MEDIA FRAMING OF INTIMATE PARTNER FEMICIDE IN MAINSTREAM PRINT MEDIA IN KENYA

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE AFRICAN WOMEN'S STUDIES CENTRE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN WOMEN, LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANACE IN AFRICA

2019

DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been submitted elsewhere for examination, award of degree or publication. Where other people's work has been used, this has properly been acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the University of Nairobi's requirements.

Signature …….. Date ……..

Nicole Nyambok Wasuna

M10/7678/2017

Declaration by the supervisor

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University of Nairobi Supervisor.

Signature …….. Date ……..

Dr Lanoi Maloiy

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to the women who have lost their lives at the hands of those that were trusted to protect them; those whose names are immortalised in our memories and those whose names we do not know.

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ABSTRACT

Violence against women is found in every socio-economic group, ideology, class, race, and ethnic grouping. Domestic violence victims are abused based on their sex and/or gender. The violence committed against them, meanwhile is not random in its pathology, rather it is tool of structural domination and subjugation. The news media in Kenya continues to be a dominant force when it comes to shaping societal perceptions and attitudes. Currently, there is significant research on how the media in Kenya influences issues such as politics and democracy, sexual violence and reproductive health. However, there is little research into femicide, which is defined (in this study as the killing of female intimate partners. The objective of this study was to analysis and establish the ways in which mainstream print media in Kenya frames the reporting of intimate partner femicide through language, context and the selected sources of information, the ways in which the media uses victim-blaming and other linguistic tropes in its reporting, and the implications of these frames and language on societal perception of femicide. The study sampled 78 articles covering thirty-six cases of intimate femicide between 1st January 2018 and 31st July 2019. An exploratory analysis was conducted based on an established coding matrix, which was utilised to examine the characteristics of the crimes, the selected articles and the media frames that were employed in the reporting of the articles. The results of the study indicate that Kenyan print media is still largely androcentric in its reporting, with a significant burden placed on the victims to prevent the violence that is meted out on them. While Kenyan print media seems to have some understanding as to the structural and institutional nature of intimate partner femicide and domestic violence in general, the reaction to it is less about systemic interventions and more about women accepting the weight of the problem and adjusting their lives around it. The mainstream print media also seems to have more sympathy for the perpetrators (men), who are granted ample opportunity to explain their actions in a quasi-redemption arc that even though it may not excuse their guilt, does the work of justifying or downplaying it. Finally, with the democratisation of news reporting through social media and other digital platforms, there is a symbiotic relationship between mainstream print media and social media content creators in shaping perception and influencing news narratives which should be explored in further academic media and feminist studies.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, the problem statement, the objectives of the study, the assumptions made, the justification of the study, the scope of the study, the limitations and delimitations as well as the definition of terms used within this document.

1.1 Background of the Study

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2018) estimates that about 69% of "all women intentionally killed in Africa in 2017 were killed by intimate partners or other family members." This is approximately 10% higher than the global average of 58%. The report states that:

> Only one out of every five homicides at global level is perpetrated by an intimate partner or family member, yet women and girls make up the vast majority of those deaths. Victim/perpetrator disaggregations reveal a large disparity in the shares attributable to male and female victims of homicides committed by intimate partners or family members: 36% male versus 64% female victims. (p.11)

The UN report further underscores the great burden borne by women and the disparity the reported cases of homicide that are perpetrated by intimate partners which currently stands at a ratio of 82% female victims as compared to 18% of male victims. According to the report, although men make up a majority of homicide victims globally, women still bear the heavier burden of victimisation thanks to gender stereotyping, marginalisation and discrimination. Furthermore, while men are more likely to be killed by strangers and casual acquaintances for reasons such as robbery financial hardship (robbery, gambling etc), women are more likely to be killed by "current and former partners…fathers, brothers, mothers, sisters and other family members because of their role and status as women" (UNDOC, 2018, p.11) with jealousy and a fear of abandonment among the most common motives for these homicides. In addition, the method of murder tends to reflect societal mores of gender roles and behaviour (Jurik & Winn, 1990).

It is difficult to ascertain the prevalence of sexual violence globally for two main reasons; a large number of these cases go unreported and different countries and legal jurisdictions have varying definitions for sexual assault and violence (Stop Violence Against Women, 2019). However, the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2017) estimates that up to 70% of women

have experienced physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of intimate partners. Add to the fact that adult women account for half of human trafficking victims, women and girls combined account for 71% of trafficking victims and 75% of trafficking victims are trafficked specifically for sexual purposes, then it is easy to paint a clear picture of how dire the situation is for women across the globe.

Gender based violence in Kenya, as in the rest of the world, continues to rise at an alarming rate (UNDOC, 2018). Unfortunately, incidents of domestic violence and violence against women in Kenya are still largely undocumented or unreported, making it difficult to accurately determine the level of prevalence. Due to the scarcity of absolute data, researchers have been forced to rely on speculative statistics from various national reports (Ondicho, 2018).

The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2014, p. 291) estimates that

> Almost half (45%) women age 15-49 have ever experienced physical violence since age 15. Twenty percent of women have experienced physical violence in last 12 months. Divorced/separated/widowed women are most at risk: 64% of divorced women report having ever experienced violence since age 15 compared to 32% of never-married women.

The survey denotes physical, sexual and emotional violence as the most prevalent forms of violence experienced by women in Kenya.

Additionally, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2019 Economic Survey further documents 921 cases of rape, 4,767 of defilement and 141 cases of indecent assault in 2018. Male perpetrators accounted for 875 of the rape cases, 4,494 of defilement cases and 131 of the indecent assault cases. Furthermore, the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2014 indicates that 57% of married women have experienced physical violence committed by a current husband or partner.

Table 1.1: Women who have experienced domestic violence (KDHS, 2014

Age	Percentage	N=5658
15-19	18	1009
20-24	19	1065
25-29	21	1176
30-39	26	1492
40-49	16	916

According to the KDHS, although the number of men and women aged between 15-49 have experienced physical violence since the age of 15 is roughly equal at 44 and 45% respectively, women are more likely to face violence at the hands of their husbands while violence against men is mostly perpetrated by other authority figures such as parents and teachers. The number of ever-married women who reported spousal violence stands at 39%, compared to 9% of men. This reinforces the findings of scholars (Njau & Kabira, 1989; Njau & Njeru, 1997; Kangara, 2014; Aura-Adhiambo, 2015, Ondicho, 2018) that wife battering continues to be the most prevalent form of violence in Kenya. The KDHS also draws a pattern of increased violence with low or no education levels compared to those with higher formal education (post-secondary). The prevalence of violence among women with incomplete or complete primary education stands at 48-51% while those with no formal education were reported at 38%.

A 2017 survey on gender based domestic violence (GBDV) by the Federation of Kenya Women Lawyers (FIDA) reports that nearly 50% of Kenyan women reported experiencing violence in their lifetime, with 25% of that demographic having experienced violence within the twelve months preceding the survey. Over 60% of these women stated that they did not report the violence to anyone. In relation, 25% of Kenyans age 12-24 reported losing their virginity through force or coercion. This is backed up by the Nairobi Women's Hospital Gender Violence Recovery Centre, which reports eighteen cases of rape and incest daily (UNAIDS, 2006). The report also reinforces the previous findings from the 2019 Economic Survey of men as the primary perpetrators of domestic violence with 79.2% of women reported to have experience violence at the hands of their husbands compared with 14.6% of men reporting violence by their wives. Of these figures, 10.2% of women reported being raped by their husbands. The survey also shows that denying conjugal rights to a spouse greatly increased the likelihood of physical and/or sexual violence by the men.

