation to men. In a subtle way, the story upholds the notion that defines women as emotional, which is perceived as negative, and who therefore fail to make reasonable decisions to leave unfaithful men. It is for this reason

that continued study of what the papers say regarding various subjects including women is necessary.

Concern about the media's depiction of women is not new (see Tuchman, 1978; Pingree and Hawkins, 1978). More than twenty five years ago, in a book looking broadly at the representation of women in mediated culture, Tuchman (1978a:8) concluded that the mass media engage in the 'symbolic annihilation' of women through the condemnation, trivialisation, and absence of them. Research in the later years (Macdonald, 1995; van Zoonen, 1994; Signorielli, 1997; Meyers, 1999; Gallagher, 1981, 2000) also contends that although the representation of women in the media may have improved, they are still not adequately represented, and this may to some extent affect the way they are treated in society. For example, Meyers (1999) has argued that the images of women in the media and newspapers are no longer just intended to symbolically annihilate women, but are rather intended to create a confusion of what is expected of women. She argues that media images of women vary depending on the intention of the paper, and as such they are 'fractured' and on occasion may have negative connotations for women. Although this subject may have been widely researched previously it is still relevant to date. For instance, it is for this reason that the United Nations initiative on improving the status of women globally identify the media as among the key players in influencing change in the perception of women (Beijing Platform of Action, 1995). By reducing stereotyped representation and embracing a gender sensitive approach to reporting, peoples' world view of women would be altered.

Building on earlier studies and more recent ones that question the media's representation of women in order to understand the definitions and possible effects of information, I shall analyse news content in three of the most widely read newspapers in Zambia. The analyses are intended to establish how the Zambian press defines women and how these definitions may affect their sense of self-worth and performance in society. In this chapter, I discuss the methodology used to analyse the representation of women. I also discuss the suitability of such an approach to elicit relevant information to enable me to make general statements about the nature of representation that women are given in Zambia and how it may affect them.

As stated earlier, this chapter discusses the methodology and methods used for data collection and analysis in the study. I hasten to point out that, although to a minimal extent I used a combination of methods including personal unstructured interviews with media personnel and structural analysis, the key approach was content analysis. It is for this reason therefore that this chapter discusses content analysis which is to date widely used to study newspaper content by various media researchers. For the purposes of this study both quantitative and qualitative content analyses have been utilised in order to effectively analyse news stories of women in the press in Zambia. While quantitative content analysis is not capable of reading between the lines or digging out below the manifest content (van Zoonen 1994), in this case, it has been used because of the dearth of the most basic empirical data on this subject in Zambia. Therefore, it is intended to provide basic empirical data on the subject matter and to at least bring to the fore the problems in the kind of press coverage that women receive. I proceed with the

preliminary questions regarding coverage of women's news which include the number, length, placement and content of stories, which in one way or another discuss women in the press apart from looking in depth at coverage of prominent women in the public arena of politics. In this case, content analysis is considered appropriate to fulfil the aims of this study to investigate the nature and trends of representation of women in the news and to determine what themes or issues related to women are brought to the attention of the public.

The purpose of content analysis in this study therefore is to document the general trends in coverage and analyse them within the broader socio-cultural context. While reducing everything to numbers may be justified in certain aspects of human experience, in certain instances they fail to capture the essence of it. Therefore, after such an initial quantitative inquiry into the general investigation of the kind of coverage, further research to look into qualitative nature of particular issues like women in politics could provide an in-depth analysis of coverage of such an issue. In view of this, qualitative analysis of selected news items about women in politics is undertaken to provide an additional in-depth perspective of language use for purposes of marginalisation in order to back-up the general picture obtained by the quantitative analysis.

My decision for further qualitative analysis is based on the assumption that the study of specific women in specific contexts can further our understanding of the construction of gender related meanings (Sapiro, 1993). Added to this is the underlying assumption of this aspect of the study that images of women in politics reflect parties' ideological stance

toward women's role in society and, at the same time, perpetuate worldviews, granting them further legitimisation. As some media research suggests, portrayals of women politicians can serve to shape the public's expectations about politicians in general and women's political participation in particular (Chang & Hitchon, 1997). The theoretical assumption behind this integrated approach is that each method uncovers different aspects of the phenomenon to be studied, and that both are equally relevant and important. In order to achieve this, the chapter will offer a critical assessment of both quantitative and qualitative research methods in general.

The aim of this chapter is to analyse how content analysis can be used to conduct research on newspaper coverage of women in Zambia and feminist media research in general. I discuss both quantitative and qualitative content analysis from critical media perspective in general and Zambia in particular. As such, the first part of this chapter is a discussion of the development and use of content analysis in general and in media research (see for example; Lasswell, 1966; Berelson, 1959; Holsti, 1969; Krippendorf, 1980; Weber, 1990; Hansen, 1997; Riffe, 1998; Hodson, 1999; Neuendorf, 2002). Looking at the various definitions of content analysis by scholars, it can be deduced that used reflexively, content analysis can be a powerful tool that can be used to illustrate patterns in news content which can further be developed by the use of more in depth methods.

The subsequent section of the chapter examines ways in which feminist researchers have engaged in social and media research using both quantitative and qualitative methods (see

for example: McRobbie, 1982; Jayaratne, 1983; Harding, 1987; Sydie, 1987; MacKinnon, 1987; Carter & Spitzack, 1989; Maynard, 1994; Van Zoonen, 1994; Kelly, 1994; Holmwood, 1995; Hammersley,1995; Gallagher, 2000). Content analysis has been widely used by feminist scholars to monitor the media's representation of women in order to make it more accountable for gender inequalities. For example, in 1995 the first extensive cross-national study of women's portrayal in the media was conducted giving women a tool with which to scrutinise the media in a systematic way, and a means of documenting gender bias and exclusion. The study which included both academics and non-academic revealed that only 17 per cent of the world's news subjects were women (Media Watch 1995). Women were least likely to be news subjects in the fields of politics and government. They were most likely to make the news in terms of health and social issues and were well represented in arts and entertainment news. In 1997, another study, limited to Scandinavia, revealed that women were most often portrayed in roles equated with low social status (United Nations, 2000). Such studies reveal that there is still a lot of research potential in the area of representation of women in the media. They are also evidence of the fact that research in monitoring media content are significant feminist interventions.

The chapter goes on to analyse the discourse that has taken place in feminist scholarship in attempting to establish which method is more suitable to adequately highlight issues that are considered of importance. First, I examine the ways in which feminist researchers have employed quantitative methods to investigate the stereotypical portrayals of women in news, followed by the employment of these methods at a more intricate level which

seeks to explain how such views affect women in the wider society. For instance, why despite several years of intervention, women still remain marginalised in society, and how images of stereotypical portrayals of women in news relate to the general social perception of women. The section is then developed into a more specific discussion of how feminist media researchers investigate the operations of patriarchal ideologies in the media and news. In this section I draw on examples from a range of studies to illustrate how news media operate to (re) produce forms of common sense that are articulated with the dominant types of power (i.e. capitalist, patriarchal, racist etc).

**Content Analysis**

Content analysis is a quantitative and qualitative research methodology for analysing data (Gunter, 2000). Content analysis not only analyses the manifest content of material, it has differential levels of content: themes and main ideas of text as primary content and context of information as latent content (Mayring, 2000). It characterises or interprets the content of communication and reveals features that might not be otherwise immediately apparent to the researcher. As such, it has proved to be a valuable research method in many areas of inquiry since it is used to manipulate large volumes of quantitative and qualitative data that have been categorised and coded. Content analysis opens up for the social scientist and humanist a wide variety of opportunities for systematic use of the most pervasive form of evidence about human affairs, for example, the content of communication (Krippendorf, 2004) . It is a multipurpose research method developed specifically for investigating any problem in which the content of communication serves

as a basis of inference. Content analysis particularly consists of a division of text into units of meaning and a quantification of these units according to certain rules.

Content analysis has been defined as a research technique for objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication (Berelson, 1954). Holsti (1969) modifies this definition: 'content analysis is an objective systematic, and general description of manifest content of text'. Krippendorf (1980:21) too has defined content analysis as 'the research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context'. Objectivity means that every stage in the research process must be based on explicitly formulated rules and procedures. The content of a text to be emphasised, and the values and beliefs of the researcher must not influence the result of the examination. Further, some reliability test must be undertaken, so that another researcher can obtain the same result from the same rules and data. As Neuendorf (2002:141) notes, 'given that the goal of content analysis is to identify and record relatively objective characteristics of messages, reliability is paramount. Without the establishment of reliability, content analysis measures are useless'. Neuendorf (ibid) argues that in addition to being a necessary, although not a sufficient step in validating coding scheme, establishing a high level of reliability also has the practical benefit of allowing the researcher to divide coding work among different coders. Along with the general consensus that objectivity, systematic and generality are defining characteristics of content analysis, two other requirements have generated considerable debate. First is the question that, must content analysis be quantitative? Second is whether it must be

limited to manifest content, or may it be used also to probe for more latent aspects of communication?

The quantitative requirement has often been cited as being essential to content analysis, both by those who praise the technique as more 'scientific' than other methods of documentary analysis and by those who are most critical of content analysis. The former viewpoint is summarised by the assertion that 'there is clearly no reason for content analysis unless the question one wants answered is quantitative. There is however considerable disagreement about the meaning of 'quantitative' as applied in content analysis. The most restrictive definitions are those which require that content analysis measures the frequency with which symbols or other units appear in each category. Other definitions such as the one by Holsti (1969) equate it with numerical. Holsti (ibid) describes the aims of content analysis as the classification of content in more precise numerical terms than provided by impressionistic 'more or less' judgements.

However, restricting content analysis to this single system of enumeration presents a theoretical and practical problem in that it can only tell us about quantifiable material which leads to ignoring other issues of significance. For instance, the researcher tends to concentrate only on predefined categories. The second limitation of content analysis is that it focuses on manifest content and very little if anything is mentioned about how and why its material was packaged in such a way. Another school of thought accepts the distinction between 'quantitative' and qualitative' but asserts that systematic documentary studies of the latter type constitute an important, and perhaps more

significant form of content analysis. They argue that despite the limitations of content analysis, the advantage of quantification is that statistical methods provide a powerful set of tools not only for a precise and parsimonious summary of findings, but also for improving the quality of interpretation and inference. As Lewis (1997) postulates, quantitative methods do not just yield statistics, when subject to a thorough analysis they can also provide a more complex ideological map. That is, quantitative content is mostly used as an indicator to assess the salience of certain attitudes and the degree to which these attitudes can be linked to certain social activities. The relationships it poses are very simple and do not attempt to explore anything but the most basic ideological mechanisms. The more complex mechanics or ideology is generally supposed to be in the domain of more qualitative research. In other words, a content analyst should use quantitative and qualitative methods to supplement each other. It is by moving back and forth between these approaches that the investigator is most likely to gain insight into the meaning of his data.

The history of content analysis as a research technique dates from the beginning of the 12$^{th}$ century, when it was mainly used in theological studies, other scattered studies going as far back as 1740s have also been cited (Krippendorf, 1980). During the early studies, content analysis was mainly used to count how frequently certain words had been used in a text. For example, the analysis of the 'Songs of Zion' to establish whether the songs were in fact carriers of dangerous ideas (Krippendorf, 1980). Since then, the use of content analysis has steadily increased over the years.

In the middle ages, content analysis was widely used in the social sciences; it was only in later years that it was increasingly being adapted for sociological, historical, political, communication and media research. In sociology, consideration was given to content analysis as serious methodological problems were discovered trying to 'fit' quantitative techniques to qualitative data. Consequently, they added concepts that could be defined and recognised in data such as attitudes, stereotypes, styles, symbols values and propaganda devices. As well as the concepts, better statistical tools were brought to bear on the analysis, especially from survey research and psychological experiments. Psychology was able to systematically assess biases, appealing to such standards as objectivity, fairness and balance.

The extensive use of content analysis began early in the last century as a method of analysing the content of newspapers. As mass produced newspapers were becoming commonplace, the field of journalism began empirical investigations based on simple measurements of column inches that a newspaper devoted to given subjects. The general interest was in space usage of news versus non-news. During the 1930s newspaper research continued to account for the largest number of studies. From writings about public opinion interest in social stereotypes entered the analysis of communication in various forms (Lippman, 1922). As mass media increased and their social and political effects were recognised, content analysis was expanded to measuring volume in radio, and later in movies television and video. This is still used today and applied to such communications media as textbooks, speeches, comic strips and advertising to mention just a few. However, significant among the contributions to the development of content

analysis are propaganda studies mainly stimulated by the seminal work of Harold Lasswell (1965) and his associates. For example, in the 1940s the United States, devoted to the war effort, was dependent on content analysis of enemy broadcasts to understand and predict events within Nazi Germany and its allies, and to estimate the effects of military actions on war mood. Pressures of day to day reporting left the analysts little time to formalise their methods. Later work through the volumes of reports left behind made major contributions to conceptualising aims and processes of content analysis.

The advances in content analysis made evident not only the emergence of a new generation of scholars engaged in content analysis, but also that they were expanding the scope of research problems to which the method could be applied. Vigorous debates on a wide range of critical theoretical and methodological issues also emerged with the new generation. For instance, scholars researching the media have argued that quantitative content analysis tends to lead the researcher to reconstruct common sense categories in news, instead of deconstructing these categories and analysing them in particular. As a result, analysts reproduce the format and language of journalists and of official news sources, (Ericson, 1989). Further, some quantitative studies have implicitly assumed that there is one reading of news text. However, the reading of a text depends on the context; people make different interpretations of the same information depending on the situation in which it emerges, and the importance of interaction for the communication process. As such, latter studies have indicated a shift of interest away from purely descriptive studies toward research on the causes and effects of communication content. For instance,

generating cultural indicators that address beliefs, values or other aspects of cultural systems has been a major use of content analysis by social scientists.

As shown by the brief review above, content analysis has been used in many different fields of research. It has proven to be good for both analysis of content such as identifying cultural indicators and social factors, and also for predicting behaviour and impact. It is for that reason that I have used both quantitative and qualitative content analyses in this study. I hope that whilst quantitative content analysis will provide numerical data of how women are portrayed in the news, qualitative analysis on the other hand will look with more depth at the language used in the stories.

**Qualitative Content Analysis**

Qualitative content analysis is an approach of empirical methodologies, controlled analysis of text within their context of communication, following content analytical rules and step by step models without quantification (Mayring, 2000). Methods of analysing media texts other than quantitative content analysis have emerged from different epistemological and theoretical perspectives. Analytical tools deriving from disciplines such as literary criticism, and linguistics have been applied to the investigation of text structures and production of meaning. A fundamental distinction between qualitative and quantitative methodologies can be found in the location of meaning in media texts. Quantitative content analysis emphasises a fixed meaning of media texts that can be repeatedly identified by different 'readers' using the analytical framework. Qualitative

content analysis procedures emphasise the capacity of texts to convey multiple meanings, depending upon the receiver (Gunter, 2000).

Krippendorf (1980), distinguishes two key concepts of framework and logic in relation to content. The framework of a content analysis involves a clear statement of the main research question, the kind of data, the context relative to the data, and the naming of inferences from data to certain aspects of their context or the target of the inferences. That is to say that, to accomplish these inferences, the researcher needs to have an operational theory of the data – context relationships. Logic deals with the procedures involved in the selection and production of data, the processing of data, methods of inference and analysis, including the assessment of validity and reliability.

Qualitative research methods seek to analyse concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity, and starting from people's expressions and activities in their local contexts (Wood, 2000). The use of qualitative methods has long traditions in psychology as well as social sciences. Various theoretical models and understandings of the objects and methods stand side by side, from which researchers can choose and which they can weigh up against each other or combine in qualitative research. These include symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, semiotics and feminism. Textual analysis is a way of gathering and analysing information based on the assumption that language is an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life (Wood, 2000). That is to say, anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position. As such, language is not

only a simple tool for description and medium of communication, it is a social practice or a way of doing things. For instance, if we want to understand the role of the media and precisely how messages participate in the cultural construction of our view of the world, then we have to understand what meanings text acquire in various contexts.

Textual analysis has developed as an approach in social sciences in which scholars seek to analyse data with more depth other than the numerical one used in the natural sciences. It is different from quantitative methods in that contrary to the commonly-made claim that numerical data is particularly scientific or objective, textual analysis seeks to make meaning of the language used to discuss, explain or engage issues in society. Unlike quantitative methods, textual analysis seeks to analyse phenomena in a holistic way taking into consideration the complexity of the cause and effect relations (Gunter, 2000). In other words, in textual analyses objects are not reduced to single variables but are studied in their complexity and entirety in their everyday context.

Fairclough (2003), argues that texts as elements of social events have causal effects which contribute to changes in people, actions and social relations. That is to say, texts can bring about changes in our knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, values and so forth. For this reason it is very important to understand how media texts might be used in order to make sense of the world we live in. Whilst a collection of statistical facts can give a general idea of what is said in the media, they cannot fully enhance our understanding of society and culture because these facts and statistics are just more text. According to McKee (2003), to understand the world we live in, we have to understand how people are making

sense of that world. Therefore, scholars trying to interpret the meanings of texts take various approaches, such that some consider audience research more suitable for such purposes. Indeed whilst audience research can sometimes produce interesting insights into unexpected ways which media texts are interpreted by audiences, however, this approach can also have practical and theoretical drawbacks. On a practical level, audience research can be expensive and cumbersome. On a theoretical and more important level, what you actually discover from research is that audience members draw from publicly available knowledge in order to make sense of texts (McKee, 2003). It is in part as a way of recovering that publicly available knowledge that textual analysis works.

Textual analysis can be used to study several themes, including governance, blurring of social boundaries as a feature some scholars call 'post modernity' and hegemonic struggles to give a universal status to particular discourses and representations. It also can be used to study ideologies, citizenship and 'public space', social change and change in communication technologies to mention a few. One of the causal effects which have been of major concern for textual analysis is ideological effects that are effects of texts in inculcating and sustaining or changing ideologies (Fairclough, 2003; Van Dijk, 1998; Thompson, 1984; Larrain, 1979). Ideologies can be identified in texts; they are representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation. Therefore, the process of textual analysis seeks to establish how things acquire certain meanings. For instance, in my study, I use textual analysis to understand how women are represented in news stories in the *Post*, *Daily Mail* and *Times of Zambia* and also to

analyse how the everyday language commonly used in the news may naturalise and reinforce prevailing views of gender-based discrimination against women. Of course this process of establishing meaning is not simple, it may involve a lot of negotiations between the different social economic components.

**Feminist Methodology**

The question as to what constitutes feminist research methodology has been an issue for feminist scholars for over a decade and there is now a considerable literature addressing the topic. Questions have been raised such as, how best to correct the partial and distorted accounts in traditional analyses which have contributed to women's oppression in the news media and in general. For instance, many feminist researchers, both those in social sciences and other disciplines, argue that traditional research is used as a tool for promoting sexist ideology and ignores issues of concern to women and feminists. That is to say, traditional theories have been applied in ways that make it difficult to understand women's participation in social life, or to understand men's activities as gendered. They go on to argue that traditional epistemologies, whether intentionally or unintentionally, systematically exclude the possibility that women could be knowers or agents of knowledge, feminist researchers claim that the voice of science is a masculine one; that history is written from only the point of view of men; and that the subject of a traditional sociological sentence is always assumed to be a man (See: Jayaratne, 1983; Mies, 1983; Maynard, 1983; Stanley & Wise, 1983; MacKinnon, 1987).

As a result of these arguments and other criticisms of traditional research and quantitative methods, some feminists have suggested the increased use of qualitative research in order to better reflect the nature of human experience (Maynard, 1994; Van Zoonen, 1994). Further, a range of questions have been posed, including: is there a distinctive feminist method of enquiry, and how does feminist methodology challenge – or complement traditional methodologies? The earlier has been the most frequently asked question. However, it has been difficult to get a clear focus on the kind of answer to this question that scholars seek. In view of the above, this section therefore analyses the way in which feminist researchers enter into critical debate about research methodology and epistemology. It also shows how they practice media research from a feminist standpoint and are politically committed to the identification of the social conditions of women and the transformation of gender relations. It is difficult though to identify a distinctly feminist method outside the range of conventional methods. This is because feminists as researchers use the range of methods available to all researchers.

The debate about feminist methodology first emerged in social science research as a response to a series of problems in the 1970s when a concern began with gender inequality and masculine dominance within the social world. Stanley (1990) categorises early debates on feminist methodology into two groups. The early school of feminists scholars critiqued the so-called male methods, seen as synonymous with hard quantified approaches, and is characterised by feminists preferring methods identified as soft or qualitative. This approach seemed to favour the practice of a distinct and separate feminist methodology. The latter approach to feminist methodology started with the

adoption by some feminist academics of an effectively binary approach to considering methods of research, and it too perceives an association of hard quantified methods with men and masculinity, and soft qualitative methods with women and feminism. This approach, unlike the earlier, is concerned with how in feminist terms it might be possible to link methodological procedures with epistemological presuppositions, and to do so in ways that can inform feminist research processes. In this approach, the focus is on the nature of knowledge as seen by feminists, and with how claims to generate and process are grounded, that is, what kind of evidence, generated in what kind of ways, and under what kinds of research circumstances, is seen as necessary and sufficient.

One of the early definitions of feminist social research was formulated by Liz Stanley and Sue Wise (1983:17) who posited that feminist research is that which is 'on, by and for women'. In other words, feminist investigation should focus on the lives of women, but how to do this will depend on whatever seem to be the most appropriate methods or techniques for collecting and then analysing data. Essentially, though, data collection and analysis will be informed by feminist theory. Maynard (1994:23) describes an early driving force within feminist research as to:

> 'Challenge the subordination, passivity and silencing of women by encouraging them to speak about their own condition and in so doing to confront the experts and dominant males with the limitation of their knowledge'.

Social researchers have often disagreed about what society is, what knowledge of the social world is and how that knowledge might be obtained. However, before the advent in

the 1970s of feminist perspectives within social research (see for example the work of Oakley, 1972, 1974), there existed a cross range of approaches used by social researchers. The principle revolved around a particular meaning given to sex differences between men and women. Knowledge of the social world, feminist scholars contend, was at that time constructed around a prior belief that biological differences between men and women constituted the natural basis upon which men and women were organised. Women were seen as 'biologically and therefore naturally different and constrained by that difference' (Sydie, 1987:203). Generally speaking, women appeared social research studies only as social problems or in discussions of the family. Women's social being was conceived as coextensive with their family function to nurture and socialise family members. In contrast, men's social being was located outside the family, and was understood as coextensive with activity in the public realm. Men, unlike women, were conceived as actors on the public stage. The result was that social researchers found it impossible to fully understand women's experiences.

The assumption of a natural difference between the sexes was taken by social scientists to be a foundation for social organisation. This rested on their way of thinking about sex and gender, involving male dominance and female submission, prevalent in the social and political life of early nineteenth century Europe, when the social sciences were conceived. Sydie (1987) argues that European societies and the sciences of society which they produced understood men to be unrestricted by their biological characteristics. In contrast, women's biology was understood to determine their social identities. Additionally, 'man' was understood to represent men, the 'norm', the generically human,

against which women were measured as different. Sydie, therefore argues that knowledge produced by such social science is not objective (1987:208). According to her, Marx, Durkheim and Weber, for example, can be seen as representing different epistemological positions on how research into the social world should proceed. Nevertheless, none of them was able to explain why women were treated as inferior to men.

Consequently, social science has only asked questions about social life which appear problematic from within the social experiences characteristic of men. In other words, research which assumes male social dominance does not only produce partial and limited perspective on the nature of social life but affects the framework of concepts within which the researcher works and then the explanation offered. In challenging this approach, feminists argue that defining what is in need of scientific explanation only from the perspective of bourgeois, white men's experiences leads to partial and even perverse understandings of social life. One distinctive feature of feminist research is that it generates its problematic from the perspective of women's experiences. It also uses these experiences as a significant indicator of the 'reality' against which hypotheses are tested.

Over several decades it has become widely accepted by feminists themselves that there is a distinctively feminist mode of enquiry, although there is by no means agreement on what this might mean or involve. For instance, Harding (1987) argues against the idea of a distinctive feminist method of research. She does this on the grounds that preoccupation with method mystifies what have been the most interesting aspects of feminist research

processes. Also discussing feminist methodology, Klein (1983) argues that most of the so-called feminist research has chosen the 'adding-on' approach which assumes that our environment emits the same signals for women and men. According to her, such thinking represents an 'equal-rights-philosophy' which completely ignores the fact that not only was our past man-made, but that our present still is. That is to say, answers from and about women are evaluated against male standards, therefore, this kind of research perpetuates a view of women from an androcentric perspective. By doing so it ignores the historical perspective, the fact that over millennia women and men have internalised 'feminine' and 'masculine' moulds in which man is the norm and woman is the other. In fact, such feminist researchers have produced knowledge for the sake of knowledge rather than with the desire to put the knowledge into practice to induce changes.

In line with Klein's arguments, Mies (1983), discussing feminist methodology, contends that if women's studies use old methodologies, they will again be turned into an instrument of repression. For example, Mies sees the methodological principle of a value-free, neutral, uninvolved approach, of a hierarchical, non-reciprocal relationship between research subject and object drives women scholars into a schizophrenic situation. If they try to follow this postulate, they have constantly to repress, negate or ignore their own experience of oppression and have to live up to the so-called 'rational' standards of the highly competitive, male-dominated academic world. According to Mies (ibid), this methodological principle does not help explore these areas which due to this androcentric bias, have so far remained invisible.

However, if what feminists want is research that will contribute to women's liberation, they have to scrutinise feminist methods more carefully to see if they are in fact congruent with feminist principles. In other words, the claim that research on women is conducted with a feminist perspective can be made only when the methods applied take women's experiences into consideration. These experiences, of course, vary depending on cultural identification, ethnicity, social status, age and sexual preference, to mention a few. Such kind of research should often explicitly enter into epistemological debates reflecting concerns of how feminists can explain gendered relations and whether knowledge can be scientifically established. Further, when feminist research is undertaken it should be with a political commitment to the identification and transformation of gender relations (Stanley,1990).