The quoted statistics above present a missing link between gender-based violence and femicide. In their statistical representation of data, the national reports fail to explicitly detail the murders and killings that are related, whether directly or indirectly, to gender based violence. Similarly, the reports on domestic violence fail to articulate number the cases that result in the killing of the victim. This gap in statistical data, however, does not necessarily mean that femicide discourse is absent in social conversations. If anything, it may be an indication that the social discourse is yet to translate into the nation's politico-legal conscience.

Several researchers (Johnson et al, 2017; Wright, 2010; Radford & Russell, 1992) have highlighted the importance of distinguishing this type of murder from the generalised category of homicide. This emphasis is not simply a matter of nomenclature, rather it is about the problematisation and politicisation of "the killing of females by males because they are female" (UNDOC, 2018, p.24).

In the early hours of November 21st 2018, the body of a 28-year-old woman was found in a bathtub in her house in Kilimani. Her throat had been slit and her hands tied from behind in what police stated was an indication that she had been tortured before the murder. The victim's body was found by her brother who had gone to conduct a safety check after trying and failing to reach her on phone the whole night (Asamba, 2018).

Four months later, another woman was killed in her home on 9th March, 2019 when her husband, a police constable stationed at a police Station in Eldoret Town pulled a gun on her and shot her seven times (Ominde, 2019). Her offence? Taking what he considered an inordinately long time to open the door for him when he returned from work. Although her neighbours were shocked by her husband's actions, they admitted to police and the media that the couple had been having frequent squabbles in the recent past (Ominde, 2019, Rutto; 2019).

These stories are not unique to the women mentioned above. They are part of a larger collection of narrative about many Kenyan women. It is the narrative of the class seven pupil, whose body was doused in acid after she was raped and murdered at her aunt's house in Eastleigh (Imende, 2019). It is the story of a woman whose husband is suspected of colluding with his mistress to kill her and dump her body in Ruiru (Wainaina, 2019). It is the story of the twenty-five women whose murders were reported in print media in January and February 2019 (Wako, 2019).

Since the introduction of the term "femicide" in 1974 (Russell, 2011), there has been an abundance of scholarly work (Russell & Harmes, 2001; Muller, 2005; Carey Jr. & Torress, 2010; Corradi, Marcuello-Servós et al., 2016;) which have made calls for clear distinction of femicide from general homicide and murder reports. The argument for this is that classifying femicide with other murder cases obscures the key details of the tremendous violence that goes into this type of crime. This idea is not simply about gender or feminism; it is about the power of words and vocabulary in shaping perception of daily life; of determining the people and things that are considered valuable in society. Richards et al. (2011) propose that this

distinction will also go a long way in the scientific research in terms of conceptualisation of the crime and research work on its manifestations, risk factors and consequences.

There are many potential causes and catalysts for intimate partner violence issues that lead to femicide. One possible contributing factor could be the way that the media frames cases of homicide in its reporting (Cohen, Tsfati & Sheafer, 2008).

The United States National Advisory Council on Violence Against Women (NACVAW) recognises the influence that media can and does wield in either fostering or combating violence against women. The media has for a while now been accused of glorifying violence through its depiction of women in the role of "willing victims of battery, implied targets of gang rape, victims of abduction, and as being sexually attractive as victims, asking for it" (Baxandall, & Gordon, 2001). Consequently, NACVAW has since called for media to desist from glorifying this gratuitous violence (Bylerly & Ross, 2006).

The Council's appeal signals the kind of impact that media has on audience behaviours and attitudes not just to violence but to general social mores. This implies that the media is still a dominant force when it comes to contextualising issues of gender and intimate partner violence to the public (Cohen, Tsfati & Sheafer, 2008). Essentially, the fourth estate has a significant role to play in preventing and eliminating violence against women.

The mainstream media remains as powerful as ever when it comes to shaping "societal perceptions of social problems as well as public opinion of victims and offenders" (Richards, Gillespie & Smith, 2011). News media, especially, is extremely influential when it comes to influencing opinion on crime, offenders and victims of said crimes. Kellner (1995, p.9) posits that a lot of "what we consider good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil" is often a result of the media that we consume and how we consume it. Scholars such as Chermak (1995), Croteau & Hoynes (1997) have intimated that media still the most influential entity as far as individual attitude and behaviour is concerned.

This attitude to the media is no different in the African context. For example, a 2018 study by Amnesty International indicates that 81% of Kenyans believe that the media has the power to address human rights concerns and hold the government accountable on these issues. As a result, the lenses of media coverage regarding socio-cultural phenomena have integral consequences to audiences' perceptions of the undercurrents of both the presented problems and the conceptualisation and execution of their solutions.

Media portrayal vastly complicates interventions for violence against women. For example, mainstream Euro-American media has often portrayed the average woman as youthful, light or fair in complexion, slender, beautiful and majorly concerned with the affectations of men (Downing, 2011). This depiction of Eurocentric beauty has become pervasive even in African societies despite it not encompassing the definitive markings of the average black African woman (Sekayi, 2003). Some studies (Galioto & Crowther, 2013; Grabe, Ward, & Hyde) in the Kenyan context have drawn a correlation between the consumption of media images idealised and an increase in low self-esteem and body dysmorphia, that is, a negative feeling towards one's physical appearance such as body weight, skin complexion etc. In his research, Thomas (2019) discussed the surge in commercials for skin lighteners in the 1960s in Apartheid South Africa and post-colonial Kenya during which the media promoted lighter skin as more beautiful and therefore more deserving of public attention, empathy and sympathy.

Thus, the understanding of women in general and of femicide victims must be widened beyond the stereotypical description as is currently "marketed" by mainstream media. Downing (2011) also reckons that sexually violent media content has greatly impacted society's outlook on violence against women. He points to the ways in which women are further victimised in news reports where their characteristics and physical attributes are often subjected to scrutiny, creating a dichotomy of women either being deserving of the crime committed against them, or being worthy of audience sympathy.

It is against this background that this study is set to debunk the myth that mainstream print media is objective neutral and objective, and that the media is purely guided by journalistic ethics and a code of conduct, especially when reporting on and intimate partner violence and femicide.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The media in Kenya plays a significant role in driving socio-cultural and political narratives in Kenya (Ugangu, 2012; Ogenga, 2008; Wanyande, 1996). The framing of print media stories is often predicated by what the media considers most important in selling its stories, which mostly revolves around the target audience and the audience's expected reactions to the news stories (Yousaf, 2015; Entman, 2010; Giles & Shaw, 2009).

There have been several news articles, television coverage and panel discussions in the media surrounding the topic of femicide. The news coverage of this phenomenon has ranged from news reporting, news features, topical analyses to opinion pieces.