Justifiably, early arguments advocated and defended a qualitative approach to understanding women's lives as against quantitative methods of enquiry. The arguments were rooted in a critique of what were perceived to be the dominant modes of doing research which were regarded as inhibiting a sociological understanding of women's experiences. For instance, quantitative research was seen to represent a 'masculinist' form of knowing. The primary criticisms arise because so much of traditional quantitative research seems inconsistent with feminist values. First, much social research has been used to support sexist and elitist values. Little effort has been made to explore issues of importance to women. Second, the socially relevant research which has been generated often is not utilised appropriately, that is, it has no real impact on social problems. Third, emphasis has been on the detachment of the researcher and the collection and

measurement of 'objective' social facts through a supposedly value-free form of data collection (Maynard, 1994). Fourth, quantitative data cannot convey an in-depth understanding of feeling for the persons under study. In contrast, the use of qualitative methods, which focus more on subjective experiences and meanings of those being researched, was regarded as more appropriate to the kinds of knowledge that feminists wished to make available, as well as being more in keeping with the politics of doing research as a feminist.

The feminist critique of quantification drew from the arguments of phenomenological sociologists, which were particularly influential in the early 1970s (see for example, Cicourel, 1974; Filmer, 1972). These sociologists claimed that the assumptions as to how actors structure their everyday worlds found within most questionnaire or interview schedules produce a falsely concrete body of data, which distort rather than reflect actors' meanings. Similarly, feminists have argued that the production of atomistic 'facts' and figures fractures people's lives (Maynard, 1994; Meyers, 1999). That is to say, only one tiny part of experience is abstracted as the focus for attention and this is done in both a static and temporal fashion. Maynard (1994) argues that often the result of such an approach is a simple matrix of standardized variables which is unable to convey an in-depth understanding of, or feeling for, the people under study. Further, research practices which utilise either pre-coded or pre-closed categories are often of limited use when trying to understand women's lives. This is because they are based on assumptions, often at an unrecognised and common-sense level, that the researcher is already sufficiently familiar with the phenomenon being investigated to be able to specify in advance the full

range of experiences being studied and how these can be encapsulated, categorised and measured (Maynard, ibid).

Female scholars in the 1980s defended quantitative methods, but it is nonetheless still the case that not just qualitative methods, but the in-depth face-to-face interview had become the paradigmatic 'feminist method'. However, in later years it has been established that rather than asserting the primacy of any method, flexible positions are adopted depending on the topic and scale of study. Wherever possible methods are combined and compared in order to discover the limitations and possibilities of each. For instance, scholars like Fonow and Cook (1991) suggest that a well crafted quantitative study may be more useful to policy makers and cause less harm to women than a poorly crafted qualitative one.

My approach to this issue is political: that is, I believe the appropriate use of both quantitative methods and qualitative methods in research can help the feminist community in achieving its goals more effectively than the use of either qualitative or quantitative methods alone. For instance, a quantitative approach could provide greater breadth by offering a summary of findings over a wider range of images and is extremely useful in providing an overview of the representation of women as they appear in various media. However, the quantifiable standards do not tell the whole story, as they cannot address nuance and underlying meanings. They do not, for instance, tell us how the representation of women's equality may be shaped by the media's allegiance to corporate, social or political interests. Nor do they tell us how patriarchy may be

reinscribed within the subtext of media content. Therefore, in order to gain a more in depth understanding of issues and the underlying meanings, a qualitative approach is more appropriate. As such, quantitative and qualitative approaches can be used effectively by feminist researchers to compliment one another and allow in depth understanding that is necessary to promote feminist theory and goals and to document individual and institutional sexism.

**Feminist Media and News Research**

Feminist media research has grown from wider research in social studies. Feminist scholars in media research have raised similar questions to the ones raised by those in the social sciences, which seek to identify a way of research that will help improve the status of women. Academic discourse, debate, and research have been plentiful in feminist media theory and women in media in recent years. Media has been described as 'technologies of gender, accommodating, modifying, reconstructing and producing, disciplining and contrary renditions of sexual difference' (van Zoonen, 1994:4). Media 'texts' such as advertisements, television programmes, films, magazines and so forth provide an area of observation to see how such technologies function and provide meaning. These help in throwing light, as a starting point for further analysis, on issues such as the tensions in a struggle between tradition and modernity; the alternative and at times, conflicting meanings encoded in such texts; the symbols of reality and fantasy in such models of communication. They also raise questions of gender, ethnicity, sexuality and power in the construction of femininity. Generally, feminist media and news research has been concentrated on the 'reception' or 'consumption' side – the interpretation of

such portrayals, the position of the intended (and non-intended) audiences and consumers in relation to such texts. For example, ethnographic studies of consumption and resistance. This becomes inevitable when one recognises the multiplicity of meanings in media texts and the multiplicity of ways in which audiences make meaning of such texts. Another has been to concentrate on the 'production' side – the study of the media product itself by content analysis or semiotic analysis. In an interpretative research strategy the one can complement the other.

The realisation that content analysis used in earlier feminist media research to study manifest data, created a limitation about which questions could be answered has led to the adoption of other methods depending on the nature of research. As van Zoonen (1994) pointed out, content analysis prevented the researcher from reading between the lines of media output, and is not expected to dig below manifest level of analysis or to descend to the level of latent meanings and associative conclusions. The more modern methods, on the contrary, analyse the representation of women as it relates to other social structures.

Scholars have adopted other research methods such as semiotics and ethnography to unravel structures of meaning beyond the mere presence or absence of women in cultural forms. For instance, dominant media ideology expressed by mass media keeps women in their subordinated position, so it is in women's own interest to identify such ideologies when they are embedded in popular culture, and refrain from consuming it. Empirically, the focus of attention moves from an analysis of social and economic structures to the

way people engage with these structures, how they make meaning of them, how they adapt to them and through which tactics they try to subvert them (Certeau, 1984). As a result, understanding audiences as producers of meaning has directed researchers to the day-to-day experiences of audiences and has produced a steadily increasing body of material about the tastes, preferences and pleasures of women. As such, reception analysis is clearly a useful contribution to the larger feminist project of rescuing women's experiences from marginalisation and invisibility. However, it is important to mention that while content analysis has several disadvantages, it can in some cases be considered an asset in that it meets the traditional requirement of objectivity in research; therefore, it has a better chance of repetition and replication by other investigators.

In view of the preceding discussion, it can be said that the field of gender, culture and media can be approached with a variety of research methods and a range of data gathering and analysis techniques. For instance, quantitative content analysis has been used to establish numbers, roles and other characteristics of the portrayal of women and men in various media, whilst the question of media effects is frequently tackled using experimental designs inspired by social research. In this study, both quantitative and qualitative content analysis in the form of textual analysis are utilised in a complimentary way. The numerical data gathered will be useful in establishing patterns and a selection of a limited number of stories from the entire sample shall be used for textual analysis, in order to get a more in depth outlook of the portrayal of women. In the next section of this chapter I shall discuss my selection of a sample and ownership of news organisations. As the cliché goes – 'he who pays the piper calls the tune', the same can be applied to media

organisations. The content of a publication to a very large extent depends on the complex interactions of corporate, social and economic interests.

**Selection of Newspaper and Period of Study**

Print was chosen to investigate the coverage of women because the English press in Zambia plays a role of opinion-maker or agenda-setter in the elite social and political arena. It holds a significant status in post-colonial Zambia. There are three national English dailies and five weekly newspapers in Zambia which rank as the nation's representatives of quality press (Merrill & Fisher, 1980). These are: *The Times of Zambia, the Daily Mail, the Post and the Mirror, the Monitor, the Sunday Mail, the Sunday Times* and *Financial Times* respectively. As mentioned earlier, all these newspapers command wide influence on the educated urban middle-class and policy makers. The *Post, Times of Zambia* and *Daily Mail* were selected as representative newspapers to study the coverage of women's news for the present study. The reasons for selecting these dailies are discussed shortly.

Three different years 1991, 1995, 1999 were picked to study the contents of the selected newspapers and to quantitatively analyse data. For the purposes of qualitative analysis, a smaller number of stories about two female public figures were selected in the same years. My aim was to establish patterns and trends of coverage over a period of ten years, however, to reduce the quantity of the data, I picked three years between 1991 and 2001. This was done by selecting newspapers every four years. The year 1991 is used as the base year since this is the year that democratic politics were adopted in Zambia. The

adoption of such politics was expected to level the playing field for all citizens and the media was identified as a key player in this setting. In view of the voluminous nature of the data, the sample of the study was narrowed through systematic sampling. The use of systematic sampling is justified when data stem from regular publications like newspapers is concerned (Krippendorf, 1980). In systematic sampling, the start date is selected at random and then every th (i.e. $4^{th}$, $5^{th}$, $6^{th}$, $7^{th}$, $8^{th}$, $9^{th\ and}$ so forth) issue of the newspaper is selected. Analysts (Krippendorf, 1980, 2004; Holsti, 1969) advise that the maximum interval length of the issues should be five and not seven because it may create a biased sample since the length remains constant. For instance, if the interval in this study was every $6^{th}$ paper, then only Saturdays' publication would have been included in the sample. Thus starting from January 1991, every fifth issue of the dailies was selected and analysed throughout the respective years. The selection of every $5^{th}$ issue ensured equal representation of each day in a week in the data, since the newspapers are not published on Sundays.

Although there were eight newspapers in Zambia at the time of this study, there was no diversity of ownership. For, instance, out of the eight publications five are government owned. Of the remaining publications, two are privately owned and the other one is owned by the church. I decided to analyse data from one private and two government owned publications based on the assumption that there is a difference in the approach to news content between private and government owned newspapers. It is my assumption that the privately owned paper has more freedom to cover news from various

perspectives without fear of interference from the powers that be. In the case of government newspapers, the authorities have much say in what and how they publish.

After several consultations with my supervisor and fellow research students on how I could include the *Post* without rendering my study unsystematic, I decided to include it even if the frequency is different from the two other papers analysed. The *Post* provides for the diversity of ownership which was lacking with the two other papers as they are both owned by government. Including the *Post* in the sample has meant that there is a difference in the period when the sample is drawn in 1991 and 1995. I included all copies of the paper published during the two years. Consequently, there are more stories from the *Post* in that year than the other two papers. Whilst I do appreciate that the dates the sample is drawn from are different, I believe that information obtained from conducting a quantitative analysis of this nature is still useful in establishing the general trends and patterns of how women are covered in newspapers.

**Conclusion**

In summary, the chapter has discussed the use of content analysis in establishing trends and patterns in the coverage of news. I also discuss the feminist approach to research methodology and feminist approach to news and media research. In doing so, I raise some of the issues brought forward by the discourse of whether or not there is what one can perceive as feminist methodology. I support an approach to research that uses different methods in order to arrive at more reliable and valid data. In the case of this study, I chose to apply both quantitative and qualitative methods. Instead of just counting

how many stories are about women in the newspapers, I also look at the placement and length. I conduct an analysis of what the stories say about women, and which sources are used in stories of women to mention a few categories.

The next chapter is a discussion of the quantitative findings of the study. The chapter begins with a discussion of newspaper ownership in Zambia and proceeds with a detailed statistical analysis of representations of women in the chosen newspapers.

## Chapter V: Quantitative Analysis of News of Women in the Zambian Press

### Introduction

Studies examining media coverage of women have evolved steadily with early ones utilising quantitative research methods, (see Epstein, 1978; Robinson, 1978; Tuchman, 1978a). As stated in an earlier chapter, the research agenda for most of these studies was to document the portrayal of women in the media by counting the times that women were actually mentioned in the media and whether the mention was positive or stereotyped. The research was mostly exploratory and sought to establish trends and patterns by counting the number of stories and their length and location, so as to determine how women were portrayed. Findings from the quantitative methods have been considered by some scholars as more objective in that very few inferences can be made by the researcher about the collected data. However, this approach can be quite limiting in that a researcher is unable analyse the possible underlying reasons for the manifest trends and patterns. As a result, more recent media studies have adopted multiple approaches including qualitative or ideological techniques (see for example; Steeves, 1997; Meyers, 1999) or even discourse analysis (Clark, 1992; Wykes, 1998; Fairclough, 2000). These approaches are adopted in order to understand the complexities of news content that lie beneath its coverage.

In my research I use a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques to analyse data. The quantitative content analysis approach is intended to elicit information about the ways in which women are represented, and the frequency of representation in Zambian newspapers. In this instance quantitative analysis is suitable to elicit exploratory data in a not so well researched area in Zambia, and also

to manage the huge amount of data included in the sample. On the other hand, the qualitative approach is an in-depth analysis of the content intended to explain how language use contributes to the continued misrepresentation of women in the newspapers. As such, both quantitative and qualitative approaches have been used to compliment each other in establishing and understanding the nature of representation that women are accorded in the Zambian press.

This technique involved coding each item along several qualitative and quantitative dimensions, as well as taking notes about the essence of the story while coding. This enabled me to pay attention to any stories that were of particular interest in terms of value positions adopted and other items that might not be evident from the coded data. It also helped me identify and select stories to be included in the sample for qualitative analysis. In early 2003, I coded a pilot number of items with each code sheet to determine its reliability and validity as a means of gathering data. The code sheet I used after making a few adjustments was first used in research about newspaper coverage of violence against women (Carter, 1998a). I revised the code sheet over a period of several months to make it more suited for my kind of study as I worked through the news sample.

For each story, I recorded the newspaper and the date on which it appeared, the type of item or genre (news report, backgrounder, news brief, editorial, feature, soft, opinion column, agony column, photo, cartoon, other). The date and name of newspaper were intended for identification purposes, but later became useful in the study for comparing the kinds of stories talking about women that were included in the newspaper on the same day, and the nature of coverage such stories obtained in

the paper. Story genres were included on the coding sheet in order to establish how issues talking about women were treated or packaged. Even if reporters have similar information, they may write it up differently depending on the level of depth they wish to give to the story, and on other things. In other words, the classification and hierarchical taxonomy of genres is not a neutral and 'objective' procedure, and it influences the content and context of news to a great extent. For instance, a hard news story is usually brief and contains 'factual' information; its packaging is constrained by time. A feature article, on the other hand, which has less time constraints is more lengthy and has the opportunity to include opinion or commentary. I followed the genre code by news classification (city, nation, provincial, editorial page, foreign business/economy, sport, letter to editor, political, parliament, entertainment and unclassified). This kind of classification was intended to establish in which categories news items of women appeared, and how frequently they did so. I then coded the length of item in paragraph, length/height/style of headline, placement of item, the production source and news sources.

The length of an item was intended to establish how much in depth news about women is given and the production source, who writes about women, the news source, and where information included in the stories about women is obtained. The news categories employed in the code sheet follow from those outlined by Tuchman (1978b). For example, Tuchman developed a model of news types in order to say something about the ways in which both space and time constraints play a role in the gathering and dissemination of news. In my case, the code sheet is developed to say something about how often women are written about in the newspapers, which places

on the page they occupy and to show how their contribution to national development is portrayed.

Tuchman's main focus is on the news net, a metaphor for how news is gathered. The news organisation searches the coverage area for newsworthy events. These efforts criss-cross, forming a net of sorts to capture news. What the net captures depends on the size of the gaps in the netting. The smaller the holes in the net, the more news that net will catch. The same is true for news organisations: the more the workers and equipment, the more news the organisation will gather. The news net is a standardised structure for gathering news. Its basic format is such that 'today's news media place reporters at legitimate institutions where stories supposedly appealing to contemporary news consumers maybe expected to be found (Tuchman, 1978b:21)'.

The news net is an economic system more than anything else. It is designed to put reporters where news is most likely to occur and where reporters are most likely to dig up a story to fill space in the news. By its very existence, it caters to the elite status quo (Tuchman, 1978b). Minority groups and low-income areas tend to generate less news of this type. What is generated tends to be negative in nature. Certainly, reporters monitor some organisations representing women, such as the umbrella body coordinating activities of Zambia's women's' non-governmental organisations (NGOCC). But in many, if not most newsrooms these organisations are not part of any regular reporter beat calls, and there is little regular contact between reporters and the leaders of these organisations. Consequently, news coverage of women becomes spotty and lacks depth in understanding the issues facing these groups.

As said earlier, the news net organises journalists' practice through norms and routines of news work. This organisational view of news gathering includes typifications, professionalism, objectivity standards, use of sources, framing the event, use of news resources, how events or ideas get noticed by the journalist organisation and the genre of the news story.

Typifications are classifications of news stories by news workers as a means of controlling the work flow (Tuchman, 1978b:46). 'They impose order upon raw material news and also reduce the variability of the glut of occurrences. They also channel the news workers' perceptions of the everyday world by imposing a frame upon strips of daily life (Tuchman, 1978b:58)'. This is where symbolic gender is able to become a part of the news story at an individual level.

News reporters are working off the schema, especially concerning beliefs, they have developed since their early childhood. In the context of this study, schema refers to the mental maps people develop to make sense of the world. To make sense of a news story, reporters covering the story use their own schema to develop their understanding of that event and then recreate the event for their audience using their perceptions of the event. Certainly, there are organisational structures and professional ideals the journalist must live up to, but these constructs do not negate the effect of the reporter's own belief system. By looking for 'typical' news stories, journalists can more easily rule out items that do not fit their definition of news. A further discussion of Tuchman's theory is worked in the findings in the rest of the chapter.

**Choosing a sample**

The three newspapers that I selected for my study represent the 'quality press' in Zambia. The English press in Zambia are classed as the 'quality press' because they have an elite (learned) readership, with a reputation for extensive and detailed coverage of all kinds of news content. Though the definition of what represents a quality press is ambiguous, it is said that they are known by their elaborate news coverage and editorial. The quality press are large format newspapers that report news in depth, often with serious and higher level language. News is dominated by national and international events, politics, business, with less emphasis on celebrities and gossip. In this instance, the quality press are widely perceived to devote a large amount of news space to examining a wide range of socio-political issues, including those of poverty, social injustice, gender and so forth. For the period ending December 1999, the three newspapers had the highest circulation figures in Zambia. For instance, the *Times* and *Daily Mail* had a circulation of between 12,000 - 15,000 with a daily readership of 25,000 to 30,000. According to the circulation manager of the Daily Mail, the circulation and readership of these papers is concentrated along the train line where the paper is accessible on a daily basis (Personal interview - Circulation Manager). Newspapers are not delivered to remote areas not served by the trains because of a poor transport infrastructure. It takes two days for newspapers to reach the Eastern province[1] which is approximately 550 kilometres east of the capital city and three days to reach certain parts of the North-Western province of the country. In fact, 50 percent of the circulation is concentrated in the capital city Lusaka, 20 on the Copperbelt province, 10 in the Southern province and the remainder

in the rest of the country. On the other hand, the *Post* in 1999 had a daily circulation of 45,000 with an estimated readership of 100,000. The paper's circulation is concentrated in Lusaka at 56 percent, whilst 44 covers the rest of the country. The geographical perspective is relevant during the analysis of the news content in that it helps establish how newspapers are read, and whether the content about women is adequate considering that 50.1 percent of the women in Zambia reside in rural areas.

At this point it is necessary to point out the difference between the broadsheet and tabloid newspapers that I analysed in this study. The main difference between the broadsheets, namely the *Times* and *Daily Mail,* and the tabloid paper the *Post* that I used in my sample lies mainly in format and not content as the case usually is in the west. For example in Britain, broadsheet papers have a large format and present events analytically, extensively and comprehensively. Their readers are usually well-educated, occupying middle and senior job levels, and for them newspapers are a valuable source of information, different opinions and attitudes. They expect balanced, analytic and unbiased reporting; they also expect commentaries and reviews based upon facts and clearly verified assertions.

On the other hand, tabloids publish sensational information about the private life of prominent people. In the case of Zambia, presumably, this difference in format exists mainly as a result of the financial constraints of sustaining a broadsheet publication, such as the cost of paper.

[1] Geographically, Zambia is divided into nine provinces based on which part of the country there are situated. The provinces are; Lusaka, Central, Copperbelt, Southern, Northern, Luapula, North-western, Western and Eastern.

Otherwise, both the broadsheet and tabloid papers included in the sample have a similar approach to news; they are serious and analytical in their reportage. It is imperative to mention that there are circumstances when the *Post* has used a tabloid style of reporting with a more sensational slant. However, the readers of all the papers included in the sample have a similar profile in that they are well-educated, occupying both middle and senior level jobs. They expect a well balanced reportage of topical issues as this information contained in the papers is considered helpful in understanding obtaining situations and decision making. As such, for the purposes of this study, the above named papers provide suitable raw material for analysis of the coverage of women.

The primary focus of this dissertation is an examination of the daily coverage of women in the media since the adoption of democracy in Zambia. Therefore, I chose to draw a non-random sample of stories from three widely read newspapers to give me a sense of the patterns that exist in the news coverage of women. The criteria for inclusion in the sample was that there was a mention of women in the story. The underlying rationale for choosing these particular papers and period of study are simple. In 1991 Zambia adopted democratic politics, and since then these three papers have played an active role in the process of democratisation through publication of relevant information. For example, the newspapers have published information about citizens rights, in particular voters rights, which have helped reduce voter apathy in the country. They have also kept citizens abreast of Zambia's ratification of international treaties such as the education of female children and so forth. In all the newspaper activities the question of whether or not women were being given adequate attention has been of interest to me.

## History and Ownership of Newspaper Sample

> 'The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it.' (Marx and Engels, 1970: 64).

In line with this statement, I argue that the dominant ideology in society is the ideology of the dominant class and that the media disseminate the dominant ideology: the values of the class, which owns and controls this media. Therefore, despite daily denials by media organisations, they cater to the needs of their owners and major financial supporters, that is, media institutions are locked into the power structure determined by dominant classes in society who own the media.

Often we hear that the 'market' determines what news our media covers. Having said that, in many instances we still find that the so-called market still embodies and reproduces the same class, race and gender stereotypes we try to eradicate. This shows that there is an intricate link between the market and the continued reproduction of inequalities and gender stereotypes. For instance, often, the interests and needs of the market have become a convenient explanation for newspaper bosses to deny or defuse issues about women in their publications. Following from the above, it is clear that the question of women's inadequate media representation can never be overcome unless one also explores the complex processes of ownership patterns in the media, and how they work with the dominant groups in society to impact on newspaper content.

The press in Zambia started out as private business with various newspapers owned by foreign conglomerates such as the Argus Group and its subsidiary (Kasoma, 1986;

Chirwa, 1996). However, an unprecedented rate of newspaper consolidation took place in 1964 – the year Northern Rhodesia became the independent Republic of Zambia. The South African based Argus Group together with its Southern Rhodesian-based subsidiary, the Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company, withdrew from the new nation-to-be as newspaper publishers. They feared that the pro-White record of their newspapers would have repercussions in the attitude of the new Black Government towards them. According to Kasoma (1986), they also wanted to avoid embarrassment since they were based in countries which Zambia's new leaders considered unfriendly.

Consequently, in February 1964, the Argus newspaper group first gave up the central *African Mail*, followed by the *Northern News* in December to a more localised company Lonrho (London Rhodesian Mining Land Company). The move was said to be the first step in rationalising the company's newspaper activities in the country to allow them to play their full role as the country's national daily newspapers (Kasoma, 1986:82). Lonrho also purchased two other dailies, the *Zambia Times* and its Sunday version, *Zambia News*, which was also the country's first and only Sunday newspaper.

**Times of Zambia**

Lonrho did not purchase *Zambia Times* and *Zambia News* for their own sake. Rather, they were part of a package deal for Heinrich's businesses. The two newspapers were the first ones to be owned by Lonrho, which was founded in 1909. By buying Heinrich's businesses Lonrho thus found itself also the owner of a pair of money-losing newspapers which nevertheless had built up much goodwill among Africans in

the country as a result of having identified themselves with the African cause right from their first issues. In doing this they were more believable than the other White newspapers, such as *Northern News*, which although they were trying to change with the times, had an anti-African record behind them (Kasoma, ibid).

As a result of the non-profitability of the newspaper business, Lonrho was forced to shut down some publications to minimise losses. The Lonrho managing director, Roland, wanted to close down both *Zambia Times* and the *Zambia News*, but was advised by the government to at least keep the Sunday newspaper. He closed down the Kitwe plant and moved *Zambia News* to the *Northern News* plant in Ndola where it continued under the same name. Rowland killed the *Zambia Times* but cleverly renamed The *Northern News* the *Times of Zambia*, to inherit the goodwill of the *Zambia Times*, it would seem.

The *Times of Zambia* first appeared on 30 June 1965. Apparently as part of the strategy to revamp the poor public image of the former *Northern News*, Lonrho also appointed as editor-in-chief non other than Richard Hall, founder of the pro-African and pro-UNIP *Central African Mail*. In accepting his appointment, Hall expressed great optimism in the government's liberal democracy, which allowed true and constructive press freedom that was a significant contrast to some so-called advanced countries where honest journalism was in danger of being fizzled away (Kasoma, 1986).

Hall, whose appointment was publicly welcomed by President Kaunda, immediately set out to improve the newspaper's public image by 'Zambianising' it both in staff

and content. He hired some Black Zambian reporters, weeded out 'colonial-minded' White staff members and recruited only sub-editors with politically progressive views. He also discontinued the Reuters via South Africa news service and brought in the Reuters Africa service, which contained more general news about Africa (Kasoma, 1986).

On the international scene, the main editorial thrust of the *Times of Zambia* under Hall was to vehemently oppose to Ian Smith's U.D.I. in Southern Rhodesia and to condemn dictatorships in Africa. At home the newspaper generally supported the government but reserved the right to criticise it. The government, for its part, accepted criticism when it felt it was justified and constructive. However, in later years, the government resented the *Times of Zambia* for condemning some of its policies to the extent that Hall had to resign in fear that the paper would be closed if he remained its editor-in-chief. Interestingly, in all the debates about the *Times* and government, there was no mention of gender or any issues relating to the subject. This could be interpreted variedly to either be because gender was not considered an important subject of discussion or as simply an oversight. In this publication stories that related to women focused on informal educational programmes on cookery and farming.

Early in 1968, President Kaunda nationalised several of the country's key industries in line with his philosophy of Humanism. Kaunda announced that the state was to purchase 51 percent controlling shares in the companies. He also invited Lonrho through Zambia Newspapers to sell 51 percent of its shares to the government. Although Lonrho did not respond immediately to government demands, it was forced to do so under mounting pressure in October 1982. Although the take-over of the

*Times of Zambia* and its sister paper the *Sunday Times* were not actualised in 1975 when government first showed intent, the newspaper was a de facto party paper before it even became a property of Zambia National Holdings – UNIP's conglomerate. This is evidenced by the way editors-in-chief were hired and fired on government initiative (Kasoma, 1986).

**Daily Mail**

Early in 1965, the government expressed concern at the prospect of one foreign company – Lonrho – owning all the national newspapers in the country. Lonrho then owned the *Northern News (Times of Zambia), Zambia Times* and the *Zambia News.* The only other national newspaper outside its orbit was the *Central African Mail.* In fact, Lonrho had tried to buy this newspaper too but was put off by the excessive price of £100,000 that the owners were asking.

In January 1965, the Minister of Information issued a statement in Parliament in which he said that the government would not sit back and let one company monopolise Zambia's press and television media. This was followed by the president's announcement of government plans to publish a newspaper that was to provide a forum for expression of free thought. In May 1965, the government officially announced it would buy the *Central African Mail.* However, the government's idea of providing a forum for free expression did not take women into consideration. This is evidenced by the lack of gender sensitive media policy. The government seemed to be more interested in providing the black 'man' a forum for discussion of what it considered as topical issues (Chirwa, 1996).

The *Central African Mail,* under its new ownership, first came out as a Government weekly on 6 August 1965, with a circulation of 20,000. It was also the last time that the newspaper was published under that name. Welcoming the new journal, the Minister of Information said that the government intention was to make the newspaper lively, stimulating and readable. He did not want it to be a dull catalogue of official announcements, lacking impact, and ultimately rejected by its reading public (cited in Kasoma, 1986). The minister stated that the newspaper would reflect public opinion of all shades in Zambia. He also promised suppressing no comment or criticism or viewpoint that was sincere and constructive, and to include conflict and controversy since they were the lifeblood of a newspaper and the main basis of its influence on its reading public (ibid).

In the early years, the *Zambia Mail* criticised the government's educational policy, calling for a system that would involve the whole nation. The newspaper also found fault with excessive central government red-tape and challenged the administration to speed up decisions.

The *Zambia Mail* became a daily newspaper on 15 July 1969. In an editorial that marked the occasion, the journal explained its editorial policy as a government newspaper, owned ultimately by the Zambian people. The *Mail* claimed to be completely committed to the development and progress of the nation and to improving the lot of common man (Zambia Daily Mail, 1969). According to the editor-in-chief, the paper would defend government when necessary but would not white-wash government departments when mistakes were made. Another role for the *Mail* to play was to reflect public opinion and to voice the feelings of the people. In

doing this, it would not censor or suppress criticism that was sincere and constructive (ibid).

Unfortunately, even with the government claim that its paper would be 'for all Zambian people', the content of the *Mail* like the *Times* did not place much interest in women, their welfare, and their role in the development and progress of the nation. Women continued to be either left out of the publication or to received stereotyped portrayals. The lack of newspaper content about women in a way is reflective of government policy which did not consider women as equal citizens with men in development. Therefore, even when claims were made that the paper was intended for all Zambians, they actually meant all Zambian men, as they are the ones who benefited from newspaper representation than women. This could also be seen in other sectors of society where women's level of participation was kept minimal.

**The Post**

The *Post* is a paper that was born as a result of political tension in Zambia that grew during the months preceding the parliamentary and political elections. Yielding to pressure, government policy was changed to liberalise the economy which in turn made it possible for privately owned newspapers to be established in the country. Several privately owned newspapers including the *Chronicle, People, Weekly Post, Monitor* and the *Tribune* appeared on the market. However, of all these newspapers, the *Post* and the *Monitor* are the ones that have survived and continue publication to date. The *Post*, which started as a weekly, and later turned bi-weekly has in recent years become a daily. The *Monitor* on the contrary has remained a weekly, and is

faced with financial difficulties to the extent that some issues are not published due to lack of funds to purchase news print.

The *Post* first appeared on the market in February 1991 with the primary aim of producing the best quality newspaper in Zambia in order to exploit the gap in the market caused by the inadequacy of coverage of the existing press. This aim was to be realised by playing a distinct role in the socio-economic and political arena. Politically, the *Post* saw its role as that of questioning policies and actions of the authorities and all those who wield or aspire to wield social, economic and political power over the lives of the ordinary people. Through investigation and reportage and analysis, the *Post* saw itself as protecting and promoting the newly emerging democratic political culture, in which the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals are guaranteed (Weekly Post, 1991).

The editorial plan for the *Post* was six-fold. First, it saw itself as having a professional duty to maintain the highest professional and ethical standards, and to defend at all times freedom of the Press and other media to collect information and express comment and criticism. Second, to strive for balance at all times in the ways that they select, write and present news, bearing in mind that there are almost always different views on any issue and on interpretation of events. Third, to try as far as possible to be accurate, fair and honest by not suppressing, distorting or censoring news unless by publication someone's life is endangered. Fourth, not to distort or suppress the truth because of advertising or other considerations, such as the personal interests of the directors and shareholders. Fifth, to mention only a person's race, colour, creed, illegitimacy, marital status or lack of it, gender or sexual orientation or political

affiliation if this information is strictly relevant to the understanding of material being published. Finally, to rectify promptly any harmful inaccuracies, ensure that correction and apologies receive due prominence, and to afford the right of reply to persons criticised when the issue is of sufficient importance (The Post, 1991).

The *Post* has strived to work in line with its editorial policy, which makes it an alternative paper to the government owned newspapers. Since it first appeared on the market, the *Post* has commanded a large portion of the readership. However, this kind of stance has landed the newspaper into trouble with the government on several occasions. At one time, the *Post* had over ten cases in court ranging from criminal defamation to libel. Consequently, most of the shareholders sold their shares limiting ownership and control into hands of very few people. However, the *Post* seems to have limited its responsibility to merely policing government and has to a great extent failed to include subjects of interest to the wider society. For instance, the *Post* pays little or no attention to issues relating to women unless they have a direct bearing on big politics. In most instances the stories contained in the paper fail to provide women the opportunity for equal participation in national development, as they focus on trivial matters such as love affairs and so forth.

**Quantitative News Sample**

Across all of the newspapers sampled, the number of stories totalled 1,050. Out of this total, 446 occurred in the *Post*, followed by the *Daily Mail* at 310 and finally the *Times of Zambia* at 294. After I had decided to include the *Post* in my sample, it became apparent that I would have to draw the sample with a slight variation compared to the other two newspapers because of the ever-changing frequency of the

paper. For instance, the *Post* first appeared on the market in July 1991 and then the paper was a weekly. In order to collect that year's sample, I decided not to follow the calendar year, but selected my sample from July 1991 (when the *Post* was first published) to July 1992, unlike the other two papers for which I selected samples using the calendar year. In the subsequent year of my analysis (1995) I used the calendar year to select a sample. At this point the *Post* was a bi-weekly newspaper that was published on Tuesdays and Fridays. All the papers published during this period were included in the sample because it was quite difficult to decide to choose one paper and leave the other. In the last year (1999) I used the calendar year to select my sample as the *Post* had become a daily paper in July, 1996. As it turned out, at the end of drawing my sample, the *Post* has the biggest number of articles totalling 446, whilst the *Times* had 294 and the *Daily Mail* 310. Whilst I do appreciate the problem that this may cause in terms of sample size compared to the other publications, I would like to believe that it was imperative to include the *Post* newspaper for the reasons stated above, and that the results obtained from the sample will be valid to establish general patterns and trends of news coverage of women in the press in Zambia. Otherwise, restricting analysis to the two other papers could have limited the scope of the study as they are both quasi government institutions which reflect only the owners' point of view.

**Breakdown of Quantitative Sample by Paper and Year.**

Table 1. Times of Zambia

| *Year* | *No. of Issues* | *No. of articles* | *Average No. articles per issue* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1991 | 63 | 66 | 1 |
| 1995 | 63 | 111 | 2 |
| 1999 | 63 | 117 | 2 |
| **Total** | 189 | 294 | |

Table 2. Zambia Daily Mail

| *Year* | *No. of Issues* | *No. of articles* | *Average No. articles per issue* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1991 | 63 | 153 | 3 |
| 1995 | 63 | 95 | 1 |
| 1999 | 63 | 62 | 1 |
| **Total** | 189 | 310 | |

Table 3. The Post

| *Year* | *No. of Issues* | *No. of articles* | *Average No. articles per issue* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1991/92 | 41 | 139 | 3 |
| 1995 | 72 | 206 | 3 |
| 1999 | 63 | 101 | 2 |
| **Total** | 176 | 446 | |

**Coverage of news about women in the press.**

This section focuses on the coverage of women's news in the press in order to examine which issues are sufficiently important to be disseminated by the newspaper. Whereas a reporter may have varied information at his/her disposal, they are likely to

select only a certain quantity and write it up according to what he/she deems as important. The decision on how to write up the story is on one hand guided by news values common to journalistic practice which include, timeliness, prominence, proximity, and frequency (Barthes, 1973; Epstein, 1973; Galtung and Ruge, 1981; Tuchman, 1978a; Hall, 1981; Zelizer, 1992). Other factors such as the paper's editorial policy, ethical considerations and newsroom routines also influence the reporter's choice and treatment of information. Newspaper routines in some instances create constraints in journalistic practice such as, newspaper size and available news space (Tuchman, 1978b). On the other hand, the reporters own personal experience or beliefs also influence the choice of what to include in the news in a subtle yet significant way, and what approach to take to write it up. That is, what to place as the main focus, the language and many other such considerations. This explains, why, for instance, even when two reporters belonging to different organisations have the same amount of information about an event, it is most likely that each one would write it up differently. Each reporter may have to consider the kind of paper they are writing for in order to have the story fit in with the rest of the material. Once the story is written up, its packaging will influence to a great extent where and with what other material the story is placed in the paper.

Newspapers have at their disposal traditional means of indicating emphasis and significance. These may include whether a news story is long or short, whether it has an accompanying picture or not, whether it has a large headline or small headline, whether it is on the front page or back page, and whether it is run above the fold or below the fold. However, news accounts, may be deconstructed in ideological terms so as to elucidate how news values help to rule certain types of events as

'newsworthy' while, at the same time, ruling out alternative types. At the heart of these processes of inclusion and exclusion are certain 'principles of organisation' or 'frames' (Goffman, 1974) which work to impose order on multiple happenings of the social world so as to render them into series of meaningful events. Precisely how a particular news event is 'framed' by the journalist claiming to be providing an 'objective' or balanced account thus takes on a distinct ideological significance (Allan, 1999: 63). Gitlin (1980: 6) argues that news frames make the world beyond direct experience look natural; they are 'principles of selection, emphasis, and presentation composed of little tacit theories about what exists, what happens, and what matters'.

In the subsequent section I seek to establish the nature of coverage in terms of presentation and supposed organisation. I analyse how news about women is framed, and show that through repetition, through the very everydayness of news discourse, that the prevailing frames acquire an ostensibly 'natural' or taken-for-granted status. For instance, once a particular frame has been adopted for a news story, its principles of selection and rejection ensure that only information or material which is seen to be legitimate, as appropriate within the conventions of newsworthiness so defined, is to appear in the account (Gitlin, 1980). I analyse who writes up the stories, how are they written up (who are the actors) and where they are placed in a selection of the Zambian newspapers. I do so in an effort to support the argument that the press in Zambia fail to acknowledge the place and importance of women's voices in the development of the nation. They write about women in ways that renders their contributions negligible and insignificant.

A total of 1,050 stories in the three years of study (1991, 1995 and 1999) were coded and analysed according to the criteria defined in the earlier part of this chapter. The yearly breakdown of the numbers according to newspaper is as follows: there were 139 stories in the *Post* in the first year, 206 in 1995 and 101 in 1999. The *Daily Mail* had 153 stories in 1991, 95 in 1995 and 62 in 1999. Whilst the *Times* had 66 pieces in 1991, 111 in 1995 and 117 in 1999. The various types of stories identified in the data were news reports (35.9 %), photos (27.9%), features (10.7%), soft (7.8%), news brief (7.3%), other/unspecified (3.8%), editorial (1.7%), analysis (1.4%), interview (1.1%), cartoon (1.0%), exclusive (0.6), opinion column (0.5%), and backgrounder (0.2%).

News reports formed a major percentage of the data. They are mainly found on the first five pages of the newspapers included in the sample. A news report within the context of this study is defined as a story of around 600 words which reports events factually and objectively and is mainly event-oriented (see Tuchman, 1978b). In other words, a news report is considered as containing 'hard' facts. It is up to the minute news and events that are reported immediately. A hard news report is usually placed on the front or first few pages of a newspaper and is chronicle of current events and incidents. Perhaps the most effective way of explaining hard news is by distinguishing it from soft news. Unlike hard news, soft news is information that is not constrained by time, focused more on human interest issues and allows for commentary and analysis. A hard news story, on the other hand, is constrained by time and is event oriented. There is no room for a reporter's commentary and analysis. An 'event' is a discrete happening which is limited by time and space, whilst an 'issue' contains subjectivity, debate and analysis. A series of events can lead to an issue. For instance,

a series of drug-related 'events' bring up the 'issue' of drug abuse (see Rogers and Dearing, 1994).

Feminist scholars have argued that the distinction of news into 'hard' and 'soft' is androcentric and plays a significant part in perpetuating skewed news coverage in which women are either invisible or stereotyped (see for example Christmas, 1997; Holland, 1998; Steiner, 1998; Allan, 2004). For instance, 'hard' news stories are considered a male domain and 'soft' female. In a typical newsroom women are most likely to be assigned to 'soft' news beats that can be considered an extension of their domestic responsibilities and their socially assigned qualities of care, nurturing and humanity (van Zoonen, 1998: 34). Such beats mostly elicit material for in-depth human interest reports while men are assigned to cover events that will yield 'hard' news stories. Apart from that, most stories about women are usually treated as 'soft' because they are not event orientated and therefore end up buried in the inside pages of the newspaper with other such material.

The raw total of news reports across the newspaper sample is 377. The news reports in this sample fell within the 100-400 word-range (although in certain cases the stories were up to 500 or more words). The *Times of Zambia* had the highest number of news reports totalling 142 (37.7%), followed by the *Post*, which had 129 (34.2%), and the *Daily Mail* with 106 (28.1%).

A further breakdown of news reports into sub-themes ( social, foreign, legal/courts, violence/crime, women's movement, conferences, political, sport, advice, economy/business, parliament, education, demonstrations/protests and health)

revealed a significant pattern. All the news reports about women were event-oriented, and did not utilise any detail or contain any analysis. For instance, the social category had most items focusing on speeches at meetings and official gatherings, with no attempt to interpret the information. The largest number of the news reports was social, with 92 (24.4%) items, followed by foreign 87 (23.1%), violence/crime 54 (14.3%), legal/courts 40 (10.6%), women's movement 24 (6.4%), conferences 23 (6.1%), political 13 (3.4%), sport 12 (3.2%), advice 11 (2.9%), economy/business 11 (2.9%), parliament 5 (1.3%), education 2 (0.5%), demonstration/protest 2 (0.5%) and health 1 (0.3%). The social news reports were focused on government policy on various social issues, speeches from public meetings and women's family relations, touching on their social role in light of the difficult economic environment and the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Foreign news reports compose a large proportion of stories on women. Out of the 87 foreign news stories, 36 (41.4%) were in the *Times*, followed by the *Daily Mail* with 28 (32.2%) and *Post* with 23 (26.4%). The events covered in the foreign news stories either discussed dignitaries, or deliberations at international gatherings organised by bodies such us the United Nations, Amnesty International and so forth. In rare instances the stories are about activities of the women's movement.

The other rather notable sub-category in the news reports about women is the sub-theme of violence/crime that had 54 news items. Of the 54 items, 17 (31.5%) were of sexual assault, followed by 11 (20.4%) of murder, 10 (18.5%) of criminal activities on women other than violence, 8 (14.8%) stories were of women as perpetrators of violence, 7 (12.9%) of physical violence against women and 1 (1.9%) abductions. The large number of stories related to violence against women in the press can be

perceived as a reflection of how much it is a problem in society or as the continued media effort to portray women as victims of violent crimes. Rather interesting for me was the fact that of the 17 items of sexual assault, 12 (70.6%) stories were of rape and one of defilement[2]. These are sex related crimes which reflect the workings of a society in which women are considered as sex objects, and this trend is even practiced in its most unacceptable form with young girls. I find this significant because after several interventions by the women's movement and the government through the adoption of more stringent laws to deal with perpetrators of rape, statistics from this study have shown an increase in the incidence of rape in its worst form of defilement. A report on women in Zambia (Southern African Research and Documentation Centre,1998), explains the increase of violence in the country is a sign of instability of patriarchal control in many respects. For, instance, the report argues that patriarchal instability in the home has led to increased incidents of domestic violence. According to the report, as ideological control wanes, violence is increasingly used as a means of subjugation.

Whilst reports of violence against women in the press keep readers informed about the seriousness of the issue, they fall short of presenting in depth analysis of the issue in order to unveil the underlying causes. Soothill and Walby (1991) argue that in the absence of proper analyses of causes of these crimes, the reader is provided with very little by way of useful information to effect change. In a similar instance, Carter (1998b: 224), argues that much of the coverage of violence against women encourages readers to believe that sexual violence is a 'natural', seemingly inevitable, part of ordinary experience in modern society. Therefore, in many instances these

[2] Defilement is the legal term used to describe the act of having sexual intercourse with a minor below the age of sixteen.

news reports of incidents of rape and defilement end up contributing to the ideological reproduction of social relations in which women are perceived as victims (see Benedict, 1992; Meyers, 1997). The stories are more concerned with establishing whether or not the women were to blame for the attack. Meyers (1997) suggests that the conventional forms of news presentation associated with these crimes are actually harmful to the interests of all women. News reports which blame victims instead of treating them with respect contribute to the reinforcement of prejudice at a societal level, she argues, while the humiliation, guilt or anguish they cause to women involved is almost never acknowledged.

Table 4: Sub-themes of Violence/crime stories

| *Paper* | *Daily Mail* | *Post* | *Times of Zambia* | *%* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sexual assault | 5 | 3 | 9 | 31.5 |
| Murder | 3 | 2 | 6 | 20.4 |
| Criminal activities | 1 | 9 | - | 18.5 |
| Women perpetrators | 4 | 4 | - | 14.8 |
| Physical abuse | 3 | - | 4 | 12.9 |
| Abductions | - | - | 1 | 1.9 |
| **Total** | **16** | **18** | **20** | **100** |

The next largest category was legal matters or court proceedings which had 40 (10.6%) pieces across the three papers. The court stories mainly originated from the local courts (courts which mainly practice customary law) and focused on dysfunctional marriages in which one or both parties are involved in adulterous relationships. There is a depressingly low number of articles of women in politics – 13 (3.4%), economy/business – 11 (2.9%), parliament – 5 (1.3%), and health – 1 (0.3%). This trend could be explained in the light of the private verse public divide in which business, politics and health are considered to belong to the public male whilst women are confined to the private sphere of domesticity. The underlying frame of reference is

that women belong to the family and domestic life and men to the social world of politics and work; that femininity is about care, nurturance and compassion, and that masculinity is about efficiency, rationality and individuality (Sreberny and van Zoonen, 2000). And whereas women's political activities try to undermine just that gendered distinction between public and private, it seems to remain the inevitable frame of reference to understand it.

Based on the news reports, the data suggested that news reports about women's issues tend to be event oriented. Such stories are largely incapable of offering the reader more than a severely limited description of an event. This is in line with what Roscho (1975) points out as the basic function of news, which is to keep people aware, not necessarily knowledgeable, of what is going on in the world. Consequently, what tends to be given more time and space in the newspapers are spectacular events such as demonstrations, workshops, seminars and controversial court stories about adulterous wives and so forth. Dahlgren (1989) suggests that this daily coverage of short, ostensibly mundane stories forces journalists to heavily depend on stereotypes to explain and contextualise occurrences (see also Carter, 1998a). Thus these stories easily fit into the media's routinisation and require less efforts and expertise.

News brief was the next largest category that followed with 239 items across all newspapers in the sample or 22.8%. There was a significant difference in the number of news briefs across the three newspapers. The highest number was in the *Daily Mail* where there were 131 or 54.8% items; followed by the *Times* with 59 items, an equivalent of 24.7% and then the *Post* with 49 items or 20.5%. A typical news brief in the sample was than 100 words long and presented the bare facts of a recent incident.

The report would either have originated from the police, hospital or in certain cases the courts. Whilst most of the stories are serious in nature, a number of them had quite a humorous and light approach. That is, the issue being written about was explained lightly, or just a mere mention of an event, with no detailed information in the paper even though the subject is of great importance. Two thirds of the total of news brief were less than a hundred words, with some as little as 20 words. It is apparent that with such length nothing can be discussed in detail. For instance, even when the news brief touches on something of great concern such as violence against women, it is just the surface that is touched leaving the detail which could enlighten the reader better about the circumstances within which the incident occurred (see Carter, 1998a). This finding supports argument that stories about women are given little depth, and as a result the reader is unable to appreciate the magnitude of the issue at hand. Also, by writing up the stories in a humorous way, the significance of the content or subject is watered down. For example, an article on the subject of high incidents of rape was headlined: '*Tshala Muana's performance Incited Rapists*' (Weekly Post, 1992). The story suggests that men went on a rampage raping women because they had been to a musical concert where the female dancers were dressed in scanty clothes and performed 'sexual' dances. As a result, information derived from such stories in most instances works to negate the role or issues that are of concern to women, and which relate to them.

The next category that follows news reports is photos with 133 items (12.7%). Of the 133 photos, 100 were found in the *Post*, 17 in the *Times* and 16 in the *Daily Mail*. I included the category of photo in the types of items because working on the sample, I realised that there were many photos of women in the newspapers. However, I found

that most of the photos contained in the newspapers were in the inside pages of the papers with women appearing in the background. In fact, in most stories the photos of women had no direct relation what was being discussed in the story. It appears that they were just placed there to take up space or just to attract the reader's attention – encouraging them to think that the content of the story somehow relates to the photographs. In other instances, women were sexually objectified by focusing on their physical attributes even when the story had nothing to do with that. In the instances that photographs of women were included in the paper, that they had no relation to editorial content could be seen as a marketing strategy by the publication. It can be seen as a means of attracting buyers to buy the paper. On the other hand, the other images underplay the role of women as they keep them in the periphery of what is happening as if to suggest that is where they belong. These findings support those of Miller's study (1976) of content of news photos in the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times* in which he found that women are scarce in the first sections of the newspapers, they are infrequently the subjects of stories or photographs and even less frequently the writers of stories. Another example can be drawn from the British tabloid press which usually carry photographs of women and celebrity women on the front pages yet do not have stories on the page to go with the pictures.

The third and other notable type of story is that of the feature with 112 (10.7%) items. The *Times* had the biggest number of features, which totalled 44 (39.3%), followed by the *Daily Mail* with 37 (33%) and the *Post* with 31 (27.7%). Feature stories focus on current topics of interest, however, there are usually not the same sorts of time pressures in their reporting as the case is with hard news stories. As such, this type of reporting tends to provide readers with a wider social context within which to assess

and make sense of issues relating to women, primarily because feature articles are often three to four times longer than a typical news item. That is to say, a feature article permits the journalist to analyse issues unlike in a hard news story that is limited by the time pressures and limitations of news space. The other advantage of feature articles is that since it gives the journalist more control over the timing of his or her report, female journalists are better able to combine work and family which is much more difficult to do on a daily news beat (see, Beasley, 1992; Christmas, 1997; Van Zoonen, 1991, 1994 1997, 1998; Ross, 2001; Gallagher, 2003; Byerly, 2004).

The next most frequently occurring type of news in my study is that of 'soft' news. The term 'soft' news usually refers to feature or human-interest stories, Fedler (2001). In the case of this study, 'soft' news refers to fairly short stories in length and detail unlike features. Soft news entertains and informs, and may appeal to its readers' emotions. Such stories may make readers laugh or cry, love or hate, envy or pity. While still newsworthy, soft news is often less timely than breaking or hard news. As noted by van Zoonen (1994: 53), women journalists 'tend to prevail in those areas that can be seen as an extension of their domestic responsibilities (such as) human interest and feature sections of newspapers'. A total of 81 or 7.7% stories were categorised as soft. The highest number of soft news stories was in the *Post* in which there were 53 (66.6%) items, followed by the *Daily Mail* with 18 (22%) and the *Times* with 11 (13.4%) stories. Most of the soft news stories contained in the newspapers made light issues that relate to women, such as wife battery, violence and how women fail to cope with men's polygamous behaviour. For example in the Post, more than five stories appeared on different days discussing the extremes that women go to in order to keep their marriage together. Some other stories on the subject discussed women's

behaviours when they found themselves in these polygamous relations. This can be exemplified by the following headlines of stories of this nature:

'Now married women declare war against younger girls' (Post, January, 1995)

'Women, love potions and those bizarre ingredients' (Post, February, 1995)

'Wives' snooping keeps their husbands faithful' (Post, March, 1995)

'Married women fear keeping female relatives in their homes' (Post, November,1995)

The next largest category of the types of items was 'other' with 40 or 3.8% items. The 'other' category covered items that could not fit into the other categories stated above. For example: advertisements, announcements and/or notices. The other types of news that follow are editorial 18 (1.7%), analysis 15 (1.4%), interview/profile 12 (1.1%), cartoon 11 (1.0%), exclusive 6 (0.6%), opinion column 5 (0.5%) and backgrounder with 2 (0.2%) items (See Appendix 1).

**News Classification**

In an attempt to have a better picture in which areas news coverage of women is most prevalent, I further classified the stories as follows: city, nation, editorial page, foreign economy/business, sport, provincial, letter to editor, political, parliament, entertainment, advertisement and unclassified. The use of city and nation classification was intended to establish the spread of coverage geographically bearing in mind that in Zambia today there are more women living in the rural areas than there are in cities. During the 1990s and to date two thirds of the female population is based in the rural areas (Central Statistics Report, 2003). As such, I found it imperative to establish the focus of stories in the papers in order to find out whether issues relating to rural women, who make up the larger part of the nations' female population, are

given adequate space and time for coverage. It is only by affording them coverage that their contribution to various aspects of national development could be fully appreciated. For example, 75 percent of the food produced in the country is by rural female peasant farmers (Central Statistic Report, 2003).