On 19th February 2018, The Standard published a story headlined "Egerton University student stabbed by boyfriend over alleged love triangle" in which friends and family members outlined a history of psychological abuse and threats for the duration of the victim and the perpetrator's relationship. On 4th July 2018, the Daily Nation carried an article titled "Sequence of events that led up to [redacted] death" by the newspaper's editorial team. This article served as a journal that documented the events leading up to the killing of the victim. On 16th April 2019, the Nairobi News, a digital publication of the Nation Media Group carried ran a piece titled "Nairobi becoming dangerous city for women as femicide continues to rise" which tallied the total number of women killed in gender-related murders by county between 1st January 2018 and 13th April 2019. The article also cited the increase in homicide rates are reported by the Kenya National Bureau of statistics and a UN report on Global Homicide Statistics.

These articles and others that are discussed in this study provides a window into the different ways that the mainstream print media reports on cases of femicide in terms of case reporting, documentary, commentary and media analysis. The stories indicate how mainstream print media chooses to present the stories to its audience, the genres, narrative styles and framing tools that are employed in its reporting. Various international and local studies have been done on media framing on various topics such as civil liberties (Kellstedt, 2000), racial policy (Nelson, Clawson & Oxley, 1997), sports activism (Boykoff & Carrington, 2019), corporate philanthropy (Nyaga, 2019), climate change (Kibiru, Nzengya & Muasya, 2017) among others. However, the studies on media framing of femicide in Kenya appear to be limited and not easily accessible.

Thus far, the topic of intimate partner femicide often as discussed in Kenyan print media has been lumped under the umbrella of domestic violence, intimate partner violence and mental health (Auchter, 2017; King'ori & Bitrus-Ojiambo, 2017; Koga, 2011). Considering that the extreme consequence of domestic and intimate partner violence is death, the limited research on femicide should be cause for worry. It is therefore important to examine and discuss the influence of this media interest on societal perception.

Despite this significant coverage of femicide in the country's mainstream media over the past two years, the framing of these news stories and media discourses is yet to be discussed in scholarly literature. This project therefore aims to address the ways in which mainstream print media in Kenya frames cases of women killed by men with whom they are or were in an intimate relationship.

1.3 General Objective

The overall aim of the study is to analyse the framing that is used by Kenyan media to report on intimate partner femicide in Kenya.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are to:

i. Examine the media framing components – sources, language, and context - that are utilised by Kenyan news media in reporting cases of femicide.

ii. Examine how Kenyan mainstream print media portrays the victims and perpetrators of femicide.

iii. Establish the implications of these media frames on the societal perception of femicide.

1.3.2 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:

i. How does mainstream print media in Kenya frame its reporting of femicide cases?

ii. How does Kenyan mainstream print media portray the victims and perpetrators of femicide?

iii. In what ways does mainstream print media coverage of femicide intersect with societal perceptions of the phenomenon?

1.4 Assumptions of the Study

i. The framing used in Kenyan mainstream print media is critical to the reporting of femicide cases.

ii. Mainstream print media in Kenya is transparent in revealing their sources of information, except in cases where this would result in harm or endanger the lives of their sources.

iii. Mainstream print media in Kenya verifies its information prior to reporting.

1.5 Justification and Significance of the Study

This study contributes to academia in several ways. Firstly, femicide studies are a relatively new discipline in Kenyan scholarship and this paper contributes to this scholarship in a several respects. While the researcher found several international studies on femicide (Mahadeen, 2017; Richards, Gillespie & Smith, 2014; Corradie, 2013; Richards, Gillespie & Smith, 2013), a search of scholarship on femicide in Kenya, its prevalence, and how media reporting of the issue has worked to shape public did not yield any results in the mainstream online academic journals and repositories. This study therefore aims to provide insight into the prevalence of femicide in Kenya and offers what may be one of the first academic work on conceptualisation of femicide as well as the media framing of femicide in the Kenyan context.

Although there has been significant research done on the subjects of physical and domestic violence (Maticka-Tyndale, Eleanor et al, 2019; Ondicho, 2018; Chiang, Laura, et al, 2018;), there has been little investigation into the phenomena of domestic homicide, honour killings and femicide in Kenya. This study therefore provides insight into an issue that affects women and their families across the country, yet remains unexplored in the Kenyan academia. The study also adds to the understanding of how media reporting continues to shape societal perceptions of violence against women and of femicide.

Intimate partner killings in Africa are disproportionately high at 69% as at 2017 compared to the global average of 57% (UNODC, 2018). Media coverage of femicide has also been prominent, with 31 cases having been reported in mainstream media between January and May 2019.

This study is relevant because violence against women "is found in every socio-economic group, ideology, class, race, and ethnic grouping." (Sweetman, 1998, p. 3). Victims of domestic violence are abused based on their sex and/or gender. The violence committed against them, meanwhile is not random in its pathology, rather it is part of a structural and systemic phenomenon (Sweetman, 1998). She argues that violence against women is used not just to remind women of their position of insubordination but also to instil fear in other women as a preventative measure to stifle any aspirations at empowerment or liberation. In this way, Sweetman contends that violence against women is not just personal and cultural, it is also a form of political warfare. She posits that the existence of violence against women in

almost every country and society, across socio-economic strata, racial groups and ideology proves that it cannot simply be reduced to "random deviance" (p. 3).

Various international organisations, including Amnesty International (AI) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) have been at the forefront of recognising violence against women as a pervasive human rights challenge in the world that must be acknowledged and addressed at a political and institutional level with haste

If the increasing reports of femicide and of violence against women in Kenya are anything to go by, academic research and scholarship on the topic is urgently required. As Choquette (2012, p.10) stated, "femicide can spread as far as it is culturally condoned."

The underreporting of cases of violence against women means that official statistics are difficult to obtain (Garcia, 2004) means that people have to rely on newspaper reports for information on the crimes, the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator and the general context of the crime (PATH, 2008). Media discourse thus becomes a significant force in determining what is or is not culturally acceptable (Mwangi, 2018), it is therefore important to analyse the conversations that are being had in the mainstream on femicide.

Furthermore, as stated in the introduction, the national statistics and reports on gender-based violence and homicide present a missing link between the two, indicating a gap between this public discourse and the country's socio-legal decision making instruments. This study, therefore, contributes to the foundation of translating social discourse regarding this public welfare issue into a legal and policy issue.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study covers seven English publications from three media houses; The Daily Nation, The Saturday Nation, The Sunday Nation, The Standard Newspaper, The Saturday Standard, the Standard on Sunday and the Star, which are the largest newspapers in terms of daily circulation and audience reach. The study analysed news articles that were reporting on specific cases of femicide. Editorials, features, opinion pieces and letters that discuss the wider issues of feminism were not included in the analysis. They were, however, used to compliment the literature review and the theoretical framework. The researcher also analysed the online publications and social media platforms, which are often used to publicise news items as well as drive conversation on said news items in order to establish the implications of media reporting on societal (audience) perceptions.

The study only analyses cases of femicide by intimate partners. A comparative analysis of the framing of non-intimate femicide against intimate partner femicide would go a long way in bridging the gap of media portrayal. However, this would require more time and resources to delve into.

The researcher notes that media has evolved beyond the traditional mass media options of print, television and radio which had for a long time been one sided, with the media houses producing the news while audiences merely consumed it. With the rise of digital media, news has almost been democratised as the public is closely involved in the shaping of news narratives. Verification of the news reports and commentary has therefore become more difficult. It is for this reason that the researcher focused the media analysis on mainstream print media which is bound by a journalistic code of conduct that enforces accuracy and substantiation of information, news sources and informants.