The classification of news yielded interesting results. National stories were the largest category with 347 (33%) items. Items classified as national had content discussing issues pertaining to the entire country. These were mainly policy issues related to health, population, education, development, economy and land. Stories about women relating to issues such as the impact of environmental degradation on farming, poverty, education, political representation of women and the like were either missing or negligible in the coverage. The next largest category was city with 227 (21.6%) items. Stories in this category focused mainly on Lusaka, the country's capital and other cities along the rail line including, Livingstone, Choma, Kalomo, Mazabuka, Kabwe, Ndola, Luanshya, Kitwe, Mufulira and Chingola. Stories in this category are of a general nature discussing a wide range of subjects including deliberations at meetings, political rallies, workshops, conferences and several scandalous events that took place in the different towns. Foreign stories formed the next largest category with 192 (18.3%) stories followed by unclassified items having 99 or 9.4% items. Unclassified items are ones that could not fit into any of the above categories. The next most frequently occurring class is sport with 40 or 3.8% items, followed by letters to the editor with 35 or 3.3% items. Political stories formed the next biggest class with 33 or 3.1% items, then entertainment with 26 (2.5%), business/economy with 15 (1.4%), provincial/rural with 12 or 1.1%, advertisement with 12 or 1.1%, editorial 7 or 0.7% and finally parliament with 5 or 0.5% items.

Data in the present study suggests that there are more relevant events taking place that are of national interest, followed by city news considering that these are the two most frequently occurring classes of news. Needless to say that it is not always clear whether an item should be classified as city or national (see Fishman, 1980). Based on these findings and other supporting data gathered during my research, I would like to posit that there are more stories originating from the cities of both national and city relevance because this is where most media organisations are based and they have very few or no journalists working in small rural towns. For example, the *Times of Zambia* has the Head Office in Ndola, another big one in Lusaka and other small ones run by two or three members of staff in other towns along the rail line. The picture with the *Daily Mail* is not so different, it has the Head Office in Lusaka, other big ones in Ndola, Kitwe and Mufulira, with smaller ones in the other towns along the rail line. The *Post* has an even smaller operational set up with the Head Office in Lusaka and journalists stationed in some of the towns. In most cases, one journalist has to cover the entire province (personal interview with IT manager, 2004). In such instances there is a high dependence on the Zambia News Agency (ZANA) and Zambia Information Services (ZIS) for rural coverage.

Reporters only visit rural areas when they are accompanying government officials on tours. The fact that they accompany dignitaries on tour limits the reporters' opportunity to cover other issues apart from the events in which the official participates. According to Kanene (1995) this type of reporting makes the reporter ignore the more important issues obtaining in the areas visited. It is only in rare instances that the reporter takes advantage of his visit to write up material on issues

not directly related to the dignitary's tour objectives. This argument is supported by Tuchman's (1978b) concept of the 'news net', which is said to impose order on the social world because it enables news events to occur at some locations but not at others. According to Tuchman, reporters cannot write about occurrences hidden from view by either their geographic location or social class. This can also be seen in the findings of this study which reveal that only few stories about rural women in general and their contribution to national development are contained in the newspapers despite the fact that most of the female population of Zambia is based in rural areas.

There are other categories in which coverage of women is negligible. For instance, there are only 40 or 3.8% sport stories about women. It can be deduced from this finding that either there are fewer sports women than there are men or that women in sports are not just given adequate coverage. It is worth noting that even in the few sports stories that appeared in the papers, some headlines portray women as not belonging to certain sports and as such they hold marginal positions. For example, a headline on the sports page in one of the papers read as follows: *'Boots on the wrong feet' (Times of Zambia)*. This is a story that discussed the excellent performance of a women's football team. However, as the headline suggests, women are not supposed to be playing football hence the 'wrong feet'. The other categories in which women are negligible are economy/business, political, parliament and letters to editor.

The small number of news stories involving women in the above said areas could be interpreted in various ways. First, it could be maintained that there are few stories touching on women in business, politics and so forth because there are few women actively participating in these areas. For instance, there were only nine women

parliamentarians out of 150 members during the period for which data was analysed for this study (National Women's Lobby Group Report, 2003). Unfortunately, the number dropped in the 1996 election and has continued this downward trend – it has now been reduced to seven. Of course in such a situation it is difficult to have many stories emanating from parliament in which women could have participated. Though I should hasten to say that this does not mean that issues concerning and about women are in this case less important in parliament. Second, it could be argued that women participating in these areas are ignored and do not get news coverage because these areas are considered as male domains, therefore women are out of place in them. In line with this argument could be the fact that although women do participate in politics and parliament, they do not belong to the power group that makes decisions. Therefore, they get very little news coverage in general, and even when women are covered the stories are likely to be located on the lifestyle pages (Carroll and Schreiber, 1997). Pingree and Hawkins (1978) argued in their research that women as potential newsmakers are placed in a very awkward position since they are denied the decision-making power that would make their actions news. Still on the subject of news coverage of women in politics, previous research found a consistent pattern of exclusion and stereotyping in terms of both sources and subjects (Lont, 1995). More recently, Carroll & Schreiber (1997), Norris (1997), Ross & Sreberny (2000), and Ross (2002) argue that the number and placement of newspapers articles on women in politics indicate the seriousness with which the media consider this group and may send a potentially powerful message to readers. For instance, by relegating stories about women and politics to the life style or women section instead of placing them in the front section of the paper may create the impression that the presence of women in politics is unimportant and that their contributions are marginal.

**Length of News Item in Words and Paragraphs**

Quantitative news research often measures stories for their total length in words and paragraphs in order to get a sense of how much column space is allotted to stories. Column space measurements can indicate what quantitative emphasis is being given to any story, which may be related to the relative importance of the event and issues being covered. Because individual newspapers vary quite widely in the length of stories in both words and paragraphs, this measurement might not be as helpful a category as it can be in situations where the newspapers studied tend to have similar word and paragraph length. I can report that the three newspapers put together had most stories with less than 100 words totalling 264 or 25.1%. This could be indicative of the lack of significance given to the stories to the extent that it is deemed unimportant to provide background and context of the information. Clearly, very little informational content can be derived from a 100 word story. The paragraph length of the stories varied from paper to paper, however, put together, most stories had a length of between 7 and 12 paragraphs amounting to 299 or 28.5%.

Looking at the length of stories in words, the data shows that most of the stories have a length of less than 100 to 400 words. The data shows that from the total sample of three newspapers of 1050 stories, 264 or 25.1% had less than 100 words, followed by stories with 100 – 199 words which totalled 171 or 16.3%, and then stories with 200 – 299 words with 152 or 14.5% and the 300 to 399 category with 121 or 11.5% items. A further break down of data according to newspaper shows that the *Daily Mail* had the most stories below 100 words from a sample of 310 items totalling 130 (41.9%), 53 (17.1%) stories between 100 – 199, 37 (11.9%) between 200 – 299, and 17 (5.5%)

between 300 – 399. On the other hand, out of 294 stories, the *Times* had 69 or (23.5%) items below 100 words, 45 (15.3%) between 100 –199, 44 (15%) between 200 – 299 and 40 (13.6%) between 300 - 399. Whilst the *Post* with a total sample of 446 had 65 (14.6%) stories less than 100 words, 73 (16.4%) between 100 –199, 71 (15.9%) between 200 – 299 and 64 (14.3%) between 300 – 399 respectively. The remainder of the sample shows that in the three papers there were 54 or 5.1% items with the length of 1000 or more words, 11 (1.0%) with 900 – 999, 7 (0.7%) between 800 – 899, 23 or 2.2% with 700 – 799, 30 or 2.9% with 600 – 699 words, 24 or 2.3% of items with between 500 – 599 and 78 or 7.4% with 400 – 499. The data suggests that most of the stories on women or relating to issues of interest to women are usually short and lack analysis or even background information to enable the reader understand better what s/he is dealing with. Generally, a lack of information in the content could adversely affect the interpretation of a topic at hand by readers as they are sometimes unable to appreciate the context in which it is being discussed.

In the length of stories in paragraphs the data reveals that most of the items had a length of between 7 and 12, making 299 or 28.5% of the total 1050. This was followed by items with more than 13 paragraphs, 256 (24.4%), followed by ones with 1–2 totalling 206 (19.6%), then between 3 – 6 with 179 items or 17%. A further breakdown by newspaper shows that 143 or (32.1%) stories in the *Post* had a length between 7-12 paragraphs, followed by 120 or (26.9%) items with more than 13, then 75 or (16.8%) with 3-6, and 40 (9%) with 1-2. The remaining 68 (15.2%) were photos without text. The picture is very different in the *Daily Mail,* which had 126 (40.6%) stories with 1-2 paragraphs, followed by 69 (22.3%) stories between 7-12, 52 (16.8%) with between 3-6, 42 (13.5%) of the stories had more than 13 paragraphs and 21

(6.8%) were photos without text. The *Times* had 94 (32%) stories with more than 13 paragraphs, followed by 87 (29.6%) stories with between 7-12, then 52 (17.7%) with between 3-6, and 40 (13.6%) between 1-2. The *Times,* like the *Daily Mail,* had 21 (7.1%) photos without text. The finding on the use of photos reveals that in some instances the photos had no direct relation with the content of a brief, or had no brief explaining them other than a caption.

These findings, when compared to the type of story and total length in words, confirm that most news stories about women are usually short and lack detail. Although looking just at the number of paragraphs one may think that the stories contain some sort of analysis, the actual length of items is still short because the paragraphs have very few words. For instance, some paragraphs had less than 15 words and are composed of a single sentence. The sentence could just be a quote from a response or comment on a topic by the interviewee without interpretation of any sort.

**Placement of Items**

Placement of a news story is important in that this is how a story is played up or down. That is to say, the significance of a story can be determined by where and with what other material it is placed with on a page (for detail see, Carrol and Schreiber,1997). In their study of news coverage of women members of Congress in the United States, Carrol and Scheider (1997) posit that the most important story of the day is placed on the front page of a newspaper and a less significant one could be buried somewhere inside the paper. In other words, reporters, usually editors' decisions play the information by making what they deem significant more visible and burying the less important somewhere inside the paper. Visibility is a social concept

which could either facilitate or impede communication. For instance, by continually placing news items of women on the less visible pages, the content of such material is more likely to be perceived as less significant by the reader. Clearly, the process of becoming newsworthy is partly a matter of social standing in a community. Social standing or stratification facilitates holding a highly visible position. Apart from placing stories so that they are more visible to the reader, the other stories that are placed on the same page or juxtaposed with the item also play the story in a certain way. For example, placing a story about women in an inside page and besides a big advertisement reduces its significance and chances of reaching the readers' eye.

A typical example of how story juxtaposition could convey negative messages can be seen in the *Post* of 1999. On the front page of the paper there was a close-up picture taking up almost half of the page showing legs of the then minister of health, a lead story talking about a presidential launch of a walk-over bridge. On the lower part of the page there was a story of a female parliamentary candidate who had not been adopted by the party. The picture of the female minister had no direct connection to the president's speech, I consider that it was merely used to sell the paper. However, having both the picture and the story of the unsuccessful candidate could have negative connotations to the image of women being portrayed by the paper. Firstly, the picture shows the female minister in question as going against accepted behaviour of women, or the so-called 'norm'. In Zambian tradition women are not allowed to expose any part of their body in public except in extreme cases like protests. The former minister is depicted as a sex object, and a distraction for men, and the president, in this particular case. The story about the presidents' launch actually suggests that his concentration was disrupted by the minister in question as the focus

of his speech was on how well Zambian women were dressed in the region, which was not related to the occasion. Second, the story of the female parliamentary candidate not being adopted by her party also shows women's failure. Placing these two stories together could in a way further the idea of women in influential positions as not being responsible and failing to be carriers of Zambian tradition, therefore justifying the non-adoption of the other woman to contest for a parliamentary position. Other results drawn from the sample appear to confirm that stories of women are usually placed in inside pages, suggesting that they are not significant or they are less important than men.

Out of a total sample of 1050 items included in the study, 169 (16.1%) of the stories were located on the front page. Of the 169 items 80 (47.3%) were located on the front page top, 65 (38.5%) in the middle of the front page, 24 (14.2%) at the bottom of the front page and 1(0.6%) covering the entire front page. There is not much of a wide variance of the number of stories located on the top of the front page across the three newspapers. A look at specific newspapers shows that the *Daily Mail* had 30 (9.7%) stories on the front page out of a total of 310, the *Times* had 30 (10.2%) out of a total of 294 and the *Post* on the other hand had fewer stories totalling 20 (4.5%) although it had a bigger sample size of 446. The *Daily Mail* had 29 (9.4%) items placed in the middle of the front page, whilst the *Times* had 25 (8.5%) and the *Post*, 11 (2.5%). Of the 24 items located in the bottom of the front page, most were in the *Times* 12 (4.1%), followed by the *Daily Mail* with 11 (3.5%) and the *Post* with 1 (0.2%). There was only one full-page front-page story in the entire sample, and this story was found in the *Post*.

The largest number of stories was placed on the inside pages of the newspapers. Out of a total sample of 1050, there were 455 (43.3%) items placed on the top of inside pages, followed by 283 (27%) placed on the middle, then 112 (10.7%) on the bottom and 21 (2%) full-paged stories. A breakdown according to paper shows that the *Post* newspaper had the most stories placed in the inside pages totalling 404 (90.5%) of the 446 included in the sample. It had 245 (54.9%) items placed on the top part of an inside page, 79 (17.7%) in the middle, 59 (13%) in the bottom and 21 (4.7%) full-paged stories. The *Daily Mail* had 240 (77%) stories of the total sample of 310 located in the inside pages. Of the 240 stories 108 (34.5%) were on the top part of the inside page, whilst another 108 (34.5%) were in the middle and 24 (7.7%) at the bottom. The *Times* had 227 (77%) stories placed in the inside pages of the newspaper out of the total sample of 294 items. Of the 227 stories 102 (34.6%) items located on the top part of the inside page, followed by 96 (31%) in the middle and 29 (9%) on the bottom of the page. Both the *Times* and *Daily Mail* did not have any full-page story on any inside page.

Most of the stories were located between pages 1-7. There were 169 (16.1%) items on the front page with just one full page, followed by 132 (12.6%) items on page 3, then 118 (11.2%) on page 4, 105 (10%) on page 5, 92 (8.8%) on page 2, 89 (8.5%) on page 7, 53 (5%) on page 6 and so forth. The subsequent pages had very few items on women in them. However, it should be pointed out that the *Post* newspaper had a noticeable number of stories on pages 15 onwards, 125 (28%). The explanation why there are many stories on these pages is that these were the 'Living/Lifestyle' pages aimed at interests of traditional women.

The content of stories on these pages were mostly human interest and features that dealt mostly with rather trivial issues such as how to prevent a husband from cheating, love potions, and many other issues relating to home-making. This finding supports findings of earlier studies that posit that most of the stories women are concentrated on 'living/lifestyle' pages (see for example, Pingree and Hawkins, 1978; Carrol and Schreiber, 1997). Pingree & Hawkins (1978:126) argue that 'the fact that there is a women's section may be the most powerful message of all that the news is for and about men'. The implication of segregating women's news is that women are different from men and occupy a less significant place since they are left out of mainstream areas such as politics, economics, sport and so forth. As researcher Gaye Tuchman (1978a) would say, women are "symbolically annihilated" – meaning that newspapers either ignore or systematically misrepresent marginalised groups in stereotypical, trivialising and disempowering ways. That is to say, the implicit symbolic messages contained in the coverage largely serve to reinforce cultural stereotypes about the insignificance of women and their 'proper place' (Pingree and Hawkins, 1978).

Table 5: Placement of items by Page Number

| Newspaper | Post | Daily Mail | Times of Zambia |
|---|---|---|---|
| Page # | | | |
| 1 | 32 | 70 | 67 |
| 2 | 23 | 39 | 30 |
| 3 | 36 | 39 | 57 |
| 4 | 26 | 48 | 34 |
| 5 | 32 | 36 | 37 |
| 6 | 11 | 17 | 25 |
| 7 | 33 | 35 | 21 |
| 8 | 20 | 10 | 02 |
| 9 | 19 | 12 | 01 |
| 10 | 19 | 02 | 03 |
| 11 | 25 | 01 | 02 |
| 12 | 08 | 01 | 09 |
| 13 | 26 | - | 0 |
| 14 | 11 | - | 03 |
| 15 | 53 | - | 0 |
| 16 | 12 | - | 03 |
| 17 | 31 | - | - |
| 18 | 08 | - | - |
| 19 | 11 | - | - |
| 20+ | 10 | - | - |

**Production Sources**

Feminist researchers have for several years now debated the impact the sex of a journalist would have on what is reported, how it is reported, with what emphasis and where it is displayed in the paper. For instance, some scholars have argued that women best represent issues relating to other women as they are able to empathise with them. It is for this reason that some scholars have argued that the increased presence of women in newsrooms would influence the types and how news is reported (see Beasley, 1993; Weaver, 1997; Mills, 1997; Christmas, 1997; Norris, 1997; Meyers, 1999; Ross, 2001; Gallagher, 2003; Bryerly, 2004). On the other hand, others have challenged the idea that more women in the media would influence how news is

reported. They argue that the increasing presence of women in newsrooms has not brought much change to news values and therefore content (Van de Wijngaard, 1992; Van Zoonen, 1998; Steiner, 1998). As such, irrespective of the reporter's sex, they are expected to present similar kinds of information based on their professional principles which emphasise objectivity. They also argue that women would only have significant impact on news content if they are in decision-making media positions. In my case, I agree with both arguments in that they bring to bear real issues that affect coverage of women in the media and in particular newspapers. However, I would like to believe that apart from women's numbers in newsrooms, there are other important mitigating factors such ownership, which to a large degree influences a publication's content. Also, the socio-cultural environment within which stories about women are gathered influences to a great extent how they are written as they provide journalists frameworks within which to package information. For example, the obtaining gendered cultural ideology will influence how a journalist explains certain concepts in a story.

Out of the total sample of news stories the highest category of production sources was that by staff reporters with a frequency of 493, followed by no production source with 281 items. Of the 493 items by staff reporters, 266 (25.3%) were male, whilst 141 (13.4%) were ones with unspecified sex and 86 (8.2%) were written by females. The non-specific category was a result of the names used being gender neutral. In some Zambian tribes one name, like 'Mutale', can be used for both sexes. Therefore, in instances where such names were used, it was difficult to determine whether it was a male or female reporter who had written the story. A similar pattern follows in the category of staff correspondent where out of a total of 49 items, 21 were written by

males, 20 by not specified sex and 8 by females. In all categories men outnumbered women, except for stories where it was not specified who the production sources were.

In terms of specific newspapers, the *Post* had 153 stories written by male reporters compared to 57 by females, and 22 were not specified. A total of 143 items had no production source stated. Again in the *Post*, there is no category in which women wrote more stories than men. The *Times* had the highest number of stories in the staff reporter category totalling 144. Out of the total number of staff reporters in the *Times*, the sex of 112 was not specified, whilst 25 stories were written by men and only 7 by women. The other notable category was that of no production source which had 64 items. The *Daily Mail* also follows the already emerging pattern in which majority of the stories about women were written by men. There were 88 items written by male staff reporters, followed by 78 originating from wire services,74 with no production source and 22 by females.

**News Sources**

In an examination of the particular kinds of sources used for news stories about women, a not so familiar pattern emerges in the sample. Almost in all categories, female sources significantly outnumber male. This finding defies many earlier studies in which have posited that news is about men and is seen through their eyes and that news about women is also seen through men's eyes (Hartley, 1982, van Zoonen, 1994; Gallagher, 2000; Christmas, 1997). In the total sample of 1050 stories, there were 579 female sources, whilst there were 341 without a specified source and 250 were sourced from males. However, it is important to mention that the findings could

be different if the unspecified sources could be classified by their sex. It is also possible that the number of female sources was high because the sample was composed of only stories about women. Further, closer analyses of reveals that the kind of female sources that information is obtained from do not wield much authority. That is, they were either victims persons without any formal sort of authority that would strengthen whatever they had to say. Apart from that, in most instances where information was from females, a male voice was included as if to authenticate the material.

A break down in categories shows that 281 (24.9%) of the stories fell under the category 'other', which is a category where you are unable to place the source in any specific group. In some cases, it was possible to tell the gender of the person used as a source whilst in other cases it was not.

The next biggest category was that of female victims with 162 (13.%), whilst there were only 28 (2.4%) male victim sources. The individual/citizen category had 125 (10.7%) items and only 47 (4.0%) sourced from males in the same category. Females were used as expert sources 99 (8.5%) times and males 61 (5.2%). There were 83 (7.1%) female politician sources compared to 56 (4.8%) males in the total sample. In the total sample, it is only in the judiciary/courts/lawyers category that more stories were sourced from males and not women; information for 30 (2.6%) stories was obtained from males, whilst 28 (2.4%) were from women. In material from the judiciary/courts/lawyers, most of the stories had both male and female sources.

A breakdown of specific newspapers shows an interesting pattern. The *Post* had 154 stories from unspecified news source followed by the *Daily Mail* with 117, the smallest number came from the *Times* which had only 70. In the victim category, the *Times* was leading with 60 items of news sourced from female victims, 2 from males, followed by the *Daily Mail* with 53 items (from females), 13 from males and then the *Post* with 49 and 13 respectively. The next biggest category in all the three papers is that of individual/citizen in which the *Post* has the highest figure of 50 female sources and 35 males, then the *Times* with 43 females, 3 males and then the *Daily Mail* with 32 female sources and only 9 males. The only variation in the pattern that has emerged is in the Judiciary/court/lawyer category in which in the *Post* there were 14 male sources and 10 females (see Appendix 2).

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I quantitatively analysed stories about women in three national newspaper. The findings reveal that although there is a significant amount of news about women in the papers, it is not adequate because it is either buried on the inside pages or written up in a manner that renders it trivial. Further, in most instances men are featured more prominently in the stories than women. Moreso, most of the stories about women are written by male reporters, bringing to question the issue of whether or not these reporters are able to bring out issues that are of importance to women in the stories, or add their perspective to several other issues of national development. The only exception to the findings is in the category of sources of news in which I found that women provided more information for stories than men. In a way, this is positive, in that it shows that there are women who can be relied on as sources of information. However, as if to counter this, most stories in which women are used as

sources have been multi-sourced from both men and women, and in most instances men are the primary sources, their comment appeared in the story earlier, whilst women are subsidiary ones, whose voices came after the men . This is as if to suggest the need for a male voice to authenticate the material in question.

The next chapter discusses qualitative findings of a small sample of news stories about women in politics. The findings are intended as a back-up of the findings discussed in this chapter in that they analyse the more latent patterns of new coverage of women which is contained in the language in which the stories are written.

## Chapter VI: Qualitative Findings

### Introduction

This chapter details findings of qualitative content analysis of select articles from the *Times of Zambia*, *Zambia Daily Mail* and the *Post* newspapers. Qualitative content analysis has been used to assess the latent or implicit messages and meanings embedded within the text that go beyond mere counting of occurrences. Instead it analyses more subtle aspects of textual construction, layout and content to uncover the underlying reasons for trends and patterns established by quantitative analysis.

Unlike in the preceding chapter where the quantitative approach was used to establish patterns in the news coverage, in this chapter qualitative data has been used to place those patterns within an interpretative context, discussing large-scale themes. As Reinharz (1990) posits, the material from qualitative analysis gives a broader picture of the social perception of a situation, and in this case of women. That is to say, examining newspaper articles qualitatively gives an opportunity to further examines patterns established by quantitative research findings on the representation of women in Zambian newspapers.

Looking across the large news sample gathered for this dissertation, it became clear that there was a patterned, predictable vocabulary which journalists and their sources use to talk about women. Therefore, in this chapter I intend to analyse news stories about women in order to ascertain how they present the possible meanings that might be made by news audiences. Some attention will be paid to the ways in which language may direct

audiences to view actors in news stories in a particular way. For instance, I will examine labels used to define key actors and their actions in the news accounts and whether these labels have positive or negative or neutral connotations. In this chapter I attempt to further the argument that the repeated presentation of material in a certain way influences people's perception of issues and situations, and in this particular instance women. This argument is based on the fact that news does not simply reflect society; it is laden with social, political and economic values, and the language used to write it up to a large extent influences the meanings readers derive from it. In other words, news is a product of linguistic resources at the disposal of journalists. These resources are closely linked to the political, social, cultural and economic values in the society in which the journalist lives and works. Since journalists use language to construct events, interpretations they give are therefore shaped by values expressed in the language they use. Thus, Fowler (1991:222) describes news as follows:

> 'News is not a neutral phenomenon emerging straight from reality, but a product. It is produced by an industry, shaped by the bureaucratic and economic structure of that industry, by the relations between the media and other industries and, most importantly, by relations with government and with other political organisations. From a broader perspective, it reflects, and in return shapes, the prevailing values of a society in a particular historical context.'

However, societal values do not only shape news, but also those reporting the news. As Stuart Hall (1973:15) puts it, journalists:

> '...operate within a framework of power because they are part of a political and social system.'

As such, the values that shape reporters' views are reflected in what they produce. That is to say, news as a 'product' is not ideologically neutral. Journalists like to think that news is a 'predominantly neutral product' since it is processed information collected from different sources (Chibnall, 1977:xiii). However, this claim of neutrality or objectivity has been questioned from different media perspectives. Scholarly discussions on factors affecting how reporters process news include organisational economic practices, i.e. pressure to maintain a cost-efficient news organisation (Williams, 1996; Bagdikan, 1997; Pilger, 1998); conformity to daily news production schedule -- especially deadlines (Gans, 1979; Curran, 1990; Steiner, 1998); and the routinisation of news (Skidmore, 1998; Kitzinger, 1998). Professional ideals, such as those of 'impartiality' and 'objectivity', are thus likely to be operationalised in ways which privilege the (largely internalised) 'journalistic standards' appropriate to the news organisation's ethos and its priorities (Allan, 1999: 68).

In his argument, Altschull (1984) posits that:

> 'To imagine that journalists are a breed apart, somehow able to be 'objective' about the world around them in ways that others cannot is to believe in a logical absurdity.'

Based on this argument, it is logical to conclude that if journalists are not neutral or objective; their reports cannot be seen otherwise but subjective. In this instance, I build on this argument and add a gender informed perspective which posits that news reports on women are particularly not neutral because they are processed and packaged in an

environment where there is widespread discrimination against women. The implication of this is underscored by the influence of news on public knowledge. Cohen's (1973) approach on the impact of news is helpful. He holds the view that although news may not influence how people think, it does determine what they think about. That is to say, news shapes public views. And since news in itself is shaped by the values in the society within which journalists operate, news is therefore interpreted and presented in a way that conforms to existing structures in society.