The focus of the project is on analysis of cases of femicide by intimate partners reported in the media between January 2018 and April 2019. This timeframe was chosen because it was during this period that mainstream print media in Kenya began to acknowledge gender related killings of women as femicide and conducted an inventory of the reported cases. This reporting was catalysed by the three high profile reported killings of three victims on 4th September 2018, 28th September 2018 and 9th April 2019 respectively. This study does not seek to analyse the reporting of every femicide case, rather it aims to explore the ways in which the mainstream print media reported on the inventories that were conducted during this pivotal moment.

The analysed data sets are also restricted to the cases that were officially reported in the mainstream media and to the relevant legal authorities. However, the study did not aim to verify the accuracy of the information in the newspaper reports, rather, it was concerned with the media frames that were employed in the reporting.

1.7 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This study is limited by certain factors that make femicide reports in Kenya difficult to determine.

Firstly, the concept of Femicide is yet to be defined in national policy in Kenya. As a result, the case reviews that are to be conducted will be based on parameters that are to be defined by the researcher based on existing bodies of work in other countries. The study therefore

used the global definition of femicide as explained by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2018).

In addition, the classification of homicides in police records is quite narrow, which makes it difficult to accurately distinguish victims of femicide from other cases of homicide. As it stands, Kenyan reports on homicide are largely homogenous and are only reported in terms of total figures across counties (KNBS, 2019; National Police Service, 2018; KDHS 2014). Data on crime in Kenya is not disaggregated based on the characteristics of the perpetrators and the victims. This made it difficult to identify cases of femicide from the national crime statistics and reports. The researcher therefore had to piece together data from the national reports and from other surveys. This does not necessarily paint an accurate picture due to the varying reporting periods and research methodology.

There is also little research on femicide that has been conducted in Kenya. Other than a few editorials and online blogs, not much attention with regards to academic research and writing has been paid to this topic. Therefore, the researcher is not able to adequately build on existing bodies of scholarship in Kenya. However, literature from other parts of the world was analysed in order to paint a broad picture of the socialisation of violence against women as well as the prevalence of femicide.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Abuse: this refers to actions that are perpetrated by one person against another (victim) in order to gain unfair control over their behaviour or to make them submit to the power of the perpetrator

Date rape: the term refers to sexual assault by a romantic suitor whom the victim may know casually, socially or romantically. It is sometimes referred to as acquaintance rape.

Courtship: the period during which a couple develops an intimate relationship before they decide to get married.

Cultural abuse: it is the outcome of harassment and discrimination of a person based on their socio-cultural background or identity, for example, not allowing them to observe the dietary or dress customs of their religion.

Dramatic reporting: this refers to the use of emotional and sensational language in news reporting to provoke certain audience responses as desired by the media. It is also known as sensational reporting.

Economic abuse: this term refers to the control of a person's access to financial or economic resources in order to diminish their capacity to independently support themselves or to depend on their perpetrator financially

Emotional/Psychological abuse: this is the use of intimidation, threats and language to undermine the self-esteem and/or self-worth of a victim often with the intention of isolating them from other relationships and to make them fully dependent on the perpetrator for validation of their humanity.

Episodic reporting: this refers to the coverage of a news event as an immediate isolated incident

Female: this is a term or identity prescribed to an individual who is capable of bearing offspring or producing gametes (ova) that can then be fertilised by the gametes of a male

Femicide: in the context of this study, defined as the "killing of females by male intimate partners" (UNDOC, 2018).

Gender: this refers to the spectrum of non-biological identities and socially assigned attributes between males and females

Gender-based violence: any form of harm visited on a woman, including physical abuse, sexual abuse, economic abuse, cultural abuse, psychological abuse, emotional abuse and destruction of property by the men in their lives.

Gender stereotype: this term refers to a generalised perception or preconception of characteristics that must be possessed or delineated roles that must be performed by a male or a female.

Gold-digger: a person, usually a woman, who engages in romantic relationships with men for financial and/or material gain rather than for love.

Intervention: an action taken to mediate, alleviate or improve a situation by removing or minimising a risk factor.

Intimate partner: in the context of this study, the term refers to a current or former spouse, current or former boyfriend or a current or former lover.

Intimate partner violence: physical, sexual, and emotional abuse and controlling behaviours committed against a woman by an intimate male partner.

Lover: a partner in a sexual or romantic relationship outside marriage

Male: this is a term or identity prescribed to an individual who is capable of producing gametes (spermatozoa) with which a female can be fertilised.

Media frame: this refers to the angle or perspective from which the media tells a story to influence its agenda or the audience's reception to a story.

Print media: this is a term used to refer to the industry collective that deals with mass communication in the form of printed publications such as newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, leaflets

Sensational language: this refers to the use of vocabulary of phrasing with the intention of rousing the emotions of the reader, usually within the context of dramatic reporting.

Sexual abuse: this is the use of rape or other exploitative sexual acts, or withholding of sex to cause harm and injury to a victim or to exert power over them

Slay queen: a woman, mostly age 19-30, who is perceived as naïve, primarily concerned with appearance and money, and is seen to live a hedonistic lifestyle in a manner that is frowned upon by mainstream society.

Thematic reporting: this refers to the coverage of a news event as part of a trend within a wider socio-cultural context

Wife beating: this refers to the continuing crime of physical assault against a woman by the woman's male partner, usually a current or former husband

Wife rape: this refers to the continuing crime of sexual assault against a woman by the woman's male partner, usually a current or former husband

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the existing literature of previous studies that have been done on violence on violence against women and on femicide. The review was conducted within the context of the following sub-topics: the social construction of violence against women, the prevalence of femicide, the coverage of femicide in the news as well as the framing of this news coverage. This chapter concludes with the gaps identified in the existing literature as well as the theoretical frameworks that are employed in the data analysis, presentation and discussion.

The main aim of this research project is to examine the framing strategies that are utilised in news reporting of femicide cases in Kenya. Since there are limited existing academic publications on femicide in Kenya, the author relied primarily on academic work from other countries.

2.1 Social Construction of Violence Against Women

The social construction of violence varies from across countries with no singular universal definition (Mathur, 2004). Violence is as diverse as the number of victims who are affected by it. Mathur points out how violence manifests in different ways; this can be physical through beatings; sexual in terms of rape, defilement, assault, non-consensual touch for purposes of stimulating sexual arousal, sodomy among others; burning etc. Violence can also be emotional/psychological by belittling victims, verbal abuse and diminishing their sense of self-worth. As a result, the theories of violence as understood and defined by society continue to evolve with time to reflect power relationships and dynamics within the acceptable social mores of the respective period in question (Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999). As a result, the process of determining and labelling violent verses non-violent behaviour may not be as straightforward as it seems. This especially becomes apparent in an age when technology and innovation has provided more tools and media for the propagation of violence. Questions must be asked of what constitutes violent behaviour, which violence is worthy of news reporting, scholarly investigation and legislative interventions (Muehlenhard & Kimes, 1999).

The concepts of wife rape, date rape, wife beating, and courtship violence as legally and socially accepted mainstream concerns are fairly recent (Bergen, 1998; Loseke, 1989). Until the late 80s and early 90s, physical and sexual violence were seen as acts that were carried out by perpetrators unknown to the victim, rather than by friends, family and acquaintances of the victim (Bergen, 1998). The first recorded type of intimate violence to be recognised by the mainstream was child abuse, which was theorised as "battered child syndrome" in the 1960s (Kempe, Silverman et al., 1962) after which various countries began to pass legislation against child laws. Although evidence suggests that both women and children have endured violence at the hands of men throughout history, violence against women especially by male relatives continued to be accepted as a form of discipline (Bergen, 1998). However, English Common Law, which greatly influenced many laws in former British colonies, recognised rape as a property crime against men since women were considered the property of men (Brownmiller, 1975). It was on this basis that marital rape was not recognised as a crime, because women's consent to sex was implied in marriage and could therefore not be revoked at will (Bergen, 1998; Estrich, 1987). Between independence in 1963 and the late 1990s the Kenyan constitution, which was rooted in British Common Law, allowed for the discrimination based on sex. In addition, the constitution had no provisions for violence against women (Ondicho, 2018).

Earlier, predominantly white male, researchers such as Abrahamsen (1960), Wille (1962), Rosenwald, and Robey (1964) published studies on the ways in which wives motivated their husbands to rape women, attributed rapists' pathologies to their relationships with the female authorities such as mothers and female bosses in their lives and even went ahead to suggest that these women's behaviour betrayed an unconscious desire to be raped. Essentially, early research on gender-based violence relied on victim blaming to not just excuse the crime but to normalise it as socially acceptable. As recently as the 1980, most mental healthcare providers and psychologists did not pay much attention to sexual and domestic violence and even when they did, it was largely to blame women for its occurrence (Muehlenhard, Harney, & Jones, 1992).

As feminist discourse and women's rights continue to permeate the mainstream, recent researchers have called for the application of a more critical, gender-sensitive lens to the issue of gender-based violence (Gelsthorpe, 2003). In her ethnographic study of the Kenyan Abagusii community, Silberschmidt (1991) notes that domestic violence is most rampant in transitional societies where men feel that their gender identity and therefore institutional

power is threatened and/or weakened by the changes in contemporary life. She points out that these societal changes are perceived to shift gender relations in favour of women at the expense of men, resulting in increased conflict in the home. Kay, Mirembe et al (2005) also noted, in a study that domestic violence in some communities in Uganda and Kenya increases exponentially during pregnancy, with over half of women in antenatal care reporting physical and/or emotional violence by their intimate partners during pregnancy. Many of these domestic violence cases were characterised by alcoholism of the male partners, conflict in polygamous households and history of domestic abuse (Makayoto, Omolo et al., 2012). However, this study only discusses the wider topic of gender based violence and does not delve into the probable outcome of this violence which is the killing of the victim. Furthermore, this study also does not address the public discourses that shape the narrative of violence against women.

It is against this backdrop that Surette (2007) explains how most individuals have a passive experience with violent crime, therefore, most people's understanding of its victimology as well as the analysis of offenders is more of a "mediated experience." As a result, most people's understanding of crimes such as domestic violence stems comes from different sources such as media portrayal – be it the news or other regular programming. Berns (2011) goes further to suggest print media is one of the "public arenas where images of domestic violence are constructed, debated, and reproduced." Therefore, it is important to pay attention to the various ways in which the media conveys biased portrayals of domestic and intimate partner violence. Sentiments such that question why the victim "allowed" the abuse, the idea that the victim willingly stayed in the abusive relationship and the victim's perceived "participation" in the violence (e.g. she must have done something to provoke him) only serve to trivialise violence against women and propagate the myth that women are partly to blame for their victimisation. Conversely, responsible reporting on violence against women would provide a unique opportunity to challenge commonly held negative perceptions about the crime and its victims as well as to marshal up community support.

There are multiple lenses through which socio-cultural problems can be viewed, and these lenses imply that there are divergent contributory factors and the corresponding mitigations for these identified problems (Miller, 2018; Kitsuse, 2000). The media as an influential institution for propagation of and suppression of views forms an integral part of this framing process. They media can choose which cases, perpetrators and victims, to amplify and which ones to downplay or even out rightly disregard. This filtering is often done on the basis of

who is considered important and how they are valued on society. Furthermore, the mainstream also builds various interpretive frameworks for social change and reengineering that prefers some solutions to others (Erickson, 1991).

Mass media often relies on predefined models to narrate socio-cultural issues to its consumers. One may occasionally find slight of variations to the templates in terms of their content and veracity, they nevertheless present the audience and the general public with channels broad strokes understanding of events, including violent crime (Surette, 2007). Within the context of domestic violence, this then covers aspects such as the occurrence of the crime, its impact (to the victim, the perpetrator and the community) as well as the various settings that characterise violence against women.

With the increasing dialogue and campaigns on preventing violence against women, it is important, now more than ever to scrutinise media attention in Kenya especially on how the reported violence is presented and in a broader sense, the ways in which this violence is understood by society. It is the outcome of this scrutiny that can heavily influence provision of funding and resources for victim services.

2.2 Prevalence of Femicide

Intimate femicide is the main cause of death for women globally between the ages of 18 and 55 with women at highest risk of being killed while in relationships characterised by physical violence (Rosenfeld 1997; Stöckl, Devries, et al. 2013). In addition, women are three times more likely than men to be killed by a lover or an intimate partner (Johnson & Dawson, 2011).

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime ranks Kenya as having one of the highest cases of femicide in the world (UNDOC, 2018). According to the report, 87,000 women were murdered in 2017, a nearly 100% increase from the 2012 statistics of 48,000. Of this figure, 19,000 were killed in Africa.

It is difficult to narrow down these statistics in Kenya because homicides are generally not tracked based on the sex of the victims. Therefore, most statistics on femicide are drawn from reports on domestic violence.

The killing of girls and women by intimate partners is seldom a random event (Adam, 2007). Therefore, the factors preceding these killings, as well as the characteristics of and the relationship the victim and the perpetrator often provide key insights into the crime. Research also indicates that, intimate partner homicide is more prevalent in younger

demographics, with the female victims tending to be younger than their assailants (DeJong, et al, 2011) largely due to traditional relationship dynamics in which women ordinarily partner with men who are older than them (Breitman et al, 2004). In essence, the larger the age discrepancy between the couple, the higher the risk for intimate partner violence. This was especially true where the male partner was at least fifteen years older than the female partner (Garcia et al, 2007).

In addition to this, Black women between the ages of 15 and 45 in the United States are disproportionately represented in femicide statistics, with intimate partner homicides accounting for about 50% of reported cases (Campbell, Webster, Koziol-McLain et al, 2003). This study is limited to statistics in the United States.

With respect to cause and effect, the primary risk factor for femicide is intimate partner violence (Moracco et al.,1998). This is further exacerbated by factors such as access to weapons – especially firearms – as well as the use of illicit drugs and alcohol (Campbell et al., 2003). This research also concluded that women nine times more likely to be killed when they leave or even try to leave an abusive relationship. In response to this, Campbell et al prescribe proven interventions for reducing the risk factors for femicide including arrest and prosecution of perpetrators, safety planning and socio-economic scaffolding for victim recovery, coordinated efforts by law enforcement, legal officers and the wider community.

The United States has seen an overall decline in cases of intimate partner violence over the past three decades, which has been partly attributed to the increase in support structures for the victims such as shelters and emergency hotlines (Campbell, Glass, et al., 2007). However, one notable fact from this research is that the most substantial decline has been observed in male victims while the proportion of female victims has actually risen by twenty-four percentage points between 1976 and 2005 (Maguire, 2007). Maguire estimates that the ratio of male to female victims of intimate partner homicide in the US stands at one to five. Some researchers (Bullock & Cubert, 2002) suggest that this is fuelled by the fact that violence against women is still largely reported as an aberration rather than the norm.