The close link between news and obtaining values in society is manifest in the way news is presented. Consequently, when journalists report an event, they use values in their own society as yardsticks for their interpretation of an event. For instance, in the case of news coverage of women, when reporters write in the media, they use gender categories and assumptions prevalent in their society to analyse and interpret any given event in which women participate.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first is the introduction, covered, above followed by a section describing the sample and the context of the study. The next one is an analysis of headlines of the stories included in the sample. This section discusses the selection of words used to headline news as they play an important role in defining a situation and signalling the social or political opinions of a newspaper about events. This is then followed by a discourse of topics and themes in general and in particular the papers included in the sample. The final section offers an analysis of the actual content of the stories included in the sample.

**The News Sample**

The sample for qualitative content analysis has been selected non-randomly from a collective of stories used for the quantitative analysis. It is composed of eight stories about two successful women named Edith Nawakwi and Lucy Sichone. Of the eight stories, five were contained in the *Post*, two in the *Daily Mail* and one in the *Times*. The criteria used to identify stories to include in the sample was based on the amount of media publicity female public figures received.

As I worked through the quantitative sample it became evident that in 1991 there were no stories that discussed female public figures. Further, in 1995, the female public figure much written about were Lucy Sichone and Edith Nawakwi, hence the inclusion of stories about them in the sample. My intention was to analyse stories from all three papers discussing the same subject. As there where no stories on the same subject available in the *Daily Mail* and *Times of Zambia*, I used material obtained from the *Post*. In 1999, the stories were obtained from the three papers and are based on Parliamentary deliberation of the years' budget at a time, Edith Nawaki was Minister of Finance and Economic Development.

The inclusion in the sample of five stories from the *Post* in a way limits the generalisations that can be made about the findings. However, it could be indicative of the *Post's* levels of tabloidisation, as clearly in this publication there seems to be a leaning towards sex, scandal and infotainment and not hard news. On the other hand, the

*Times* and *Daily Mail* seem to focus more on hard news and therefore do not contain similar stories as the *Post*. Tabloidisation can be seen as a social phenomenon both instigating and symbolising major changes to the constitution of society (signs being for example, attaching less importance to education and more to political marketing, resulting in an increase in political alienation) (Esser, 1999).

I chose stories about these two women because they have been prominent on Zambia's public (political) arena. I classify them as successful for two reasons: first, both being university graduates, one with a background in economics and the other in law; second and most importantly, both women have in their own ways played significant roles in nurturing Zambia's young democracy. Edith Nawakwi joined politics at the time when Zambia was changing to a democracy after 27 years of authoritative rule. She joined the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) in 1990 when it was formed, and during her political career, became a Member of Parliament and held various ministerial positions including those of Minister of Finance and Economic Development and Energy and Water Development. To date Nawakwi participates actively in politics and is a Member of Parliament belonging to the opposition. Lucy Sichone, on the other hand joined politics earlier as a member in the United National Independent Party (UNIP), which was the party in government during authoritarian rule for twenty seven years. After Zambia's rule turned democratic, Sichone gave up membership in UNIP and founded and chaired the Zambia Civic Education Association (ZCEA), an organisation which worked very hard to enlighten citizens about their rights and how to exercise them in a democracy. The association chaired by Sichone got a lot of attention from the public and

was not so popular with the government because of its agenda to educate citizens of their civic rights.

Having held such powerful positions, these two women received significant amounts of media attention. For me, it is interesting to analyse the kind of representation that they got in the media as this will show how they are defined and how their experiences are interpreted. That is, the meaning of women in the public sphere of politics is a symbolic representation of gender as well as other cues which interact in creating meaning (Ross, 2002). Therefore, analyses of such representations should be understood in the broader perspective of ongoing discussion of women's imagery in popular culture. I should mention at this juncture that I do not make claims that this sample is representative enough to make generalisations. Rather, it is purposive and is intended to support or elaborate patterns that emerged from quantitative analyses of the preceding chapter. Although not many generalisations can be made using findings of this sample, it at least gives an insight of how certain politically powerful women are represented in newspapers in Zambia and to some extent how this can be used to gain an insight about attitudes towards women in the country in general.

The ways in which the news media privilege the dominant socioeconomic paradigm of patriarchy ensures a male-ordered and global system of social and economic control in which women are situated in highly gendered and specific contexts. The existing and unequal social, economic, political and cultural relationships are routinely promoted in ways in which women are represented in newspapers and send important messages to the

public about women's place, women's role, and women's lives. For instance, research on mainstream media representations of women suggests that women are still portrayed as playing subsidiary roles of wives, mothers or daughters, and in some other instances they are shown as victims or sex objects (Ross and Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1997; Carter, 1998a; Wykes, 1998). In instances when women are professional and engaged in social transformation, their success is grossly underplayed. For example, women in politics have in many instances been portrayed as ill equipped for the political arena (Rakow and Kranich, 1991; Ross, 2002; Worthing, 2003). They are represented as unnecessarily adversarial or with undue attention to their physical attributes (Ross and Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1997; Ross, 1995, 2002). In other instances they are situated as 'women' rather than as 'politicians'. That is, the focus is more on their personal or physical attributes and family situation. Findings of my study support the preceding debate on this subject. Women in the Zambian press are portrayed as playing subsidiary roles to men. For example, women in my study are portrayed as wives, villains and not suited for their jobs because they fail to take charge of their emotions and let them interfere with work. It is clear therefore, that there is a specifically gendered news discourse which comes into play when journalists report on activities and events involving women not just in politics but more generally. Gallagher (2001:80) explains the media's approach to women resulting from the fact that such women provide the news media with a problem. As women they embody a challenge to masculine authority. As active, powerful women they defy easy gender categorisation.

This chapter draws extensively from the works of Teun van Dijk (1988, 1991), Roger Fowler (1991) and Allan Bell (1994, 1998). Van Dijk's contribution to the study of news language is developed through a number of his works attempting to integrate his general theory of discourse with the discourse of news. The application of this theory to concrete cases is provided by *News Analysis* (1988) and *Racism and the Press* (1991). Fowler is interested in the use of discourse to bridge the gap between what he calls the 'bureaucratic' and the 'personal' in news media. Bell stresses the multi-authored character of media text. A key issue for him is how journalists use and interact with various inputs that are available to produce media texts. I also draw from the works of Karen Ross (2002a, 2002b), which discuss women, politics and media. Ross (2002a) is a compilation of articles specifically looking at issues concerning the relationship that women have with the political process. This material provides a spring-board from which to qualitatively analyse the news texts about women in politics in Zambia. The chapter also draws from Gallagher's *Gender Setting* (2001), which discusses the results of a global media monitoring project conducted in 2000, and from the media monitoring report from Southern Africa conducted in 2003 in eight countries. In both these studies, qualitative analyses have been used to establish the kind of language used to discuss women and how it describes them. To some extent, this chapter also adopts hegemony theory to explore how female press representation is influenced not only by the imperatives of news organisations, but also by the political, economic and cultural climate to which the organisations adapt. Following feminist research of news about women (Danner and Walsh, 1999; Luthra, 1999; Steeves, 1997) this chapter assumes the mass media are an important ideological institution engaged in the hegemonic process of

securing popular consent for dominant ideology, or common-sense understanding of how things are. Drawing on Antonio Gramsci's (1971) conceptualisation of hegemony, researchers have argued that the media perform a crucial function in the socialisation process, in that they provide the arena in which meanings are constructed. As Rakow (1989) argues that, in communication, the concept of gender functions as a terrain of struggle upon which social groups battle for different forms of societal and cultural power, as in most fields.

I also analyse stories about women by borrowing from the concept of news frames. News frames depict both the product and the process of hegemony in that they reflect how journalists naturalise constructions of reality, including gender hierarchy, using routines and practices developed over time to accommodate working conditions, journalistic traditions, and news values (see for example Gitlin, 1980). David Altheide's (1996) explanation of how frames interact with discourse guided my understanding of how news frames reference constructions of identity, such as gender, class, race and ethnicity, to particular meanings about women:

> 'Frames are the focus, a parameter or boundary, for discussing a particular event. Frames focus on what will be discussed, how it will be discussed, and above all, how it will not be discussed... Discourse refers to the parameters of relevant meaning that one uses to talk about things... [D]iscourse and frame work together to suggest a taken-for-granted perspective for how one might approach the problem. (1996:31)'

From this statement, it is evident that discourse, predominantly shaped by those with the most ideological and political power in society, has significant power in facilitating and maintaining a way things are perceived. For instance, sustained use of certain language in news discourse can perpetuate discrimination against members of certain less powerful groups in society. In such instances language provides names for categories, and so helps to set their boundaries and relationships; and discourse allows theses names to be spoken and written frequently, so contributing to the apparent reality and currency of the categories (Fowler, 1991). He argues that:

> 'women are represented in an unfavourable light and men are characterised by mentions of occupational and political success... taken all together, the discourse of the newspaper media handles men and women in terms of different sets of categories, different stereotypes [and] it seems very likely that discrimination discourse helps maintain intellectual habits that promote discrimination in practice'. (p.105)

Fowler goes on to suggest that women are constituted in discourse as a special group with its own peculiar characteristics, set out for exceptional evaluation from the male population. Hegemonic discourse constructs women as irrational, emotional, familial, dependent, less powerful, and sexual. It is within these restrictive gender frames that journalists write their stories about women. Additionally, anything that does not fit within this frame is most likely to be ignored.

In order to analyse the qualitative representation of women in a few selected text, I attempt to bring to focus the methodological framework in which headlines of news

reports are based and how topics and subjects are covered (see for example, Van Dijk, 1991). For instance, by choosing a certain aspect of the information as the headline of a story, journalists assign hierarchical significance to it. Journalists use the most salient aspect of material gathered as the headline in order to signpost and draw the readers attention. It is then followed up by an expansion of the salient points in the lead.

**Headlines**

Headlines in the media, whether the press, television or radio, have important cognitive and textual functions, and therefore deserve special attention. Headlines are the most conspicuous part of a news report. They are briefly, boldly and conspicuously written on top of, and across, several columns. They serve as a summarising title of the most important information of a report, which expresses its main topic. In my study therefore, I selected seven headlines for the purposes of my analysis:

'Energy Minister Nawakwi Thumps Post Journalist.': 'I could have turned physical on her but I respect the law.' ( *Weekly Post*, 20th January, 1995)

'Kebby could enter State House with Two wives.' (*Weekly Post*, 30th May, 1995)

'Nawakwi Chased.' ( *Weekly Post*, 24th November, 1995)

'Lucy and Kebby's Act is Scandalous' (*Weekly Post*, 16th June, 1995)

'What does the Police have Against Sichone?' (*Weekly Post*, 22nd September, 1995)

'Nawakwi Names Public Accounts Committee.' (The *Times*, 11th February, 1999)

'Budget Is Gender Sensitive, insists Nawakwi.' (*Zambia Daily Mail*, 11th February, 1999)

The kind of analysis I give to headlines is informal, and not a systematic and explicit analysis. It is intended to reveal the ideological implications of the headlines, that is, from which socio-political position the news events are defined. The production processes in newsrooms in Zambia operate in such a way that the reporter as well the editor to a great extent influence how the headline is coined. In the first instance, this is done by how the reporter writes up a story, that is, angle or focus given to story. Secondly, in most cases a reporter has a 'working' headline which in some instances is adopted by the editor and in others is not so different from the one that the editor finally utilises. Although newspapers may claim to simply state the 'facts' in their headlines, it is obvious that there are many ways to describe the facts and highlight and headline them accordingly. The lexical choice, syntax, relevance ordering, identification and comparison, among other characteristics, may be used to persuasively define and convey the prevalent definition of the situation. Take for example, the two headlines published in the *Post* newspaper about the 'chasing' from parliament of the former Minister of Finance and Economic Development and the 'scandalous' relationship between ZCEA chairperson Lucy Sichone and Kebby Musokotwane:

'Energy Minister Nawakwi Thumps Post Journalist.': 'I could have turned physical on her but I respect the law.' ( *Weekly Post*, 20th January, 1995)

'Nawakwi Chased.' ( *Weekly Post*, 24th November, 1995)

'Lucy and Kebby's Act is Scandalous' (*Weekly Post*, 16th June, 1995)

These headlines provide good examples of some of the ways in which newspapers headline writers tend to write about women -- often using more sensational language than they do when they are referring to male news actors. The first property of the headline I examine is the use of words, that is, their lexical style. Words manifest the underlying semantic concepts used in the definition of a situation (Van Dijk, 1991). Lexicalisation of semantic content, however, is never neutral, the choice of one word rather than another to express more or less the same meaning, or denote the same referent, may signal the opinions, emotions, or social position of a speaker. Such a choice of words in newspaper headline plays an important role. Not only do they express the definition of a situation, but they also signal the social or political opinions of a newspaper about the events. That is, headlines not only generally define or summarise an event, they also evaluate it (Van Dijk, 1991:53). For instance, the use sensational words such as 'thumps' 'chased' and 'scandalous' put across negative messages and therefore, portray an image of women as being irresponsible and out of control. This kind of description fits well into the stereotypical frame of women in general that describes them as being irrational and of female politicians not really fitting into the patriarchal political arena and therefore being prone to making mistakes. This can be seen as a deliberate culture of undermining women politicians through particular framing techniques (Ross, 2002). For example, in this case, the female minister fails to rise to the challenge of the job which involves dealing with unrelenting journalists, and becomes emotional, loses her temper and becomes violent. It is worth noting that although the headline suggests that the journalist is 'thumped', inside the story there is just a mention that he is physically removed (pushed) out of the office.

In the next headline, the word 'chased' is used to describe an incident when a female minister was sent home to change her attire as the clothes she was wearing were not in line with the parliamentary dress code. The word 'chased' in this instance immediately gives an impression of serious wrongdoing and therefore may be perceived as derogatory. In the Zambian context, the word 'chased' carries negative connotations as it is mostly used when referring to an animal – in particular a dog and in the case of people, it is used to refer to deviants such as thieves. For example, a dog is 'chased' if it displays bad behaviour, and in the same way a thief is 'chased' for stealing. Therefore, when such a word is used referring to a Minister, the likely message sent to the reader is derogatory. Again in this instance, the headline plays into the familiar stereotypical frame of women being irresponsible and not fitting in with the male culture of Parliament. Other than that, the headline is incomplete in that it does not state where Nawakwi was chased from, or who was doing the chasing. Whilst the incomplete phrases of the *Post* headline could have attracted the reader to read on in order to establish how this could have happened, it is possible that some would have abandoned the further reading because to them, yet again a female politician was up to some irresponsible act.

The third headline describes Lucy Sichone's act as 'scandalous' because she admits having a relationship with Kebby Musokotwane - chairman for the United National Independent Party (UNIP), and that they were in a process of getting married under customary law. The immediate impression given by the headline is negative towards women in that it shows again how they fail to control their emotions even when they hold

influential positions. Whilst both Lucy and Kebby's names are included in the headline, it began with Lucy's name, placing her as the primary focus of the scandal. Another headline relating to this topic is not written up using sensational language possibly because it is headlining a man. The reporter states that there is a possibility that Musokotwane could enter the State House with two wives, and then the story goes on to explain how this may happen, which I think allows the reader to make their own interpretations. Describing this incident as 'scandalous' is not befitting the circumstances because the law of the land allows men to engage into polygamous marriages. As such, in the Zambian context, this act is not really 'scandalous' unless of course Musokotwane had married his wife under statutory law that does not permit polygamy. However, in this case, the journalist expresses it as such, in order to portray the women involved negatively. Again in this instance, the journalist uses the existing frames to define a woman, notwithstanding that double standards have to be applied ( discussion of this follows later in the chapter). Probably if the headline had read differently, then it would have been left to the readers to make up their minds as whether or not such an act can be construed as scandalous.

Headlines have a cognitive function in that they are usually read first, and then the reader strategically uses the information put across during the process of understanding, in order to construct the overall meaning or the main topics of the rest of the text before the text is even read. For instance, a reader reading a story about the 'scandalous' act will approach the story bearing in mind there is some kind of scandal taking place irrespective of the circumstances. Van Dijk (1991) argues that headline information is used by the reader as

an overall organising principle for the representation of the news event in memory - as a model of the situation. In this instance the various news definitions of women in the Zambian media. Headlines also have an important role to play in the everyday routines of news production. Just like the readers, journalists use summarising headlines to understand and memorise the information they get from the discourse of their many sources, which may well define the situation for them as they in turn do it for the reader. Often headlines are not written by the reporters themselves, but by special editors, who not only think of the best summary for a news report, but also take into account what they think will be a 'catchy' title for the readers; readers may decide to read a news report, or not, only on the basis of the information contained in the title. In a story about women for example, headlines of news reports summarise events that the reporter, or editor considers most relevant for the readers. As such, the headlines at the same time define and evaluate women's situation as society sees it.

Apart from the reader's personal memory representation, headline information signals the reader how to define the situation or the event. Thus, according to Van Dijk (1991:50):

> 'This top-level information to the text will therefore often serve the top level of the mental model the readers build of that event'.

Headlines also have ideological implications. Since they express the most important information about a news event, they may bias the understanding process. They summarise what, according to the journalist, is the most important aspect, and such a summary necessarily implies an opinion or specific perspective on the event. Thus,

journalists may 'upgrade' a less important topic by expressing it in the headline, thereby 'downgrading' the importance of the main topic. That is to say, headlines are a subjective definition of the situation, which influences the interpretation made by readers.

Since the headline has such a powerful influence on the interpretation of a news report, readers would have to make an extra effort to derive an alternative main topic from the text. Generally speaking, the information in the headline is also the information that is best recalled by the readers. This means that headlines have a particularly important function in influencing the use readers will make of the information on later occasions (Van Dijk and Kintsch, 1983; Van Dijk, 1991). Therefore, it is better if even though the headlines are 'catchy', they do not slant the story in any way for the reader. For example out of the seven headlines in my study, only three seem to be worded in a way that they would not have an evaluative influence on the reader. That is, they are written in such a way that the reader is left to decide the perspective in which to place the information. Examples of these are:

'Kebby could enter State House with Two wives.' (*Weekly Post*, 30th May, 1995)

'Nawakwi Names Public Accounts Committee.' (The *Times*, 11th February, 1999)

'Budget Is Gender Sensitive, insists Nawakwi.' (*Zambia Daily Mail*, 11th February, 1999)

In sum, headlines are not arbitrary parts or labels of news reports. On the contrary, they formulate the most crucial words for such reports. Their positive semantic role and cognitive consequences are such that they literally cannot be overlooked. They express

the major topic of the report, as the newspaper sees it, and thereby at the same time summarise and evaluate a news event. Essentially, they define how a particular situation has happened and what to make of those news actors and subjects involved. It is this definition that also plays a prominent role in the ways readers understand and memorise news.

**Subjects**

In this section I qualitatively analyse the subject of the texts under the headlines I looked at earlier on in the chapter. The analysis is intended to establish the focus of subjects and topics in which women or issues relating to them are discussed in the press. Van Dijk (1991) defines "subject" as a "single concept" such as 'crime' or 'education' which stands for a large social or political domain or a complex issue about which the press offers potentially an infinite number of specific news reports. Therefore, each news report has its own, unique topics that do not consist of a single concept, but of a more complex structure of concepts such as macro proposition. In my case, the sample or the actors in the stories are politically active individuals, as such it is interesting to find out whether the focus of stories in which they are involved has political topics or themes.

For an elaborate analysis of subjects and topics in the news about women politicians, I use three stories about Lucy Sichone and the same number for Edith Nawakwi. My analysis of these stories begins by discussing their placement on a page, followed by a topical or thematic discussion, in which I analyse the kinds of topics women are likely to be featured in and how. Before discussing the content, I shall begin by giving the

background in which the stories occurred. In instances where the story appears in all three newspapers, all the stories are analysed. Unfortunately I was unable to make copies of actual newspaper cuttings because there were not available. The only available copies were filed in such a way that it was impossible for me to make copies. As a result, I had to handwrite the stories and later process them on computer. Although this may to some extent conceal a bit of detail of the story, I try my best to give the information that I deem necessary to enhance the understanding of the story.

Topics are subject to a specific type of organisation. They are structured by abstract underlying forms, which are called 'superstructures', or textual 'schemata' (van Dijk, 1991:118; Bell, 1991). Many discourse genres, including those of the media, have their own characteristic schematic form of superstructure. Such a superstructure consists of a number of conventional categories, which exhibit a special linear order, as well as hierarchical organisation; they determine what content typically comes first, second or last in a text.

Thus, news reports conventionally begin with a summary category, which in turn is sub-divided into a headline category (which itself may be complex), and a lead. The summary category summarises the topics of the news reports, which is its most important information. The rest of the news report also features a number of conventional categories, more or less explicitly known and used by newsmakers. The main event is the

central, obligatory category of this body of the news report, and organises the information about the prominent, recent event that gave rise to the news report in the first place.

Therefore, in a longer news report or feature, and especially in the quality press, the recent event is often reported against a specific background. This is the background category in the schema of news reports. Background news may be of two basic types, namely ' actual context information', and information about 'history of current events'. Context places the event in a broader framework of other current events, sometimes of more structural, sometimes of an incidental nature. To this end contextual and historical backgrounds provide information that allows better understanding of current events (van Dijk, 1991:119).

News events are not only described 'in depth' against such a background, but also as part of a sequence of events. Immediate causes may be mentioned, and these are sometimes reported in previous news reports, from which the information may be summarised in the present report, for instance in a previous event category, which serves as a reminder for the present report.

Similarly, current events may in turn become the immediate, conditional or casual events for various types of consequences. If these consequences are newsworthy by themselves, they may even become the main event because news reports are structured by a recency principle. For instance, given two or more events of similar relevance, the most recent

information is usually considered to be most important in the press, and often tends to be most prominent in the report by occurring in the headlines.

Van Dijk further points out that a special consequence category is verbal reactions, which feature the opinions of major news actors about the main events. Basically, large parts of news reports consist of news about such discursive events, such as declarations of participants, eyewitnesses, the authorities, and if events are important, the head of a particular country. Besides summarising what happened, reporters thus focus on what people say about each event because this is the kind of information they are able to control, by asking questions, interviewing news actors, reading other information, or summarising reports in other media. Thus, the category of verbal reactions organises both discursive news events in their own right, and at the same time allows newsmakers to include provisional opinions that also put the events in perspective.

**Topics/Themes**

The topics of news in the sample mainly focus on the politicians' private affairs at the expense of the their career accomplishments. Women are discussed under various topics including marital relations, political professionals and physical appearance. For instance, the three stories about Lucy Sichone mainly talk about her relationship with a male politician, a matter not related to her professional performance. Although the relationship has no direct bearing on her career, it is made out to look in contrast to with it and to some extent act as an impediment (a detailed discussion follows later in chapter). Out of the three stories analysed, only one seems to have a topic which speaks positively of

Lucy's career. In the case of Edith Nawakwi, the stories are more focused on her career as Member of Parliament and Cabinet Minister. However, the topics of discussion depict her as irrational and failing to rise to the challenges of her political career since she is interested only in herself at the expense of her professional performance (an example of this is when she allegedly hit a reporter, and the kind of clothes she wore to Parliament which caused her to be sent away).

Topics are important aspects of news reports crucial in an analysis of news coverage of women, and they have prominent discursive functions. Van Dijk (1991) observes that topics reflect many dimensions of the psychology and sociology of news. They represent what newsmakers construe to be the most important information about a news event. The selection and textual prominence of topics results from routines of news making and embodies criteria of journalistic decisions about the newsworthiness of events. It is worth noting that topics also manifest complex networks of professional, social and cultural ideologies (Van Dijk, 1991:71). Therefore, the topics covered in the news about women are a result of the obtaining socio-economic and political playing field in which women occupy a subordinate status to men.

Since topics summarise complex information, they have very important functions in communication. Thus, because they represent the most important or relevant information, they are routinely used to make a summary or abstract of a text. They are also crucial in cognitive information processing, and allow readers to better organise, store and recall textual information in memory. Moreso, research has shown that topics are usually the

best- recalled information of a text. Therefore, if discourse on women is usually conducted under a trivial topic, it is possible that their action will be perceived as such in most instances.

Some topics may have a higher hierarchical position in the topical structure than others, and this position can also be manipulated. For instance, it may happen that a lower level topic is 'upgraded' and even expressed in the headline. An example of this is the story about the 'thumping' of a reporter. The topic has been 'upgraded' in order to show how emotional women behave under pressure. Since newspaper readers use headlines and leads to guide their process of comprehension of the news report, such biased topical structures may also influence the ways readers interpret the text and how they interpret the world. This means that topics as presented by the press are also the ones that are most likely to be recalled later and used by the readers (Van Dijk, 1991:73).

Topics do not only suggest what information is most important in the text, but also what is most important in the world. Topics influence the representation readers construct in their minds of events and situations. Such mental representations of events are what Johnson-Laird, Van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) and Van Dijk (1985, 1987, 1991:73) call 'models'. Models are the fundamental cognitive knowledge structures readers build and use when reading reports in the press. According to Van Dijk, models are mental structures of information, which, besides the new information offered in a news report, feature information about such a situation as inferred from general knowledge scripts. Models are much 'richer' in information than texts, because readers are able to infer large

parts of the relevant knowledge themselves. The organisation of the text may give strategic limits about how the model of the reader should be organised (1991:74). As such, text topics suggest to the reader what is important or less important information in a subjective model of the situation. High- level topics in the text may also become high-level information in the model.

Models also feature evaluative beliefs, that is, personal opinions. In the same way as specific knowledge may be derived from general, socially shared knowledge, scripts such opinions may be derived from social attitudes shared by a group, including ethnic prejudices. Therefore, models are the central 'interface' between the knowledge and attitudes of the readers or journalists on the one hand and the texts they read or write on the other hand. Such opinions may also become part of the main topics of a text and be prominently expressed in headlines or leads.

Van Dijk (1991) uses the familiar image of a pyramid to further describe the structure of information in news reports. The bottom of the pyramid consists of complex and detailed information expressed by the respective words and sentences of the text, whereas the topics represent the higher levels of the pyramid. In a news report, the top of the pyramid is usually expressed by the headline and the lead. In this way, only a few topics at the top may summarise large amounts of information at the bottom.