In South Africa, half of female homicide victims are killed by an intimate partner. Outside of war-torn countries, South Africa has the highest number of reported cases of females murdered by gunshot (Mathews, 2010). Mathews study found that the rate of intimate femicide in South Africa is 8.8/100,000 while the rate of intimate femicide-suicide rate is 1.7/100,000 among women aged fourteen and above, with 90% of them below age forty. Half

of the victims are killed by cohabiting boyfriends while 27% of them are killed by husbands. A further 18.5% are killed by non-cohabiting boyfriends.

The high rates of intimate femicide is associated with alcohol abuse as well as early childhood trauma and neglect that acts as a gateway to violent expressions of masculinity. Mathews (2010) concludes that intimate partner femicide is an extension of intimate partner violence and that the complexities of the associated catalysing factors need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Furthermore, 19% of men who committed intimate femicide by gunshot committed suicide within a week of the crime.

The high levels of gun violence in South Africa have also contributed significantly to intimate partner femicide, with women making up 33% of gun homicide victims (Abrahams, Jewkes & Mathews, 2010). The researchers observed that of this demographic, 60% of them were killed in their homes, with half of them being shot by their intimate partners.

In their study on the sexual and reproductive healthcare in South Africa, Russel & Harmes (2001) argue that the AIDS epidemic is a major contributor to mass femicide. They point to the widespread problem of males who purposely refuse to wear condoms when engaging in sexual relationships with their spouses or girlfriends despite having multiple sexual partners. Furthermore, many of these men fail to disclose their HIV status to their sexual partners. Other reasons included husbands who are entitled under cultural laws and norms to force their wives to engage in sex with them as well as men who were ignorant of their HIV status. UNAIDS (2019) estimates that in the age group of 15-19, girls account for every three out of five new infections. Additionally, women who have experience violence are more 50% more likely to be infected with HIV. According to UNAIDS, HIV infection in sub-Saharan Africa is 1.62 times more prevalent in women than it is in men, with the former accounting for 57% of HIV infections.

Aborisade, Adedayo and Shontan (2019) observed that there is a sociodemographic diversity among males in Nigeria who kill their intimate partners. The perpetrators ranged from age twenty to forty with a post-secondary education. At the time of the study, a majority of the cases were still on trial, with only four convictions confirmed within the two-month period of the study. The sample research sites of the study were Kirikiri Maximum Prison and Ikoyi Prison which with inmates who have either been convicted of or are currently awaiting trial for intimate spousal homicide. Aborisade et al. found that 71% of the study participants reported no motive in killing their spouses prior to the incidents leading up to their victims'

deaths. However, an analysis of the weapons used in the commission of the crime indicated an established pattern of abuse, with a majority of the participants admitting to using dangerous weapons that are capable of inflicting serious injury to the victim. Knives were the most commonly reported weapon of choice at 51.4%, followed by strangulation or suffocation at 24%. Further to this, Mize, Shackelford & Weekes-Shackelford (2011) noted that young women of reproductive age are at higher risk of being killed by stabbing and other hands-on methods such as strangulation, compared to their older counterparts who are past their child-bearing age.

As with the case in South Africa, there was a running theme of a history of abuse in childhood among the perpetrators in Nigeria, with 76% of respondents admitting to what they describe as "excessive disciplinary punishments" such as "beating", 'flogging' 'slapping' 'kicks' 'hitting on the head' 'throwing items at me' 'pushing me violently' 'hitting with sticks and other objects.' (p.8). The result of these childhood traumas is that these perpetrators have grown up to normalise violence as an acceptable reaction to wrongful behaviour.

The demarcation of societal roles as well as the socialisation of boys and girls which reinforces the perceptions of male superiority and domination makes it easier for people to ignore violence against women (Kalra & Bhugra, 2013). It would be imperative to interrogate the role of culture in Kenya as an influential parameter in the prevalence of femicide (WHO, 2009) and correlate that with the media framing that is currently in use by Kenyan mainstream media.

2.1 Coverage of Femicide Cases in the News

Stories of crime and violence continue to dominate both the news reporting and fictional television due to its popularity with viewing audiences. This is because violence evokes the basic human instincts of fear and curiosity (Chermak, 1995). Unfortunately, media coverage of crime and violence is not always necessarily accurate and is sometimes even sensationalised and exaggerated for ratings. This then distorts society's perceptions not just of the individually reported crimes, but also of violence in general (Surette, 2007). Researchers (Chermak, 1995; Chiricos & Eschholz 2002; Dixon & Linz, 2000) have also discussed the ways in which the media reinforces dominant social structures of race, gender and class in their reporting, often with members of dominant group(s) being portrayed as more empathetic and relatable than members of the less dominant group(s).

The media then can play a key role in creating public awareness and sensitisation of femicide by shifting away from the current episodic coverage and instead focusing on thematic coverage in its agenda setting of it as an issue of social concern (Fairbairn & Dawson 2013). The current mode of reporting relies on sensationalism and theatrics that turns the conversation into "office cooler gossip" on the details of the victim's and/or perpetrators personal lives, thereby diverting attention away from the real issue at hand (Blood, Putnis & Pirkis 2002).

There have been few studies conducted on media coverage and portrayal of femicide, with Meyers (1994) being the first and most seminal piece on this issue. Meyers' paper was an analysis of a murder-suicide in the United States with victims Wanda and Dennis Walters being the focus of the case. Meyers noted that media coverage tended to gloss over details of victimology when the victim was female. Instead, the violent female victimisation was attributed to "individual and family pathology rather than to social structures and gendered patterns of dominance and control."

In addition to this, Meyers noted the use of victim-blaming tactics and language which offered up excuses for the offender, with the most common fall-back being mental health status due to stress factors including marital strife, addiction issues, anger management issues. The victim, meanwhile would be negatively characterised as directly contributing to their death. In the case of the Walters, the female victim was branded as "white trash", that is, a poor white person predominantly from the Southern states of the US, who was responsible for her demise. According to Meyers, the news coverage of domestic violence incidents tends to delink violence against women to the wider male-dominated social structures and must therefore be reassessed from a feminist perspective. Although Meyers' study was not intended as an explorative analysis of an individual case, it has with time proved to be representative of news coverage of violence against women.

Meyers' paved the way for Taylor (2009) who presented broader research on the phenomenon. Taylor analysed six-years' worth of newspaper coverage – 168 cases across 292 articles – by The Orlando Sentinel which is the primary newspaper of the city of Orlando in the state of Florida. Her sample included cases of female-perpetrated and same-sex perpetrated homicide for a comparative analysis.

Taylor created a coding framework with a ten-point checklist for each article. The paper analysed various facets of the media coverage including the sources of information, the

language used and the contextualisation of the crimes as domestic and/or intimate partner violence. In essence, Taylor's research confirmed Meyers' declarations on the relationship between victim-blaming language and the framing of femicide within the context of domestic and intimate partner violence. Furthermore, Taylor observed that most newspapers and media houses relied heavily on information from law enforcement officials. Approximately 34% of the sampled articles covered the homicide within the context of domestic violence. However, most of them were vague regarding the person responsible for the crime.

Taylor's research confirmed what Meyers' before her had concluded in her work, that news media disproportionately employs victim-blaming language in the reporting of femicide cases.

The information sources that are used by the media in their reporting on intimate partner violence cases largely influence the nature of the reporting. Several researchers (Chermak, 1995; Ericson, 1989; Fishman, 1981; Surette, 2007) have pointed to the ways in which law enforcement often presents the details of a case from a heavily biased viewpoint, to the extent of operating more as gatekeepers than simply informants. This is an especially dangerous notion considering that their sentiments are often prejudiced against not just female victims but women in general (Heeren & Messing, 2009). On the other hand, the media is less likely to turn to experts on domestic violence such as counsellors, psychologists and doctors (Kelly & Payton, 2018; Berns, 2017; Taylor, 2009) who may be in a position to provide more insight into the victimology of the case or even serve as character witnesses. This means that the media and law enforcement unwittingly continue the cycle of stereotyping domestic violence cases, victims and perpetrators. They also fail to paint the bigger picture of domestic violence as the social problem that it is (Heeren & Messing, 2009).

As gatekeepers of societal perceptions, the news media's framing of intimate violence holds a lot of weight. In the words of Lowney and Best (1995, p. 48), "A key step in social problems construction is linking a troubling event to a problematic pattern, defining a particular incident as an instance of some larger problem." Feminist researchers (Belknap, 2007) continue to point out the media's insistence on presenting intimate partner violence as an instance of individual pathology rather than an issue of public health and concern. Consequently, its prevalence continues to be minimised and relegated to a "pink issue" that is of no immediate concern.

2.3 Framing of News Coverage of Femicide

Iyengar (1991) discusses two base framings of news that impact on public perception. The first frame that he identifies is the episodic frame in which the crime is reported as a singular isolated event. The second frame is the thematic frame that recognises the wider issues and also presents datasets and trends that inform the broader context of the news item. Iyengar emphasises the importance of the thematic frame in creating public awareness and often even influencing social responses and interventions. Unfortunately, as several scholars (Blood, Putnis & Pirkis 2002; Iyengar 1991) have pointed out, news coverage is frequently skewed in favour of the episodic frame.

There are three major components to the framing of media stories: reference sources, language and context.

Ordinarily, source analysis narrows down on three key sources, official sources including the police, friends and family, personal acquaintances as well as other qualifies persons such as anti-violence advocates. Law enforcement has historically been the primary and most trusted source of information, meaning that their word is taken as fact and goes a long way in swaying public opinion in whichever direction that they point to (Doyle, 2018; Feldman, Gruskin et al., 2017; Kleemans, Schaap, Hermans 2017).

The police have several advantages as sources compared to the other two groups: they are often the first to arrive at the scene of the crime and they are also more likely to provide a legal standpoint for what is perceived to be factual reporting. Their unfettered access to most, if not all, the minutiae of the case also increases their chances of being quoted in newspaper reports or TV news coverage. The media, and by extension, society's view of what should or should not be considered criminal behaviour (Gorelick, 1989; Humphries, 1981) is therefore restricted to the narrow definitions that are applied by law enforcement. These limited definitions of crime become an important factor when one considers the number or cases in which perpetrators are pathologised as victims of undiagnosed or untreated mental health issues.

Outside of law enforcement, the media frequently makes it a point to quote or paraphrase individuals who are acquainted with the victim. Rather than default to family members who would be an obvious choice given their familiarity with the victims, the media has often relied more on neighbours (Doyle, 2018; Feldman, Gruskin et al., 2017; Kleemans, Schaap, Hermans 2017; Taylor, 2009). On one hand, neighbours and other such acquaintances are

often more likely to engage the press than family members and close friends; on the other hand, Taylor (2009) observed that they are also more likely than the latter to portray the crime as an isolated incident even in cases where there was a history of abuse. She opines that this could be partly attributed to the fact that unlike family, neighbours are unencumbered by the future legal outcomes of the case.

Without diminishing the significance of information provided by friends and family, it should be stated that experts in domestic violence are most useful in contextualising domestic violence as the social problem that it is (Richards et al., 2011).

Researchers (Doyle, 2018; Feldman, Gruskin et al., 2017; Kleemans, Schaap, Hermans 2017; Taylor, 2009) have decried the media's lack of attention to professional sources such as scholars and anti-violence advocates who can provide important contributions on the public health concerns surrounding the issue. They are also more likely to have in-depth knowledge of domestic violence and intimate partner violence that is germane to the reporting of the cases as the societal problem that they are. These professional views are can provide the necessary context required for dispelling the myths surrounding the pathology of abusers.

Language is a central component in the framing of news and media reporting around intimate partner violence and femicide. It affects conceptualisation, understanding, perception, and interpretation of events that play out in the public sphere (Taylor, 2009).

In the context of this study, language can be used to depict domestic violence as a socio-cultural issue and therefore demanding of structural and institutional interventions, or it can be reported as an isolated incident that instigated wholly or in part by the victim. Recognising a homicide case involving intimate partners as intimate partner violence, as domestic violence or as a case of femicide requires the use of deliberate language. This is easily recognised in the choice of title or headline employed by the media, which can either sensationalise or downplay the seriousness of the case. It is also from the headline that the audience is able to immediately distinguish a case of intimate partner homicide from a case of stranger homicide (Gillespie et al., 2013) to bring attention to the issue.

In a comparative newspaper analysis of femicide reporting in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico and Detroit Michigan, United States, Branch (2019) pointed out that newspaper articles in Juarez often failed to provide comprehensive details of femicide cases, despite explicitly linking them to the femicide epidemic in the city. The Juarez newspapers also contextualised their stories on femicide to the wider issue of violence against women. While newspapers in

Detroit often went into tremendous detail regarding their femicide case reporting, unlike their Juarez counterparts, they were less likely to report on them within the scope of domestic violence and barely made connections between the different cases. Branch's study was a cross-cultural examination of the characteristics of news stories in both cities that are used to determine the newsworthiness of femicide reports in the newspaper and their implications to the social construction of violence against women.

Branch's study conforms Surette's earlier conclusion on the importance of language, context and news sources as a determinant of newsworthiness. This is then important for embedding an issue into the societal psyche. This has proven in some places such as California to be a central aspect of instituting criminal justice reforms.

2.4 Gaps in Existing Literature

Globally, there have been few studies on the socio-cultural aspects of femicide. A majority of the studies that have been conducted on intimate partner femicide have been surveillance studies that analyse data from law enforcement records, demographic surveys and auxiliary homicide reports (Ferrara, Caporale, Cutrona et al., 2015; Abrahams, Matthews, et al., 2013; Russel, 2008). The primary objective of these studies has been to establish the prevalence of intimate partner femicide, rather than to explore the cultural aspects and factors that contribute to its prevalence.

Additionally, the studies that have been done on the media framing of femicide have been undertaken in other countries such as North America, Jordan and Mexico. In Africa, majority of the research on femicide has been done primarily in South Africa and Ghana. (Sela-Shayovitz, 2018; Choquette, 2012; Richards, Gillespie & Smith, 2011; Mathews, 2010). The researcher did not come across scholarship on femicide in Kenya. This current study – aims to fill this gap.