In a more theoretical perspective, topics are defined as semantic macro structures. These global, overall meaning structures of a text consist of a hierarchically arranged set of

macro positions, which are derived from the meanings of the sentences of the text by way of macro-rules. These rules reduce the complex information of the text to its essential gist. That is, the sequence of a complex idea expressed in a report is further reduced by summarising propositions in their headlines and leads. Each of these summarising propositions is what we call a 'topic'. The overall meaning of a text, according to Van Dijk (1991:72), consists of a 'hierarchy of such topics, because each series of topics may in turn be summarised again at a higher level'.

Furthermore, unlike topics in everyday storytelling, topics in news reports are usually not expressed in a continuous way. It is not the chronology of events, but rather importance, relevance, or newsworthiness that organise news reports. Therefore, what we find is that each episode of the story, the most important, topical information will be given first, and then later in the text the details covered by that topic. That is to say, topics in news discourse are delivered in 'instalments' (Van Dijk, 1991:73). Now a closer look at the actual stories:

**News Representations of former ZCEA Chairperson**

As earlier explained, Lucy Sichone was a civic education activist. In May 1995, she admitted to entering into a polygamous marriage with Kebby Musokotwane, the then United National Independence Party (UNIP) Chairman. This announcement created outrage in the media, with the *Post* leading the discussion. The first story to emerge relating to the announcement appeared in the *Post* and was headlined: 'Kebby could enter State House with Two Wives'. It is written by a senior male reporter and is presented as

a hard news story. Although the story headlines Kebby Musokotwane thereby suggesting that he is the primary actor, the rest of the text focuses mainly on Lucy Sichone and Regina Musokotwane, (Kebby's first wife). In this story, both Lucy and Regina are portrayed as not having much say in what is happening. Lucy simply admits that she is getting married to Musokotwane and refuses to make further comment. The next piece is framed as a column and is headlined: 'Lucy and Kebby's Act is Scandalous!' It is written by a female journalist who trashes Lucy's marriage to Musokotwane. The third story about Lucy is quite different from the other two. It is written a few months after the issue of the polygamous marriage has died down and is headlined: 'What does the Police have against Sichone?' Unlike the preceding articles, the story is positive and seems to question the actions of the police.

The story about the possibility of Kebby entering the State House with two wives appeared in the *Post* on 30th May, 1995 and is placed on page 20 with a bold headline across the page. In the centre of the story, there are two pictures: one of Lucy Sichone and the other of Regina Musokotwane. The story is placed on the same page as a cartoon, an advert from Zambia Revenue Authority and the horoscope. It is placed on the 'life and living' page that mainly contains stories about women, although it is about a leading political figure – chairman of the main opposition party to the one in government. In the first instance, the placement of this story clearly indicates how lightly news about women is perceived – as public amusement. Instead of placing the article on either of the first 3-4 pages of the paper that normally carry all news stories, it has been relegated to page 20 and 'ghettoised' on a woman's page. Stories on this page mostly talk about issues such as

how women can find and keep men as husbands and many others relating to homemaking, gardening, women's sex activities and so forth. It can be argued that the placement of this story on the women's page conforms to the pre-existing frame in which to discuss women. For instance, in this case, even when the story involves a high-profile politician who was Zambia's former Vice President, it is seen to belong to the women's pages simply because it discusses his marital matters. In a way, this act upholds the concept that women are different and that issues relating to them should be treated differently and belong to a specially designated space in the paper irrespective of whether or not they are newsy (see Fowler,1991; Bell, 1991; Bell & Garrett, 1998). Further, the placing of the story does to a very large extent influence the significance that is attributed to it.

Apart from the placement revealing how the story is perceived, the story contains blatant stereotyped frames to situate events in which women participate. The announcement story seems to deal with 'facts' and may be considered as neutral since it uses a lot of quotes from the concerned actors. However, the quotes used by the reporter and the slant of the story still work to strengthen the already existing beliefs of both men and women. For instance, Musokotwane has been portrayed as being in control of what is happening, and has been referred to as the 'key player'. Although he could have been the first polygamous president to lead the country, his actions have been justified using customary traditions. For instance, his aunt is quoted as having 'no apologies' about her nephew's polygamous marriage. She says traditionally, Musokotwane as a chief's son is permitted to marry more than one wife, and therefore, his deeds are depicted as not out of the

ordinary. And the fact that such a statement is made by a woman is an attempt to make the situation seem 'normal' on Musokotwane's side. On the other hand, both Lucy and Regina are portrayed negatively and as not having much say in what is happening. In the first instance, Lucy is described as 'outspoken' by the reporter. In most cases, in Zambia, women are more tactful in their speech. Therefore, the word 'outspoken' may elicit negative undertones, as it suggests that she does not think through the things she says. However in this situation, she simply admits that she is getting married to Musokotwane and refuses to make further comment. Lucy's silence allows the reporter to portray her negatively as a husband snatcher whose 'private life is catching up with her in public' (*Post*, 30th May, 1995). Regina in this story has been described negatively in a subtle way, for example, she is portrayed as subordinate to Musokotwane and as a helpless victim – allowing him to take charge of her life even when it is detrimental to her welfare. Whilst Regina takes it upon herself to explain the situation, and in doing so is portrayed as a 'victim' whose husband is being taken away from her by an 'out-spoken' civic leader but who can do nothing about it, she is quoted as saying:

> 'Naturally, I am not happy. No woman would, but I have known that Lucy and Musokotwane have been seeing each other since our return from Canada but what can one do?'(*Post* Newspaper, 30th May, 1995).

The quote reflects Regina as moving out of a culture where women are not expected to express themselves. However, she is further depicted as helpless and having little choice in the matter – although she is unhappy, she would continue to stand by Musokotwane. She is not concerned with how this arrangement affects her, rather she is more concerned

about not 'dehumanising' and 'degrading' Musokotwane to whom she has great obligations.

In my view, the story is partial in that the quotes used perpetrate the marginalisation of women obtaining in wider society. For instance, women's lack of decision-making power is highlighted when Regina explains that her husband is 'key-player'. Most of the quotes used in the story originate from Regina, and they fit in properly to support the stereotyped ideological notions of women such in society at large. For example, Regina is quoted as saying:

> 'A decision like this needed preparation of all of us. Here the key player is not Lucy nor myself but him (Musokotwane). He should have involved me from the start but there are certain things I only heard later, the visit to his village by Lucy' (*Post* Newspaper, 30th May, 1995).

Apparently, even when Musokotwane's marriage to Lucy hurts the wife, she is still committed to supporting him through his political career and denies doing anything to jeopardise that. For instance, she denies ever physically confronting Lucy about the affair with her husband because it would negatively affect her husbands' political career. Though this kind of commitment may seen to be positive, the underlying messages about women in this action are rather negative. That is, women are portrayed as being powerless and not in control of their life situations.

The next story is titled; 'Lucy and Kebby's Act is Scandalous' a column by Carolyn Mwanza published on June 16th, 1995 in the *Post* newspaper. Unlike the first story, this story is placed on page 5, which is a page devoted to columns and commentary. The story is placed on the same page with three other commentaries. They are: Law Report, which questions whether girls are entitled to keep gifts as their property after breaking up with the men who bought them. The piece identifies government ministers and chief executives of parastatals[1] as the main culprits who take back the gifts they give to girlfriends after a relationship goes sour. The other commentary is titled 'Chiluba issues ultimatum...' This commentary is about Chiluba's (former republican president) alleged extra-marital relationship. The president sent a letter to the *Post* managing editor asking him to either produce the lady or drop the subject.

The third is a response from *Post* managing editor to Chiluba refusing to budge over the Chiluba affair. The Musokotwane story carries a picture of Lucy and Kebby with the captions; 'uncaring, selfish?' under Lucy's picture, and 'Morally Weak' under Musokotwane's picture. Interestingly, all the pieces on the page discuss extra-marital relationships between men and women. Research indicates that the images work cumulatively and unconsciously, to create and reinforce a particular world view or ideology that shapes our perspectives and beliefs (Ross, 2002a: 79). For example, repeated discussion of the subject of women in adulterous relationships of course adversely affects the image of women. Placing four pieces on the subject on the same page may work to strengthen the idea that women and men are always involved in inappropriate relationships. However, having said that, the other stories discuss whether

[1] Quasi non-governmental organisation (Quango)

girls should be left with the things that men buy for them during a relationship when they break up. The power that men wield in this instance is shown, as the question of whether or not the girls would like to keep the presents they are bought does not surface in the discourse.

Since this is a column, the opinion of the author filters through the content unlike in a news story that claims to present objective 'facts'. The beginning of this column describes Lucy as an 'exponent among all Zambian women for the cause of justice, equality, and fair play for downtrodden Zambian women.' However, later in the column Sichone is portrayed as uncaring and bearing poor moral values. She is described as: ' ... morally, physically and spiritually weak'. She is also said to have 'compromised her position as a leader'.

Clearly, there is a contradiction here in how Lucy is portrayed, in one instance her action as a civic leader are praised whilst in the other her private activities are scorned.
This is the sort of contradiction that Meyers (1999) refers to as the 'fractured images' of women. She argues that images and messages in such instances are inconsistent and contradictory, torn between traditional, misogynistic notions about women and their roles on the one hand, and feminist ideals of equality for women on the other. In the current instance, contradiction arises from the fact that the columnist fails to separate Sichone's professional successes from her personal endeavours as is clearly shown by the caption of the picture. Although in no way does the story relate to Lucy's professional conduct, the columnist questions Sichone's professional capabilities simply because she is having an

affair with a married man. For example, her ability to head the Zambia Civic Education Association is questioned:

> 'I don't see how Lucy in her capacity as chairperson of ZCEA as a self confessed shameless adulteress can address a group of young women on social responsibilities'. (*Post* Newspaper, 16th June, 1995).

The reporter calls Sichone names because of her relationship with Musokotwane instead of giving the reader an informed analysis of the situation which would have helped them make their own interpretations. For instance, it would have been much more useful if the piece had been given more background information such as an attempt to explain that whilst Lucy's action of getting into a polygamous marriage may be unacceptable in certain circles, it is not so under the customary law of Zambia. And that it does not justify bringing to question her entire integrity. For instance, the columnist conveniently does not address the fact that Zambia practices a dual legal system composed of statutory and customary law. As such, the act that the columnist describes as 'scandalous' may not be because Sichone's action is legal under one system (customary law) and in no way compromises her morality, though it maybe illegal under statutory law. Evidently, in this instance the reporter has not conducted background research to establish under which legal system Musokotwane married his first wife. An attempt to establish under which system they were married before could have situated her comments of Sichone's action in a better perspective. For example, if Musokotwane and his first wife were married under customary law, then Lucy's marriage to Musokotwane is in no way 'scandalous'. However, if the opposite is true, then the columnist's claims could be justified to some

extent. Evidently, in writing this piece, the columnist quickly adopts news routines obtaining in the profession (van Zoonen, 1994, 1998; Holland, 1998; Steiner, 1998), and therefore, frames Lucy using the stereotype that depicts women as villains.

The columnist also shows Sichone as deviant because she does not feel for Musokotwane's first wife by accepting to be Musokotwane's second wife. This is to suggest that as a woman, one must be empathetic with their actions:

> 'What I am at pains to understand is that Lucy was once married and therefore she has some idea of the pain and anguish Regina Musokotwane is going through when her home is under threat of a determined wrecker.' (*Post* newspaper, 16th June, 1995).

The third story is also a column by Carolyn Mwanza titled 'What does the police have against Sichone?' which appeared on 22nd September, 1995. This is a 420- word story placed on the top part of page 5. As I mentioned earlier page 5 of the Post is devoted to commentary and analysis. The piece is placed next to another commentary on the Sichone arrest and subsequent detention. The other commentaries are titled 'Luxury Mercedes while people survive on roots', ' Nthani's home-made journalism' and 'America suggests new career for FTJ'. All the pieces on this page seem to question government actions and motives. Like the other pieces on the page, the column questions the arrest of Sichone that had taken place a couple of days earlier. The column, unlike the two previous articles on Sichone, seems to defy the gendered nature of news narrative which adopts negative stereotypes. It is framed in support of Sichone's action and condemns the police.

The coverage also adopted a class-conflict frame suggesting that the arrest was evidence of politicians disregarding the interests of the less privileged in society. This is a piece several months after the discussion of Sichone's marriage announcement to Musokotwane. It can be said to come at a time of instability in the hegemonic process and provides the media an opportunity to challenge the obtaining hierarchy. For example, it comes at a time when there is concern about government spending on luxuries whilst there were people starving in certain parts of the country. Unlike the earlier cases, the paper aligns itself with Lucy Sichone, the so-called outspoken human rights activist to challenge the system.

An important component of this story is the overlap in the interests between activist and the newspaper representing her. This story, unlike the others, depicts women's actions more positively and shows how media images can be used to influence change in society. In this instance both Sichone and the newspaper have a common interest of condemning government institution's failure to function effectively and their human rights infringements. Research on the press in the Southern hemisphere (Luthra,1999) attributes gradual changes toward more gender-sensitive discourse to 'expansive hegemony', whereby the media are part of a larger hegemonious system that accommodates challenges. Danner and Walsh (1999) analyse "backlash" themes persistent in mainstream US media framing of advocacy to exemplify both the product and the process of hegemony.

The *Post*'s coverage of Sichone's activities demonstrates how the news media adapt shifting alliances in the hegemonic process. During moments of weakness the dominant class encounters briefly sustained challenges. For example, Sichone, in this column is portrayed as a 'hard-working' human-rights advocate whilst the police's action to arrest her is questioned. The police are described as being characterised by: ' incompetence, lethargy and misplaced priorities'. The columnist seems to support Sichone's action and condemn the police for arresting her. This kind of discourse usually appears in the media when there are lapses in the existing hegemonic system that therefore allow for challenge from the subordinated groups. In earlier pieces, Sichone was portrayed as a villain because at that point the media had to succour its standing with government by condemning the people perceived as a threat to government. The *Post* had been experiencing censorship problems with government to the extent that some issues had been blocked from publication since they contained 'controversial' material.

**News Representations of Former Minister**

The subsequent section discusses stories about a parliamentarian who had a successful career both as Member of Parliament and Cabinet Minister. The stories used for analysis are picked from all three newspapers included in the sample. The underlying assumption of the selection is that images of women in politics and, in Parliament reflect the media's ideological stance towards women's role in society and, at the same time, perpetuate worldviews, granting them further legitimisation. Therefore, the image of women in politics should be understood as symbolic representations of gender as well as other cues which interact in creating such meaning (Sapiro, 1993; Ross, 2002b).

The first story is taken from the *Post* newspaper titled; 'Energy Minister Nawakwi Thumps post Journalist'. It appeared on page 2 on 20th January, 1995. The story was 215 words long, had a photo of Nawakwi and the 'assaulted' journalist and was placed next to a 200 word story accusing MMD and UTTA (United Transport and Taxi Association) officials of charging illegal fares. The other story on the same page is a 600- word piece on Meridian BIAO group to move its headquarters to Lusaka. This is a bank that was facing financial difficulties and eventually went into liquidation. Placing of the story with all these negative ones could have make readers view it in a similar light. The possible messages that this could convey is the failure of MMD officials or people in leadership to run a smooth system.

Coming back to the Nawakwi story, it portrays Nawakwi as a person not in control of her emotions. The irrational behaviour is demonstrated by the Minister's response to the secretary's call. For instance, when her secretary calls to tell her that the reporter was upsetting her, Nawakwi does not stop to find out in what connection the reporter wants to talk to her, but just immediately springs into violent action. Of course this is negative in the sense that since she holds a Ministerial position she is expected to exercise more tolerance and control. Interestingly though, nowhere in the story is reference made to the reason why the reporter sought to make an appointment with the Minister. Probably a statement of that would help explain the Minister's loss of temper and subsequent behaviour. The reporter, on the other hand, is portrayed as being in better control himself. For instance, even when he is 'descended' upon, 'thumped' and 'pushed out' by the

Minister, he maintains his cool purportedly because he respects the law. This stereotype supports the notion of men as more rational beings whose behaviour is strongly guided by their ability to reason. Even when the reporter is enraged, he manages to control his anger and seek recourse from the appropriate institution.

Whilst this news story may seem to narrate an event that actually took place, comment from other participants or eyewitnesses to the event apart from the reporter is not included. In a way, this lack of comment from other eyewitnesses raises the question of the paper's motive. The paper publishes the story with allegations of assault although no formal complaint has been made to the police. Further, this story is not contained in the two other papers at all. The *Post's* failure to include alternative sources could be explained in the context of its continued swipe at government to the extent that it is willing to compromise journalistic practices.

The next piece is a story that appeared in the *Post* and *Daily Mail* on 24th November, 1995. It relates to the incident when Edith Nawakwi, then Energy and Water Development Minister, was sent away from Parliament for inappropriate dressing. In both papers the story is placed on the front page. In the Post, the story is headlined; 'Nawakwi Chased' and 'Nawakwi Tossed out of Parliament' in the *Daily Mail*. Nawakwi is sent out of Parliament for wearing trousers, which was a breach of the National Assembly dress code. In the *Post*, a male journalist reports this incident and the language he uses sexually objectifies her. Nawakwi's outfit is described as being 'black sexy', which 'exposed her features' and is said to be to 'the disgust of the house'. Even when

she returns to Parliament after a change of clothes, her blouse is described as 'skimpy' and her skirt 'short' falling just above her knees (above the knees skirts are also prohibited). Further, a note of her two to three minute delayed entrances seem to suggest a person seeking to attract attention to herself to the detriment of the House – 'She took with her most of the eyes in the House as she walked in'. This kind of narrative is in line with the obtaining stereotype that shows women in general and in particular politicians as more concerned with their physical appearance at the expense of their work. A female journalist who reported the same story for the *Daily Mail* uses more gender sensitive language than that written by a male reporter in the *Post*.

Unlike the *Post* story, the *Daily Mail* does not directly refer to Nawakwi's clothing nor condemn her behaviour as somehow inappropriate to a government Minister. Instead it uses the speaker's quotes to elicit a negative perception of Nawakwi's behaviour. For instance, the Speaker to National Assembly is quoted as saying that Nawakwi should go out and dress like a 'woman' and that the attire she was wearing was for the 'streets'. Whilst I do appreciate that Nawakwi's dressing was in breach of the parliamentary dress code, the quotes used by the journalist to report the incident in the newspapers still have negative connotations. In the first instance, the reporter does not make any attempt to question the idea that a trousers are a man's attire and not suitable for female parliamentarians, especially when the in most government institutions this kind of dress is acceptable. In doing so, the reporter is perpetuating the notion that women are not supposed to wear trousers because they are for men. Instead, Nawakwi is portrayed as an

irresponsible member of the House who is more interested in her looks to the extent that she does not adhere to house rules.

The next two articles appeared after the presentation of the budget to Parliament by then Minister of Finance and Economic Development, Edith Nawakwi. The stories appeared on the front pages of the *Times of Zambia*, *Daily Mail* and *Post* on 11th February, 1999. The story in the *Times* is titled; 'Nawakwi Names Public Accounts Committee' is placed in the middle of the page with a story titled 'MMD retains Liuwa seat'. The stories below are one of firing by Zimbabwean riot police following their thwarting of a students' protest. Next to it is one in which the presidential aide claims PHI (Presidential Housing Initiative) is targeted for the poor. In the *Post* the story is titled: 'Calibre of Public Accounts Committee Questioned'. It is placed together with stories about the formation of a team to fight AIDS by SADC (Southern African Development Community) and one on concern raised by parliamentarians about police indiscipline.

In both papers, what is at question is the Minister's ability to put together a credible Public Accounts Committee. Back-benchers in the House question why members of the previous committee were left out when some had accounting backgrounds. It seems that Nawakwi had to work hard to convince the House of the suitability of the new members. In her presentation, she is said to take a 'swipe' at female Members of Parliament for describing the budget as one that lacks gender sensitivity at a forum of the women's caucus held the previous week. This may seem an innocent picture of parliamentary discussions, however these stories do not fail to bring to attention Nawakwi's short-

comings as Minister. For instance, her choice of members to the budget committee is questioned by male Members of Parliament, and later women seem to think that the years' budget she had presented was not gender sensitive. To compound this, Nawakwi is even said to have 'abandoned' her speech and said she was 'fed up' of female Members of Parliament complaining about how gender insensitive government was when 36% of the resources were allocated to social sectors that covered women. Again in this story, a stereotyped approach is used to create the impression that women are not supportive of one another. This is in line with an ungrounded argument that has developed in the growing debate of gender balancing and sensitivity that women in power positions act as stumbling blocks to others. Apart from the question of Nawakwi's competence, the preceding behaviour shows her as emotional and not in control of her emotions.

The next piece continues the discussion of claims that the budget is not gender sensitive. It appeared in the *Daily Mail* on 11th February, 1999. The Minister is said to have 'defended' the budget from allegations that it was gender insensitive in a debate that was characterised by counteractions to the Minister's contribution from female Members of Parliament. This story shows the challenges female parliamentarians face daily, for instance, they are not expected to make mistakes (Ross, 2002b). When they make a mistake, the are judged more harshly than their male colleagues. Also, this story advances the stereotype that women are their own worst enemies especially when they hold decision-making positions is strengthened. For example, this is shown by the response from female parliamentarians. Kankoyo Member of parliament who is said to 'rarely' raise points of order in this case feels that the minister's contributions is 'inappropriate'.

In her response to the allegations the minister is portrayed as emotional. For instance, the speaker to parliament is said to have advised the minister to 'gently' respond to the points of order, as if to suggest that her responses inappropriately (to her gender) have been uttered in a raised voice.

**Conclusion**

In summary, it is evident that the use of language to report an event plays a significant role in the possible connotations that a text has. The objects and events of the world do not present themselves to us ready classified; the categories into which they are divided are the categories in which we divide them (Bell,1994; Fairclough, 1995). That is to say that language is not neutral. It is a vehicle that carries ideas we want to disseminate. It is recognised as having an active role in the construction of social definitions and the possibility of subject positions. In the same way, looking at the various text about the two prominent political figures in the Zambian press it is evident that the language used to report events about them carries several meanings. These meanings mostly work to enforce the already existing negative perceptions of women as subordinates to men and unsuitable for careers as politicians. The next chapter is the conclusion of the study. It ties together discussions in the dissertation, the implications of the current study and possibilities of future research.

## Chapter VII: Conclusion

### Concluding Remarks

Women have not only struggled to gain economic and political power and equality, they have also contended with the symbolic struggle over the cultural definition of femininity and masculinity. These struggles are fought in the day to day activities between those who like to challenge dominating definitions and those yearning to maintain the old and predictable dichotomies. The struggles are extended to the realm of mass communication which provide a platform to discuss ideas emanating from both those challenging or supporting the status quo. In this dissertation, I directed my attention to the symbolic codes that are expressed through news content. My dissertation is a study of news coverage of women in newspapers in Zambia. It sought to establish the nature of coverage women are accorded in the press, and how this may affect their everyday life and aspirations in a democracy. The media are said to be an important arena where different ideologies and definitions are played out. As such, the news media in particular play a crucial role in the dissemination and approval of new ideas and values by framing events and issues significant in the perception of women. For instance, if women's contributions to national development are either negligible or non-existent in the media, it is widely assumed by wider society that women do not participate in this area as do men. The common sense assumptions that tend to shape journalists' accounts of women make a significant contribution to the normalisation or the marginalisation of women in Zambian society. Furthermore this common sense, in turn, operate to naturalise traditional feminine roles and behaviours within the context of society as 'appropriate'

and therefore creates a certain resignation regarding the inevitability of discrimination against women.

In my view, news coverage of women is supposed to bring up questions of oppression, vulnerability and relative powerlessness within Zambian society. However, the press instead offer a sporadic and mild critique of patriarchy, and a very mild critique of government actions. As such, news coverage does not offer a far-reaching critique of patriarchy, the state, and the class system. Discourse stays within the 'vaguely liberal' but markedly elite domain, with elite women claiming to represent the interests of the ordinary. In some instances the press incorporate women's articulation with relative ease because this articulation itself does not challenge the role of the state in their lives. Therefore, women's issues presented as such enable the press to gain the opportunity to appear progressive without the political fall-out that taking a truly progressive stance questioning the basis of the patriarchal system or the role of the state in social change. Following from Steeves (1997) insight, expansive hegemony allows for the expression of feminist resistance without presenting an overarching threat to the system itself, including its patriarchal aspects.

While bringing issues about women to the public forum, press discourse creates certain absences as a result. For example, press coverage neither addresses the contradictions involved in using the legislative and coercive power of government to enact women's agendas, nor addresses contradictions involved in this route to change the condition of Zambian women. Another absence in the coverage is that of the voice of ordinary

woman. The positioning of urban (elite) women's groups as the ordinary woman's legitimate representatives dictates a construction of issues that plays down the contradictions in women's own lives. It also emphasises the inability of the ordinary women to perceive and articulate their own oppressive situation, and their inability to resist oppressive practices.

This study has been carried out under a limitation caused by the scantiness of previous data to support most arguments made about Zambia. It is the first study attempting to explore the women, media and democracy relationship in Zambia. Prior research in the country on the subject of women and the media is patchy and has not been vis-à-vis democracy. Moreover, the sample is selected non-randomly from the material available and therefore cannot be considered entirely representative of the entire population. Hence, the assumptions made here can not be generalised to make any large claim about the press's institutionalised policy on women's issues. The findings of this study however are suggestive of the patterns and trends of how women are portrayed in newspapers, and the possible implications of this coverage.

Chapter Two began by discussing research that has analysed the perception of women in liberal philosophy, which is the basis for western democratic societies. The chapter later went on to discuss the construction of women in Zambian society. The aim of this chapter was analysing the theoretical assumptions underlying women's discrimination in a liberal society and to establish how these western assumptions work in congruence with local ones. Such a discussion was essential as a spring-board from which to pursue the claim

that women in the press are represented in ways that fail to recognise their contribution in national development, and also to provide a conceptual framework for the quantitative and qualitative studies undertaken in this dissertation. I argued in this chapter that the perception of women in liberal democracy is flawed, ahistoric and is seen from the point of view of a white male. Also, with the advent of colonialism, these flawed perceptions were transferred to Zambia, thereby strengthening the existing social systems which discriminated against women. Therefore, even when women have made great strides in improving their situation and acquiring equality with men, they are in one way or another still affected by the deep-seated liberal theoretical underpinnings.

My analysis began with the assertions that explain the marginalisation of women in liberal democratic theory. These are based on a binary view of the world which divides and associates women with negative attributes and men with the positive. In this kind of thinking, it follows therefore, that the marginalisation of women is considered 'natural' because, for example, it is rationality that counts as important and not emotionality. Further, in civilised societies man's aspiration is to conquer nature and become cultured. Therefore, everything that is associated with nature including women has to be conquered in man's pursuit to become cultured. As a result, the roles that women are ascribed in such a society follow from these ill-conceived perceptions of women. For instance, women are designated roles that are closer to nature such as child rearing, domestic work and nursing, as this is in line with their natural attributes. This, in turn, affects their socio-economic standing in society as their labour is largely domestic and not remunerated. An example of this can be seen in the case of Zambia, where women spend so much time

performing domestic roles assigned to them that they are unable to get involved in income generating activities. In the Zambian context, for instance, women are symbolically linked with earth, fire and water, three of the four elements of traditional culture. This gives women responsibilities for food preparation, acquisition of cooking materials, and tilling the soil, in addition to other production and reproductive tasks. Men have responsibility for the fourth symbolic element air, which carries speech and verbalised ideas. It is not surprising that under the circumstances women are largely left out of the public sphere of the media.

I then turned to consider the role that the media is expected to play in the public sphere in a democracy. The chapter began with a discussion of the evolution of the media in Zambia to date and then progressed to discuss the media role in the country's democracy. Scholars have argued that the mass media constitute the backbone of democracy. My argument in this chapter is that the media in Zambia, and more specifically the press, fail to fulfil their democratic role of keeping all citizens informed and providing a platform for discussion and debate. By the minimal coverage and stereotyped portrayal of women, the press negates their participation in national development. The media are seen as having a significant role and function to play in nurturing and sustaining democracy, by bringing into public focus issues of human rights, freedom and human dignity particularly in Africa and elsewhere, where such rights are trampled upon. Such functions include building well-informed and self-assured citizens to participate actively and bring views to bear on the decision-making process; and to help prevent the establishment of oligarchic leadership. The media, therefore, identify problems in our society and serve as

a medium for deliberation. They are also the watchdogs that we rely on for uncovering errors and wrongdoings by those who have power. It is therefore reasonable to require that the media perform to certain standards with respect to these functions, and our democratic society rests on the assumption that they do. Gurevitch and Blumer (1990) list what they consider the most important democratic functions that we expect the media to serve. These functions include surveillance of socio-political developments, identifying the most relevant issues, providing a platform for debate across a diverse range of views, holding officials to account for the way they exercise power, provide incentives for citizens to learn, choose, and become involved in the political process, and resist efforts of forces outside the media to subvert independence.

However, there is growing concern that the mass media are not fulfilling these functions properly. Media critics in the West claim that commercial mass media controlled by a few multinational conglomerates have become an antidemocratic force supporting the status quo (Herman and McChesney, 1997; Alger, 1998; McChesney, 1999; Herman and Chomsky, 2002). In Africa and Zambia, critics complain that the media fail to keep the public adequately informed since they are still largely controlled by government. For instance, one of the fundamental contradictions in the democratisation of the press in Zambia exists between obvious tendencies for political and economic elites towards privatisation and commercialisation as means of power and profit-maximising, and the neglected development of public services as one of the cornerstones of more democratic communication.

Therefore, there is a tendency of reproducing the old form of hegemony which is supported by the absence of indigenous economic elites and based on the new, but still exclusive ideology which does not allow an adversary to participate in decision-making and to control the activities of state. Contrary to the new liberal philosophy both economic and political activities are still largely controlled by the state. While former restrictions on plurality of interests and opinion were aimed at class-ideological homogenisation, the new ones are justified in terms of sovereignty and national interest. As a result of the state and market economy-centred logic of social and media restructuring, a kind of paternal-commercial media system is developing, with a tendency towards progressive privatisation and commercialism of the media.

Feminist critics have also questioned the media's function in a democracy and argue that the have often portrayed women stereotypically, strengthening the normative assumption about the 'place' of women in society. For example, a gender baseline study in a number of countries in Southern African revealed that women were under-represented in the media in Zambia like others included in the study (Gender Media Baseline Report, 2003).

Chapter Four focuses on methodological issues. It explores how both quantitative and qualitative analyses might be utilised to examine news coverage of women in the press. It is noted at the outset that critical media research has tended to regard quantitative methods with suspicion, primarily because there has been a tendency to view them as central to and inextricable from positivistic forms of media research. However, it has been argued that a number of media researchers have recently begun to insist that

quantitative methods can be used critically to provide empirical evidence of the quantitative contours of ideology (see Bennett, 1992; van Zoonen, 1994; Lewis, 1997; Murdock, 1997). Because a great deal of mainstream media research and policy formulation is based on the use of quantitative methods, it is important that critical research contributes to the refinement and critical extension of quantitative methods so as to deconstruct their language and rework their assumptions along more critical lines. As quantitative data is seen to be more scientific and scholarly, it also tends to be taken more seriously than qualitative findings, a fact which critical researchers must acknowledge and redeploy to their advantage. Next examined was the use of quantitative methods in feminist research, most notably in the analyses of stereotypical images of women in the press.

What followed was a brief discussion outlining how and why I decided to research news coverage of women in the press and why I employed quantitative methods. After this, I moved to broadly consider the contribution of qualitative methods in media studies, followed by a more specific focus on the use of qualitative methods by feminist media researchers. Next came an investigation into the use of qualitative research methods in news research followed by feminist news studies. In this latter field of research, feminist news researchers have often focused their examinations on how feminine subjectivity is constructed in the news media in ways which often result in the marginalisation or silencing of women's voices, particularly as subjects of news events (see, Carter, 1998a; van Zoonen 1994; Gallagher 2000; Baltha; Meyers1997; Allan, 2004). The chapter ended by looking at the Zambian National Daily Press in terms of its ownership, readership and

circulation. The review supplied an institutional context within which to situate the findings of content analysis.

In the quantitative research undertaken here, findings demonstrated that there is little difference across all newspapers in the sample both in terms of the overall numbers and typical news genres utilised to report on women. The findings also showed that the largest proportion of stories contained less than 400 words. The short length of stories meant that very little depth was given to subject matter. As a result, some important subjects were played down because they lacked an explanation of the underlying factors necessary to understand it. For example, stories about women's involvement in politics, agriculture, environment and so forth, are only covered in the news when an event takes place. This means that women's participation in these sectors will only be understood in light of the event, ignoring their regular activities. It was evident in all the three papers under study that women are most often portrayed in a sexual manner, including in serious news stories. Also, most of the stories about women are written with a light angle. In all newspapers the sex of the reporters who wrote most of the stories about women is not clear, however the majority of the sources were men.

In the qualitative analysis chapter Six, I sought to investigate the operation of patriarchal ideology across a small number about stories of women in the political limelight of the public sphere. I insisted here upon the need for further media research that investigates the ways in which the news media might contribute to the (re)construction of patriarchal ideology. Moreover, I have argued for the importance of understanding how patriarchal

relations of gender domination are symbolically constructed through language. As primary agents in the maintenance of dominant ideology, the media do their work through the use of language and symbols, or signs in discourse. Myra Macdonald (1995) points out that how women are represented within a specific historical juncture is a function of the political, social cultural and economic climate. In a similar vein, Fiske (1994:3), describes discourse as:

> 'Language in social use; language accented with its history of domination, subordination, and resistance; language marked by the social conditions of its use and its users: it is politicised, power-bearing language employed to extend or defend the interest of its discursive community'.

Qualitative findings revealed that women in the public sphere of politics are often disregarded as leaders and are portrayed as individuals, not groups; victims, not heroines; sexual figures, not thinkers. They are shown as fickle, dishonest and are usually demonised. Even in instances when stories are written by female reporters, they are conditioned to respond to news in a 'male' pattern and focus on scandal in order to avoid being labelled 'too soft'. It was also revealed that portrayals of women in the Zambian press vary to fit in with the politics of the moment, therefore they sometimes emerge as contradictory and conflicting. Meyers (1999) refers to this phenomenon in the portrayal of women as the 'fractured' representation. Looking at the Zambian press, it can be said that women are not only symbolically annihilated, but their images are fractured, therefore sending contradictory messages. In one instance, they could be torn between

traditional, misogynistic notions about women and their roles and feminist ideals of equality for women on the other. According to Meyers (1999:12), 'this tug-of-war over representation reflects not simply the contested terrain over which articulation and meaning of 'woman' is being fought, it also mirrors real divisions among women of different backgrounds and social groupings and the prevailing social understandings of these divisions'.

It follows therefore, that the portrayal of women in the press can be attributed to the fact that media are just one among other institutions in the social structure contributing to the ideological reproduction of social relations. As such, they play a key role in maintaining hegemonic consensus by helping those in power win consent of the governed (Gramsci, 1971, 1983). Cultural critics have pointed out that popular media help shape a world view in their audiences which supports those in positions of power and authority (Althusser, 1971; Gitlin, 1980; Hall, 1982). By serving the interests of this ruling class, the media help to maintain its political, economic, and social dominance. For instance, subordinated groups such as women are encouraged to buy into the dominant ideology which, in fact, maintains the status quo by keeping them subordinated.

**Reflections**

Looking back at the data collection process, I begin to think that maybe a smaller sample size would have made the work more realistic than was the case. However, I must hasten to say that since the study objectives were exploratory in nature and aimed to provide a broad knowledge base for future research, I felt obliged to work with a large sample in

order to be able to make some tentative generalisations. I also sometimes think that probably including another approach such ethnography could have been useful in order to widen the scope of the study and to understand what women themselves think about the kind of coverage they receive in the press. However, under my financial circumstances that would have been too expensive; also, I am still quite convinced that the current approach is more suited in exploratory research.

It took me several months of deliberation with both my supervisor and colleagues to ascertain that the method of study would elicit the kind of information that would be relevant in analysing news portrayals of women. Then came the question of deciding which specific dates to include in the sample followed by developing a code sheet to use in the study. As regards my sample, I was certain from the beginning that I would draw it from between 1991 and 2000, which is the time that Zambia, like many other African countries, yielded to international pressure and changed to multiparty democratic politics and adopted a free market economy. When I decided to draw a sample from 1991, 1995 and 1999, I was left with the task of refining my tools for analysis. The initial coding sheet that I used in the study was obtained from a feminist study that analysed news coverage of violence against women conducted in 1998 (Carter, 1998a). I began working with it, and modifying it to fit into my kind of study. In June 2002, I drew a pilot sample and coded it using the coding sheet I had developed. I realised that I needed to improve the clustering of the themes to make them more inclusive. When I was satisfied with the adjustments, I decided to draw my sample. All along I wanted to represent both the private and state media so as to determine whether or not their news coverage of women

would be different. Also, I intended to analyse three newspapers that had the highest circulation and readership. As it turned out, the papers that met this criteria were the *Post,* (one privately owned), the *Daily Mail* and the *Times of Zambia,* (state-owned) as these represent the most widely read daily national press in the country.

During the process of drawing a preliminary sample, it came to my attention that the *Post* newspaper in 1991 was a weekly publication, in 1995 a bi-weekly and only in 1999 was it a daily. I considered dropping it from the sample since it would break the systematic approach required in content analysis. However, I strongly felt that it would be inadequate to base the analysis of news coverage of women on publications owned by the same organisation as it is inevitable that the characteristics of the two would be similar in one way or another. I also felt that there was a need to include a privately run newspaper as it represented the free market economy which promotes more diverse ideas and in which only the 'good' ideas are expected to excel. After consultations with my supervisor and fellow research students, I decided to include the *Post* in the sample. This decision was based on the assumption that information gained from it will be more useful even if the sample was slightly different from the other two papers, and therefore, some flexibility was allowed in the methods of data collection. The issue of format did not pose much of a problem to me because my research was concerned with analysing data from daily nationals. Coupled with that, the difference in format is more as a result of financial limitations more than anything else.

After deciding which publications to include in my sample, I contacted Colindale library in London to see whether I could work from there. Unfortunately, I found out that the library had stopped filing newspapers from Zambia in 1991. That in its own provided me with difficulty in that I now had to travel to Zambia to draw the sample. Finally, in January 2004, I travelled to Zambia to conduct field work for my study. It was not possible for me to use the internet to draw the sample as Zambian newspapers have only recently started publishing on the internet and have no archives of past publications.

The data collection process was made complex because I had to physically go to newspaper libraries and code all the stories. This of course was lengthy and very time consuming. On certain occasions, I had to go round several libraries in order to get hold of a copy of a newspaper that would be missing in one library. In the process I was faced with time and financial constraints. For instance, I had to pay high membership fees at most libraries, even if it meant that I went there once and with some, I had to pay each time I used it. Apart from that, I had to pay a lot of money to make photocopies of the coding sheet and other relevant material. In some cases I was unable to make copies of the material due to the bulkiness of the original. For example, I was unable to make copies of stories used for qualitative analysis because the folders in which they were filed were too bulky that they couldn't fit on the photocopying machine. As a result, I had to handwrite all these stories and later process them on the computer. After collecting and coding my data, I computed most of it manually before feeding it on to the computer. In some respects this could be considered duplication; however, I did that in an attempt to reduce the incidence of error. Unfortunately, I was unable to use all the modern computer

systems that make the conduct of quantitative content analysis a much easier job because the primary data source did not exist on computer. Instead, I used Microsoft Excel software to work out percentages of my data.

**Contributions to Research on News Coverage of Women**

Media is one of the most important yet challenging areas of work for advancing gender equality. As 'formal' or legislated discrimination against women disappears, the key challenge confronting women is how to change the mindsets that have been hardened by centuries of socialisation and cemented by factors such as custom, culture and religion. In such an instance, free and democratic media systems should strive for gender balance in the sources, opinions and perspectives through which they reflect the world.

However, though the media have a huge potential to play a key role in the 'liberation of the mind', they more often than not are a part of the problem rather than the solution.

The patterns formed by news coverage are not simply a reflection of the way in which news is defined and structured. They are a reflection of much more fundamental socio-cultural ideas and values. The patterns have usually been explained as resulting from professional constraints and deadlines facing the media (Kitzinger, 1998). Journalists often claim that there is no time to seek out a range of sources, that no woman can be persuaded to speak, that no suitable female expert can be found and so on (personal interview with reporter, 2004). But research has shown that the tendency to ignore women – or at best to talk about, rather than to women – is deeply embedded throughout

cultural practices, not just in newsgathering and media production routines. As a result, these practices and routines are extremely difficult, though not impossible, to change.

A fundamental tenet of media monitoring is that nothing will change by aimlessly complaining about the media. What is needed is professional, constructive dialogue with media based on well-researched findings. Margaret Gallagher (2000) attests to the value of media-monitoring. She posits that it gives women a tool with which to scrutinise their media in a systematic way, and a means of documenting gender bias and exclusion.

In my study, I was able to confirm quantitatively for example that women form a marginal part of information content in Zambian dailies. Whilst their opinions and perspectives are included, they are usually coupled with a male point of view. I was also able to illustrate that female politicians are portrayed in ways that do not promote their standing and view of themselves. For instance, their performance is always questioned and their outward appearance is the focus of more media attention than befalls their male colleagues. When these women make mistakes, they are judged harshly in the press unlike their male colleagues. The objectification of female politicians as subjects for the male gaze in the press is symptomatic of the general manner in which women's bodies are commodified in mainstream society: women are always viewed as a sex objects no matter what their profession, no matter why they are otherwise newsworthy (Ross and Sreberny, 2000). The language used to write about women is one that continues to promote the patriarchal ideology that seeks to keep them in marginal positions in society. For example, the press use emotional language when they write about women (Ross, 2002a).

This study has explored news coverage of women in the Zambian press as it relates to democracy. The democratic role of the media in Zambia and news coverage of women has been discussed previously by other scholars, however, my study focuses on how traditional values and beliefs work in tandem with democratic principles to further marginalise women. It provides a more comprehensive way of understanding press coverage of women in the Zambian context instead of limiting it to media operations.

I concluded that the project undertaken here and future studies in this area might provide important clues as to how media contribute to the construction of a persistent and problematic gap of representations of 'gendered' relations as the 'ideal' human relationship against the ways in which people actually organise their lives in African societies. To that end, the qualitative analysis sought to highlight how news discourses contribute to the [re]construction and [re]production of norms around feminine and masculine identity, thus conditioning how readers perceive the issues and actors involved in accounts of women.

**Future Research**

The work reported on here constitutes an attempt to go beyond feminist news media research which tend to be 'media-centric – focused on the examination of media texts, audiences and institutions without paying much attention to the ways in which the news

media interact and articulate with other important structures and ideologies. It analyses media representation of women in African contexts bearing in mind significant role traditions and beliefs play in defining everyday life.

The dearth of research originating from Zambia on the current subject is indicative of the fact that women and women's concerns remain a low cultural priority and a need for more studies in the area. This dissertation, therefore invites other researchers to conduct more specific and in-depth studies in the areas of women and media relationship that could not be explored here.

Questionnaire methods seeking to discover how female politicians perceive media representation could be undertaken. For example, other research could focus on examining the placement and prominence of stories of women within newspapers or examining how related stories on the same page and those that surround it may shape how readers interpret their messages.

Further research could be undertaken to cover the representation of women in broadcast media, in particular community radio as many such stations have been set up during the last decade. It would be interesting to establish whether and how these stations included the voices of rural women in the programmes. Another area of feminist media research could be based on the news coverage of women in election campaigns. Although NGOs have set up support groups for female political candidates, it would be interesting to

establish how the media treats these women, and how this may affect them. Research on media representation of the women's movement is another area that future researchers could tackle in order to highlight benchmarks made by women in the struggle for emancipation.

Suggestions for future research represent only a few possible avenues that might be explored to add further strength and depth to the findings of the present study. It is my hope that this dissertation has a consequential contribution to existing research on news coverage of women in Zambia. I also hope that it may provide a possible point of departure for researchers struggling to understand how media shapes and contributes to the naturalisation of gendered reporting in the Zambian press and how current representations inhibit women's participation in democratic structures and nation building.

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## Primary Bibliography

### Title of Newspaper: Times of Zambia and Daily Mail[1]

### Year 1991

**Month: January**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 1st | Tuesday |
| 7th | Monday |
| 8th | Saturday |
| 18th | Friday |
| 24th | Thursday |
| 30th | Wednesday |

**Month: February**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 5th | Tuesday |
| 11th | Monday |
| 16th | Saturday |
| 22nd | Friday |
| 28th | Thursday |

**Month: March**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 6th | Wednesday |
| 12th | Tuesday |
| 18th | Monday |
| 23rd | Saturday |
| 29th | Friday |

**Month: April**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 4th | Thursday |
| 10th | Wednesday |
| 16th | Tuesday |
| 22nd | Monday |
| 27th | Saturday |

**Month: May**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 3rd | Friday |
| 9th | Thursday |
| 15th | Wednesday |
| 21st | Tuesday |
| 27th | Monday |

**Month: June**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 1st | Saturday |
| 7th | Friday |
| 13th | Thursday |
| 19th | Wednesday |
| 25th | Tuesday |

**Month: July**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 1st | Monday |
| 6th | Saturday |
| 12th | Friday |
| 18th | Thursday |
| 24th | Wednesday |
| 30th | Tuesday |

**Month: August**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 5th | Monday |
| 10th | Saturday |
| 16th | Friday |
| 22nd | Thursday |
| 28th | Wednesday |

**Month: September**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 3rd | Tuesday |
| 9th | Monday |
| 14th | Saturday |

**Month: October**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 2nd | Wednesday |
| 8th | Tuesday |
| 14th | Monday |

[1] Items were selected from both the Times and the Daily Mail on each of these dates.

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|---|---|
| 20th | Friday |
| 26th | Thursday |

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|---|---|
| 19th | Saturday |
| 25th | Friday |
| 31st | Thursday |

**Month: November**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 6th | Wednesday |
| 12th | Tuesday |
| 18th | Monday |
| 23rd | Saturday |
| 29th | Friday |

**Month: December**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 5th | Thursday |
| 11th | Wednesday |
| 17th | Tuesday |
| 23rd | Monday |
| 28th | Saturday |

**Year: 1995**

**Month: January**

| Date | Day |
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| 2nd | Monday |
| 7th | Saturday |
| 13th | Friday |
| 19th | Thursday |
| 25th | Wednesday |
| 31st | Tuesday |

**Month: February**

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|---|---|
| 6th | Monday |
| 11th | Saturday |
| 17th | Friday |
| 23rd | Thursday |

**Month: March**

| Dates | Days |
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| 1st | Wednesday |
| 7th | Tuesday |
| 13th | Monday |
| 18th | Saturday |
| 24th | Fridays |
| 30th | Thursday |

**Month: April**

| Dates | Days |
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| 5th | Wednesday |
| 11th | Tuesday |
| 17th | Monday |
| 22nd | Saturday |
| 28th | Friday |

**Month: May**

| Dates | Days |
|---|---|
| 4th | Thursday |
| 10th | Wednesday |
| 16th | Tuesday |
| 22nd | Monday |
| 27th | Saturday |

**Month: June**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 2nd | Friday |
| 8th | Thursday |
| 14th | Wednesday |
| 20th | Tuesday |
| 26th | Monday |

**Month: July**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 1st | Saturday |
| 7th | Friday |
| 13th | Thursday |

**Month: August**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 5th | Saturday |
| 11th | Friday |
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| 19th | Wednesday |
| 25th | Tuesday |
| 31st | Monday |
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**Month: September**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 5th | Monday |
| 9th | Saturday |
| 15th | Friday |
| 21st | Thursday |
| 27th | Wednesday |

**Month: October**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 2nd | Monday |
| 7th | Saturday |
| 13th | Friday |
| 19th | Thursday |
| 25th | Wednesday |
| 31st | Tuesday |

**Month: November**

| Date | Day |
|---|---|
| 6th | Monday |
| 11th | Saturday |
| 17th | Friday |
| 23rd | Thursday |
| 29th | Wednesday |

**Month: December**

| Date | Day |
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| 5th | Tuesday |
| 11th | Monday |
| 16th | Saturday |
| 22nd | Friday |
| 28th | Thursday |

**Year: 1999**

**Month: January**

| Date | Day |
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| 1st | Friday |
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| 19th | Tuesday |
| 25th | Monday |
| 30th | Saturday |

**Month: February**

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| 5th | Friday |
| 11th | Thursday |
| 17th | Wednesday |
| 23rd | Tuesday |

**Month: March**

| Date | Day |
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| 1st | Monday |
| 6th | Saturday |
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| 18th | Thursday |
| 24th | Wednesday |
| 30th | Tuesday |

**Month: April**

| Date | Day |
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| 5th | Monday |
| 10th | Saturday |
| 16th | Friday |
| 22nd | Thursday |
| 28th | Wednesday |

**Month: May**

| Date | Day |
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| 10th | Monday |
| 15th | Saturday |
| 21st | Friday |
| 27th | Thursday |

**Month: June**

| Date | Day |
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| 2nd | Wednesday |
| 8th | Tuesday |
| 14th | Monday |
| 19th | Saturday |
| 25th | Friday |

**Month: July**

| Date | Day |
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| 1st | Thursday |
| 7th | Wednesday |
| 13th | Tuesday |
| 19th | Monday |
| 24th | Saturday |
| 30th | Friday |

**Month: August**

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| 5th | Thursday |
| 11th | Wednesday |
| 17th | Tuesday |
| 23rd | Monday |
| 28th | Saturday |

**Month: September**

| Date | Day |
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**Month: October**

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**Month: November**

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| 18th | Thursday |
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**Month: December**

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| 29th | Wednesday |

**Weekly Post Newspaper 1991/ 1992**

**July**

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16th - 22nd

26th - 1st August

**August**

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20th – 26th

30th – 5th September

**September**

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**October**

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27th - 3rd October

25th – 31st

**November**

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22nd - 28th

29th - 5th December

**December**

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20th – 26th

27th – 2nd January

**Year: 1992**

**January**

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17th - 23rd

24th - 30th

**February**

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14th – 20th

21st – 27th

31st – 6th March

**March**

6th - 12th

13th - 19th

20th - 26th

28th - 5th April

**April**

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10th – 16th

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24th – 30th

**May**

1st - 7th

8th - 14th

22nd - 28th

29th - 4th June

**June**

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19th – 25th

**Post Newspaper -1995**

**January**

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18th Tuesday
21st Friday
25th Tuesday
28th Friday

**May**
2nd Tuesday
9th Tuesday
12th Friday
26th Friday
30th Tuesday

**June**
6th Tuesday
9th Friday
13th Friday
20th Tuesday
23rd Friday
27th Tuesday
30th Friday

**August**
1st Tuesday
11th Friday
15th Tuesday
18th Friday
25th Friday
29th Tuesday

**September**
8th Friday
12th Tuesday
15th Friday
19th Tuesday
29th Friday

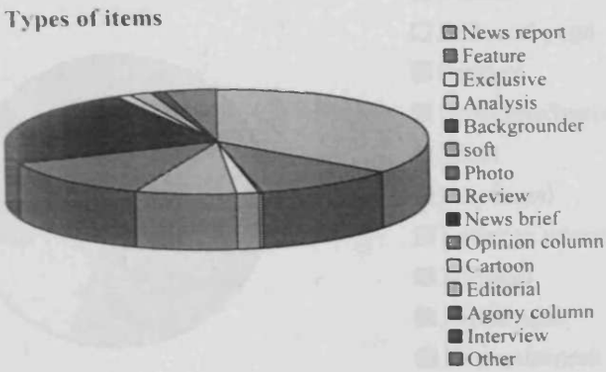
**October**
3rd Tuesday
6th Friday
10th Tuesday
17th Tuesday
20th Friday
27th Friday

**November**
3rd Friday
7th Tuesday
10th Friday
14th Tuesday
17th Friday
21st Tuesday
24th Friday

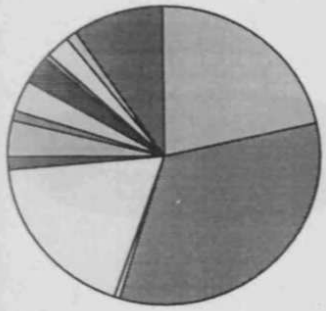
**December**
1st Friday
8th Friday
15th Friday
22nd Friday

*Newspaper sample for the Post for 1999 was drawn on the same dates and days as with the Times of Zambia and Zambia Daily Mail.

Appendix 1

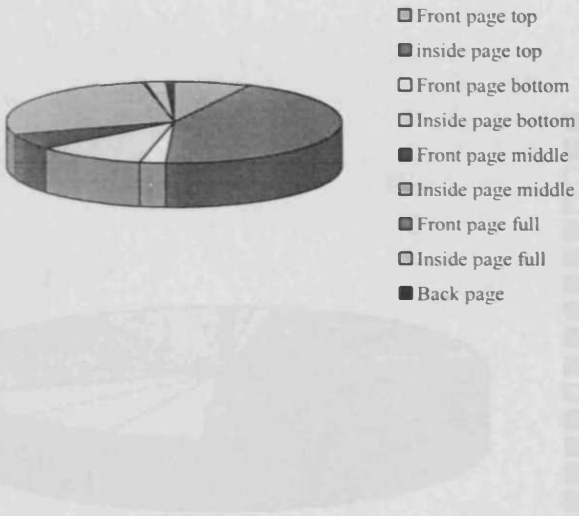

Types of items
News report
Feature
Exclusive
Analysis
Backgrounder
soft
Photo
Review
News brief
Opinion column
Cartoon
Editorial
Agony column
Interview
Other

**News Classification**

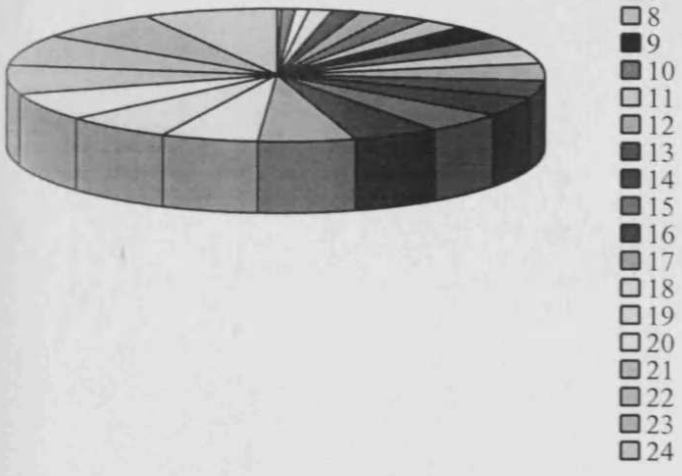


- City
- Nation
- Editorial page
- Foreign
- Economy/business
- Sport
- Provincial
- Letter to editor
- Political
- Parliament
- Entertainment
- Advertisement
- Unclassified

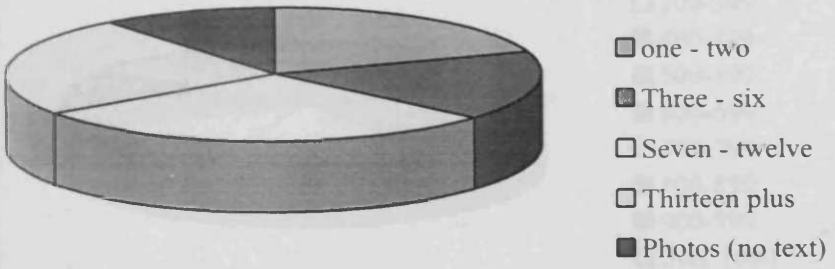
**Placement of Items**



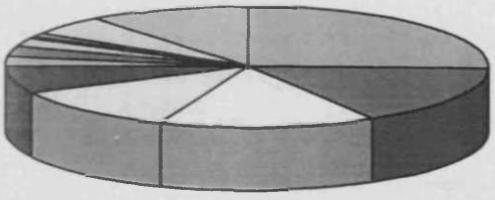
Page Number



## Length of Items in Paragraphs



**Total length in Words**



- Below 100
- 100-199
- 200-299
- 300-399
- 400-499
- 500-599
- 600-699
- 700-799
- 800-899
- 900-999
- over 1000
- Photos (no text)

**Appendix 2**

**Coding Schedule to study the Coverage of women's news in the Zambian Press.**

1) Newspaper: _____ Section: _____

2) **Date of Item:** Day: _____ Month: _____ Year: _____

3) **Type of Items:**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| News report __ | Backgrounder __ | News brief __ | Editorial __ |
| Feature __ | 'Soft' __ | Op Column __ | Agony column __ |
| Exclusive __ | Photo # __ | Cartoon __ | Interview/Profile __ |
| Analyses __ | Review ___ | Other specify __ | |

4) **News Classification:**

City ___ Nation ___ Editorial Page ___ Foreign ___

Economy/Business ___ Sport ___ Provincial ___ Letter to Editor __

Political___ Parliament ___ Unclassified/not specified ___

5) **Total Length in words:** _____

6) **Length of Item in paragraphs:**

1-2 ___
3-6 ___
7-12 __
13+ ___

7) **Length/height/style of headline**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1cw___ | inc (inches) ___ |
| 2cw ___ | Bold ___ |
| 3cw ___ | Underline ___ |
| 4cw ___ | Caps ___ |
| 5+cw __ | Other ___ |

8) **Placement of Item:**

FP, top___ IP, top ___ FP, bottom ___ IP, bottom___ FP, middle ___
IP, middle___ FP, full ___ IP, full___
Page number __
Number of Pages ___

9) **Production source of Item:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Staff reporter(s) ___ | Specify: M___ F ___ UC ___ |
| Staff correspondent ___ | Specify: M ___ F ___ UC ___ |
| Staff editorialist ___ | Specify: M ___ F ___ UC ___ |
| Staff columnist ___ | Specify: M ___ F ___ UC ___ |
| No production source/other | |

10) **News sources in Item**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Victim(s) ___ | specify: M ___ | F ___ | UC ___ |
| Politicians __ | specify: M ___ | F ___ | UC ___ |
| Individual citizen(s) ___ | specify: M ___ | F ___ | UC ___ |
| Experts/Org reps ___ | specify: M ___ | F ___ | UC ___ |
| Relative(s) ___ | specify: M ___ | F ___ | UC ___ |
| Judiciary/courts/Lawyers | specify: M ___ | F ___ | UC ___ |
| Other ___ | specify: M ___ | F ___ | UC ___ |

11) **Principal news Topic cited in Item:**

Headline: I)

II)

Lead:
Event or Peg:

**Actors quoted, interviewed or referred to (Sources)**

1) President
2) Any right wing official
3) Central govt
4) State government
5) Zambian Official
6) Police
7) Parliament
8) Constitution
9) Judiciary/Courts/Lawyer
10) Any left Party
11) Women Political figure
12) Woman Police official
13) Department of Women in Development
14) Ministry of Agriculture
15) Zambian Council of Medical Research
16) Ministry of Health
17) Ministry of Social Welfare
18) Ministry of Education
19) NGOCC
20) YWCA
21) Women Professionals (lawyers/doctors/judges/academicians)
22) Housewives/non- working women
23) An Educational Institution
24) Victimised women
25) Women prisoners/or in custody
26) Prostitute women
27) Professional men
28) Foreign Personality
29) International Organisation/body
30) Foreign institution
31) No main actor
32) Other

**Issue/Theme of Item**

1) Violence – domestic, beating
2) Women's employment/job
3) Equal wages/retrenchment/or any discrimination
4) Housing/shelter
5) Economic dependence/Independence
6) Literacy/illiteracy among women
7) Adult education
8) Vocational educators
9) Women's studies/projects/books
10) Equal Legal Rights/legal issues/Legislation/judgement
11) Legal Aid/family courts
12) Changes in law/amendments
13) Women's studies
14) Corruption
15) Women in Politics/political participation/representation
16) Equal Political Rights/political issues

17) Freedom of movement
18) Pressures/customs/practices/traditional
19) Family relationships/marriage/divorce
20) Religion/fundamentalism/communalism
21) Gender/genderisation/socialisation
22) Women's rights. Emancipation/equality/status
23) Women's issues/causes
24) Dignity/honour/prestige/degradation/humiliation/reputation
25) Women's liberation/movement/feminist
26) Patriarchy/male domination/chauvinism
27) Naturalness/Biological anatomy
28) Family Planning
29) Health
30) Women and Media/representation in media
31) Women's publications
32) Women & Environment/ecology
33) Sports
34) Counselling
35) Demonstration/protest
36) Seminars/conferences/workshops/group discussions
37) International women
38) Conscious raising empowerment/awareness
39) International women's day
40) Women's status in the country
41) Criticism/Condemnation
42) Nominations Selection/appointment to high post
43) Role of women/women's org
44) Function/celebration/inauguration/festival/reception
45) Exhibition
46) Campaigning/canvassing
47) Women's professional career
48) Infidelity/adultery/chastity/illicit relations
49) Man's lust/passion/depravity
50) Protection/Security/safety
51) Human Interest
52) National Perspective plan
53) Abortion
54) Others

**Qualitative Analysis of News Accounts of Women in Politics**

1. Labelling
   Victim(s)
   Positive_____ Neutral_____Negative_____

2. According to Whom? (*Themes)
3. Locus of the Problem
   Victims_____(specify)
   P rofessional_____ (specify)
   Social Pathology_____(specify)
   Other_____(specify)

*See detailed list of themes on next page

**Appendix 3**

**THE WEEKLY POST - 22nd September, 1995**

**What does the Police have Against Sichone?**

**I doubt if there is anyone who is gullible enough to believe the arrest and detention of Lucy Sichone. The Zambia Civic Education Association Chairperson is evidence of the tireless and efficient police force dedicated to enforcing the law of the land.**

The whole incident highlights yet again the depressingly sad state of affairs in our police force which is characterized by incompetence, lethargy and misplaced priorities.

We may now add to this appealing list describing police performance, silly and childish vindictiveness.

The police went to a great deal of trouble to arrest Lucy Sichone. Several officers were commandeered to track her down. When this was done, the press was tipped to come and witness the capture and arrest, not of a dangerous and most wanted notorious criminal, but a simple 40-year old woman, on a charge of alleged common assault committed several months ago.

Many crimes are committed on our streets every minute of the day and right in front of policemen who, in the usual expected manner, turn their backs to look elsewhere pretending they have seen and heard nothing.

During the course of the day and night, police stations in the country receive numerous reports of robbery, assaults, burglary, rape, etc, and no one is naïve enough to expect the police to do anything. Cases are reported to the police purely as a matter of routine. The police merely record the incident in their Occurrence Book; take some statements and the matter ends there.

The police are not expected to take any further action, as they have no transport so they say.

What then do the police have against Lucy Sichone, and what could they be trying to prove to themselves and the country that they should display so much zeal and uncharacteristic determination and effort to arrest and charge her?

The problem Lucy Sichone has is simply that her noble campaign to educate the masses of people as regards their variance with the 'modus operandi' of the police.

Our police are not just able, but helplessly incapable of conducting an investigation of crime. They are too thick and lazy to analyse clues left at the scene of crime, follow up leads and track down the criminal.

All they know how to do is to round up whoever they suspect, beat the hell out of him and extract a confession. That is why hard-core criminals who can withstand pain are not afraid or respectful of the police.

The police, therefore realize that if Lucy Sichone succeeds in her civil education campaign, they will be rendered more ineffectual and impotent.

They will be required to investigate crime professionally, which they don't know how to do, rather than depend on extracting confessions by brutal and inhuman treatment.

What is most frightening is that the police do not and cannot be made to feel ashamed of themselves over their treatment of Lucy Sichone.

Maybe this shouldn't be surprising. After all, our police are not capable of anything that requires thinking.
From the mind of Carolyn Mwanza (Column)

**WEEKLY POST – 16th June 1995**

**Lucy and Kebby's Act is Scandalous!**

I have been a great admirer of Lucy Sichone, the irrepressible chairperson of the Zambia Civic Education Association (ZCEA).

I have always considered her as a leading exponent among all Zambian women for the cause of justice, equality, and fair play for downtrodden Zambian women.

During the few occasions that I have had the opportunity to meet her she has impressed me as a patriotic daughter of the soil, who we should be proud of. She is a warm determined, articulate and unreservedly free to speak her mind.

Her ZCEA, an important and worthwhile cause, bears testimony to her boundless energy and concerns of the less fortunate and vulnerable groups in our society as she seeks to educate them to better comprehend their human rights, and their responsibilities as citizens.

It was therefore, surprising when early this week she told a newspaper reporter and confirmed she has been having an intimate love affair with UNIP president Kebby Musokotwane and that he was her husband and that nobody will stop them from marrying.

The rationale for making the love affair public maybe based on a mistaken assumption that any intimate relationship between two consenting adults, in this case two public figures; Lucy Sichone a widow, and Kebby Musokotwane a married man for 24 years, is a personal and private matter has nothing to do with anybody whatsoever.

This is naiveté at its worst as it is assumed that we, in the country, have neither moral decency, nor ethical standards. It is also assumed that we don't expect anyone of our leaders to provide exemplary behaviour and social conduct in moral rectitude, sound judgment and clean incorruptible living.

I have heard it said to me biblically that no one would dare throw the first stone at Lucy and Kebby.

This utter nonsense as it abrogates our acceptance of the simple fact that is; Lucy and Kebby are morally, physically and spiritually weak. Consequently, they have compromised their positions as leaders.

I just don't see how Lucy I her capacity as chairperson of ZCEA as a self confessed shameless adulteress can address a group of young women on social responsibilities.

Just as I cannot imagine anyone in his right mind inviting Kebby to address a young marrying couple as a guest of honour.

What I am also at pains to understand is that Lucy was once married and therefore she has some idea of the pain and anguish Regina Musokotwane is going through when her home is under threat of a determined home wrecker.

Is Lucy so uncaring, hard hearted, and selfish?

As people, we have basic customs and traditions. Adultery is still not condoned. Grabbing other people's dully-wedded husbands or wives is still not tolerated.

The scandalous behaviour of Kebby and Lucy is unacceptable.

From the mind of Carolyn Mwanza (column)

**WEEKLY POST – 20th January 1995**

**Energy Minister Nawakwi Thumps Post Journalist** - By Staff Reporter
**"I could have turned physical on her but I respect the law"**

**A journalist was this week hit and pushed out of a government office by Energy Minister Edith Nawakwi for insisting on making an appointment with minister.**

Nawakwi descended on Post reporter Levi Ngoma after the reporter persisted to have an interview with the minister on alleged corruption.

Nawakwi's secretary referred the reporter to the deputy permanent secretary who also refused to attend to Ngoma.

The reporter went back to the minister's office and insisted he sees her, but the secretary refused and phoned Nawakwi.

"This reporter from the Post is here. He is upsetting me madam". Nawakwi, then came out, and sprang into action attracting scores of curious onlookers.

"Get out before I throw you out through the window", she said as she advanced towards Ngoma.

"She came close behind me and thumped me in the back before pushing me out. I was enraged I could have turned physical on her but I respect the law and she is our minister," Ngoma said.

Police acting spokesman Killian Chisanga, said the minister has committed common assault and should be arrested as soon as there is a formal complaint.

The reporter says it is his only recourse. "I have to rely on the law to protect me. I am reporting the matter," Ngoma said.

**PHOTO** – Nawakwi – Hit reporter
-- Ngoma - Wanted appointment

**ZAMBIA DAILY MAIL - 11th February, 1999**

**Budget Is Gender Sensitive, insists Nawakwi** – by Mutale Mwamba

**Finance and Economic Development minister yesterday defended this budget from allegations that it was gender insensitive in a debate that was characterized by counteractions to the minister's contribution from female members of parliament, Ms Nawakwi charged that it was unfair for some women's organizations to describe her budget as insensitive to women.**

She said 36% of the budget had been allocated to the social sector from which women were the major beneficiaries. Several points of order were raised by various women parliamentarians who wondered why the minister has chosen the house to complain about issues that were raised elsewhere.

Kankoyo member Mrs. Irene Chisala (MMD) said she rarely raised points of order but was compelled to do so because the minister's contribution was inappropriate. Mongu central member Dr. Inonge Mbikusita Lewanika in her point of order alleged the minister had taken advantage of the privileges of the house in defending her position instead of attending a meeting to which she was invited to present her position. Dr. Mbikusita Lewanika was prompted into her point of order when Miss Nawakwi said that she made numerous contributions to alleviate the plight of women.

She said as Energy and Water Development minister she had sunk more boreholes than any body else had done in that capacity.

She said that at the same ministry she had masterminded the electrification of some residential areas in which women had previously used charcoal or firewood, and challenged any of the women members of the house to find fault in that.

Speaker Mr. Amusaa Mwanamwamba advised the minister to gently respond to the points of order.

Miss Nawakwi was winding up debate on the appointments of the public accounts committee which she had just appointed.

Miss Nawakwi in response to some members of the house who said the members of the committee were ill qualified and that the previous members be returned said it would be undemocratic to do so.

Meanwhile several members of the house expressed displeasure with the performance of the police service when the institution came up for debate in the house. Nalikwanda member Valisiku Situmbeko (ZDC) said the police service should not be blamed for its inadequacies because it had not been given the necessary tools to carry out its duties.

Nchanga member Dr. Patrick Kamata(MMD) said the police had done a commendable job emphasized that their job should be prevention of crime rather than the investigation of it when it occurred.

He said with the prevailing peace in the country there was reason to believe that the police had done its job in keeping tranquility.

He however noted that the traffic section of the police had let it down because of its rampant abuse of powers.

He said the traffic section was preoccupied with collecting traffic fines instead of policing defective vehicles.

Chifubu member Chibwe Mulenga complained of the high number of roadblocks on Zambian roads. He suggested that roadblocks should be done away with and patrols introduced.

Mwembeshi member David Shinonde called for the provision of accommodation to police officers in police camps as opposed to the current trend where the officers lived in the same residential areas as members of the public.

Home affairs minister Dr. Katele Kalumba winding up debate on the police service agreed with most members of parliament on the short comings of the institution but said this was due to lack of resources.

He said the police was working very hard against difficult odds and deserved to be commended.

He asked for the support of the house to make the budgetary allocation of the police service bigger.

He noted that in the absence of adequate financial resources to buy equipment and to motivate officers the situation would be difficult to change.

He urged the press to be a lot more precise in the manner that it reported about the conduct of the police service saying inaccurate reporting tended to have a negative impact on officers.

**THE TIMES OF ZAMBIA- 11th February, 1999**

**Nawakwi Names Public Accounts Committee**- by Times Reporter

**Finance minister Edith Nawakwi yesterday presented to parliament a completely new set of members for the Public Accounts committee whose she described as diligent and qualified people.**

Ms Nawakwi also took a swipe at women members of parliament for describing this year's budget as one which lacks gender sensitivity at a forum the women caucus held last weekend.

Moving a motion to adopt the members, Ms Nawakwi said the committee previously chaired by Isoka East MP Robert Sichinga (independent) had now been reformed into that of general purposes and consisted of highly qualified members.

Apart from Ms. Nawakwi, the new members are Dominic Musonda (Lunte), Dr. Ndashi Chitalu (Nchelenge), Bothwell Nyangu (Nyimba), Stafford Mudiya (Pemba) and Charles Museba (Chimwemwe) all from MMD.

Opposition members include Dr. Sam Chipungu (Rufunsa), Dantel Kalenga (Kabompo West) and Bert Mushala (Mufumbwe).

But some backbenchers and the opposition criticized the composition of the committee. Sesheke MP Colonel Mwiya Nawa (AZ), Luena MP Cripin Sibetta and Lukulu East MP Alexis Luhula (both independent) said members of the previous committee with accounting experience should have been included.

Colonel Nawa who served in the previous committee said he would not cooperate with the new members unless the Public Accounts committee was reconstituted.

To expect medical doctors and teachers who have no knowledge of book keeping or accounts to corner accountants would be asking for a miracle. Mr. Sichinga should have been retained even as ordinary member, Mr. Sibetta said.

Mongu MP Dr. Inonge Mbikusita Lewanika (AZ) and Chipata MP Rosemary Malama (MMD) said women should have been incorporated in the committee.

But Ms. Nawakwi lashed out at the women for insisting on another woman when she was there on the committee.

Ms. Nawakwi who temporarily abandoned her speech said she was fed up of the women members of parliament complaining about how gender insensitive government was when 36% of the resources this year had been allocated to social sectors which covered both women and children.

At that moment Kankoyo MP Irene Chisala shot up and asked if Ms Nawakwi was in order to suppress concerns raised by women members over the budget.

But speaker Amusaa Mwanamwamba allowed Ms. Nawakwi to continue urging her to debate gently.

**THE WEEKLY POST – 24th November, 1995**

**NAWAKWI CHASED- by Staff Reporter**

**Energy mister Edith Nawakwi was yesterday chased out of parliament by speaker Robinson Nabulyato when she waked in the house wearing black sexy slacks which exposed her features, much to the disgust of the house.**

The dressing of Nawakwi who came in the house minutes late for the sitting which started at 14:00 hours was said to be contrary to the parliamentarian etiquette which does not allow women to wear slacks.

" I take strong exception to women who prefer to dress in men's clothes than their normal dress, may I ask the Honorable member of the house to go and change", Nabulyato ordered.

But the ruling appeared to have been unpopular, especially among traditionally talkative male MPs who all kept quiet as a sulky and visibly embarrassed Nawakwi sauntered out of parliament without a murmur or the usual" hear, hear" nod from MPs.

But speaker spoke with firmness and was less apologetic. The decision made in midst of the presentation of a report on committee of agriculture , lands and co-operatives which was presented for adoption by committee chairman Boniface Kawimbe.

Nawakwi, however, took her time and only returned a few minutes after 16:00 hour's tea break. She took with her most of the eyes in the house as she walked in, this time in a skimpy blouse and a short semi tight skirt which fell just above her knees. There was neither a point of order nor a reaction from the speaker.

On Tuesday the speaker ruled on a point of order raised by sports and youth minister Patrick kafumukache who queried what he considered as wrong dressing by Senanga Member of Parliament Inonge Mbikusita Lewanika who wore a sleeveless dress which left her arms bare.

The speaker then ruled: "arms are alright, what we are concerned about are legs". The ruling cheered Inonge.

"Unlike MMD members who wear three pieces suits that match their ties and shoes no matter what kind of weather, we follow the weather" Lewanika said thanking the speaker for the ruling. Upon her return, however, Nawakwi who came and sat in between information minister Amusaa Mwanamwamba and anther male minister remained silent through out the rest of the debate.

**PHOTO** – NAWAKWI – Her dressing was said to be contrary to parliamentary etiquette.

**THE WEEKLY POST – 30th May, 1995**

**KEBBY COULD ENTER STATE HOUSE WITH TWO WIVES.**
By Bright Mwape

**The process to wed began last year. Zambians are heading for a novelty in State House should UNIP president Kebby Musokotwane be elected to "plot one" and occupy it with two "first ladies".**

Musokotwane last week disclosed to the Post his journey to a polygamous life. Musokotwane revealed he was finally taking out-spoken Zambia Civic Education Association of Zambia chairperson Lucy Sichone as his 'second' wife. This revelation ended years of public and media speculation that the two have been long time 'secret' lovers.

"Yes I confirm that Lucy has been to see my parents and we (Musokotwanes) have been to see her people too", Musokotwane said from his office on Freedom House.

Both Lucy and Musokotwane's first and now senior wife Regina confirmed the relationship in separate interviews in Lusaka.

"What you have heard about my marriage is correct but the process is still under way so that is all I can say for now" said Lucy who quit UNIP in 1993 to form the Civic Association.

According to family sources the process to wed the two under customary law began in December last year with a visit by Lucy to Musokotwane's village.

Regina admitted her husband of 32 years whom she has seen from his lowest as primary teacher to Zambia's prime minister was taking another wife but said she has little choice in the matter and would continue to stand by Musokotwane.

"Naturally, I am not happy. No woman would, but I have known that Lucy and Musokotwane have been seeing each other since our return from Canada but what can one do?" Regina said in the presence of Musokotwane at her Kabulonga home, Lusaka on Sunday.

She said her major quarrel with the marriage is the manner in which her husband attempted to handle the situation.

"A decision like this needed preparation of all of us. Here the key player is not Lucy or myself but him (Musokotwane). He should have involved me from the start but there are certain things I only heard later, the visit to his village by Lucy. How serious are they if they are going to leave me out?" Regina asked.

But Musokotwane's family appears to have had no problems accepting Lucy as the UNIP chief's 'second' wife.

According to our traditions we first take the woman to the village to meet the man's parents and that was done about December last year. So, yes they are married", said a close relation and aunt of Kebby Musokotwane, Ina Njai.

Ina Njai who is sister of the UNIP president's late father and chief Musokotwane however said Moskotwane's family was prepared for a ceremony where both Regina and Lucy would meet as wives of Kebby Musokotwane.

We are calling Regina and Lucy to the village and introduce Lucy to Regina so that she is formally told her friend is not just a girlfriend but a fully recognized wife", Ina Njai said.

The decision by Lucy and Musokotwane has generally been interpreted in certain circles as not an act of surrender by two political heavy weights whose private life was catching up with their public standing.

Two years ago The Sun Newspaper reported a love relationship between the two and indicated that Sichone had fought Regina. There has been widespread speculation and suspicion on the two especially at Freedom House, the UNIP headquarters where once served together.

Both women have admitted the story is old but have denied they ever fought.

"I can never do such a thing because it does not only dehumanize and degrade me, but Mr. Musokotwane as well, Regina said.

Regina believes her greatest obligation is to Musokotwane and not Lucy and she is not prepared to destroy what she had defended and suffered for in Musokotwane's public life. "For 32 years I have supported him. There is no other woman who can bring anything different in his life, materially, socially or politically. That is why I cannot destroy what I have worked for and begin humiliating him.

"I want him to be happy and progress with his political career and I will back him all the way". Regina said.

Musokotwane however said Regina was still relevant in his life and is not prepared to let her go.

"I could have filed for divorce if she were irrelevant but she is very relevant", he said.

For a self confessed Christian was Musokotwane's decision not in conflict with his religion beliefs?

"I know the implications of this as a Christian but once a decision has been made it has been made and you have to stand up for it", Musokotwane said.

His aunt had however no apologies.

"Musokotwane is a chief's son and traditionally he is allowed to have many wives. His father Chief Musokotwane had more than two wives"', Ina Njai said.

If Musokotwane has enough muscles to ascend to the republican presidency he would not have been the first African head of state to enter a polygamous marriage after the likes of Malawian president Bakili Muluzi and Tanzania's Ali Hassan Mwinyi.

He would however be the first Zambian leader to admit a polygamous marriage and take two official wives to state house.

Across the page Headline

**PHOTOS-** Sichone – to be Kebby's second wife
Musokotwane – Lucy has been to his village.

CAS PRIFYSGOL CAERDYDD