There exists however literary scholarship on Kenya media and domestic violence in general in Kenya. A closer examination on this scholarship specifically on Kenyan print media and femicide reveals that These studies focused on media framing from a journalistic perspective, rather than a cultural and feminist perspective. (Mwai, 2016; Koga, 2014; Nyambura, 2012).

The existing literature also insufficiently analyses femicide and domestic violence in terms of who the dominant story tellers are, the gender dynamics of the newsroom and how this affects the framing of the phenomena

This research study aims to fill these gaps by analysing the framing of media coverage of femicide as influenced by both traditional and contemporary cultural lenses against a feminist theoretical framework.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study made use of two theoretical frameworks, namely, media framing theory and feminist criminology. Media framing theory was useful in establishing the ways in which media selects the issues and topics to focus on it its reporting while feminist criminology was used to analyse the ways in which gender biases affect media frames.

2.5.1 Media Framing Theory

Framing theory emerged in the 1960s within the field of sociology to define the ways in which people perceive, conceptualise and orient issues for their own understanding. The concept of framing was first theorised by Bateson (1972, p. 197) who defined it as the "spatial and temporary bounding of set of interactive messages."

In the context of mass communication, media framing theory refers to the ways in which the media packages and presents information and news items to audiences. At the foundation of media framing theory is the idea that the media deliberately chooses to focus its attention on specific events, issues and/or phenomena and then positions these issues within a field of meaning for its audience. Goffman (1974) theorised that audiences subconsciously interpret information that is presented to them through two primary frameworks, natural and social. Natural frameworks are "undirected, unoriented, unanimated, unguided, "purely physical."" (p.21) that occur without human intervention while social frameworks "incorporate the will, aim, and controlling effort of an intelligence, a live agency, the chief one being the human being." (pg. 22).

Arowolo (2017, p. 3) summarises media frames as "organising ideas or themes, ways of linking together stories historically, building up a narrative over time and across political space." He further posits that the media framing serves several purposes such as establishing mental shortcuts which enable the audience to make quick conclusions of decisions about the information that has been presented. These decisions may not necessarily be optimal of accurate. Arowolo also suggest that media frames can be used to "simplify the news, distract the public from important issues and limit the ability of the audience to think outside the box" (p. 4).

Bateson (1972) theorised that journalists select the issues on which they report and also decide on how they will present the information to the audiences. This means that the reporting of the information is subjected to the biases and interpretations of the journalist and their editors. However, following the idea by Goffman (1974) that audiences also interpret information through their own frames, it does not necessarily follow that audience frames must overlap with media frames. In some cases, there may be contradictions based on how the audience chooses to construe the information presented to them.

Some researchers such as Gillespie, Richards, Givens & Smith (2013) and Taylor (2009), propose three components that are integral in identifying the above listed frames: sources of information, the language used in reporting, and the context of the narratives.

The sources of news story establish the type of information that will ultimately be availed to the audience in terms of quality and perspective, both of which ultimately influence the audiences' interpretation of the situation. For example, law enforcement, specifically the police, tend to be the most cited sources of information in domestic violence and femicide cases. Because they inherently hold an authoritative position in society, their accounts are often treated as gospel and are rarely challenged. At best, this leaves little room for competing perspectives and at worst, it marginalises any conflicting narrative (Gillespie et al., 2003). This then poses a challenge because the relationship between victims of domestic violence and the police has always been a tenuous one especially in cases where the police are not well educated on the dynamics of domestic violence (DeJong, Burgess-Proctor & Ellis, 2008). This is because in many instances, the police fail to understand why a victim may not automatically want to leave an abuser, why they would fail to report a domestic violence case or fail to follow through with the prosecutorial process. Consequently, their interpretation is based on the victim's reactions to the situation as an indication that they are willing to remain in the relationship of their own accord and will therefore remain uncooperative should an arrest be made (DeJong et al., 2008). Victims of domestic violence have also reported incidents where the police discouraged them from reporting their cases or even going as far as siding with the perpetrators in an effort to trivialise the abuse (Wolf, Ly, Hobart & Kernic, 2003).

Gillspie et al. (2003) assert that the most reliable sources of information as to the relationship dynamics of the couple in a domestic violence case would be the friends and family of the victims due to their proximity to the everyday happenings of the relationship. However, journalists often contend that they are likely to be biased towards one party.

In addition to the sources of information, the language used in the stories was also analysed by looking out for direct and indirect victim-blaming tactics as described by Richards et al. (2011). This was done especially in establishing the ways in which the print media can perpetuate harmful stereotypes about women. This is because language is still fundamental in shaping audience perceptions and opinions towards a news story (Taylor, 2009). Monckton-Smith (2012) found that one of the ways in which the media does this, is by using language that reinforces the patriarchal penchant for referring to women by their relationship to men. References to women often used titles such as wife, mother, girlfriend or by their husband's surnames rather than using their given names which strips them of their individual identities.

The use of language to minimise femicide is best manifested in the use of passive voice Monckton-Smith (2012). Phrases such as "a woman was raped", "a number of girls were harassed" has the political effect of shifting focus from the perpetrators (men and boys), to the victims (women and girls). Even the phrase "violence against women" erases the active agent in the crime and in a way suggests that violence simply happens to women, without an active participant instigating it (Katz, 2019). This goes hand in hand with **linguistic avoidance** where the media co-opts the language of consensual sex to report on rape and sexual assault encounters. The use of phrases such as "*performed oral sex on*" or "*had a sexual encounter with a minor*" instead of writing that "*he forcefully penetrated her vagina*" works to minimise the level of violence (Bohner, 2001). The use of language is also important in conveying emotion and concern in narratives about domestic and sexual violence. This can be seen prior instances of domestic violence by a perpetrator are reported alongside minor violations such as speeding (Public health watch, 2014).

The choice of reporting language in media may be occasioned by several different reasons, such as lack of knowledge, journalists' biases, regard for the target audience or poor choice of information sources. Whatever the reason, examination of language is germane to examining the portrayal of femicide cases in mainstream print media reporting.

The final component for the frame analysis is context of the story, which was examined by coding for through various elements of the story including the characteristics of the story, including the details of any events preceding the crime, as well as the portrayal of the victim and the perpetrator. Gillespie et al. (2013) have pointed out that media reports sometimes fail to explicitly mention details of the couple's past or report on it as a minor detail that is not germane to the case. This creates the illusion that the particular crime is an isolated incident rather than part of a pattern of an all too common crime. What is more, the omission of these

past details of the couple's past can also contribute to victim-blaming since the audience is left unaware of the victim's past efforts to seek redress against her perpetrator (Taylor, 2009). It also ignores the increased probability of the perpetrator killing the victim when she attempts to leave. Taylor (2009) also asserts that journalists should be cognizant of the fact that as more stories of domestic violence are reported on in mainstream media, other victims or potential victims may relate these accounts to their own lived experiences to counter their feelings of isolation. She emphasises that by illustrating the correlation of current violence and abuse with the increased likelihood of homicide in future, the public can then begin to understand femicide as a prevalent social problem. This contextualisation also makes it easier to curate cases of domestic violence that go unreported to police or other law enforcement.

In the contextualisation of femicide cases, this study made use of the following characteristics: age of the victim and the perpetrator, relationship status of the victim and the perpetrator; including the method of killing, motive for the killing, whether or not the femicide was followed by suicide, whether there was a history of domestic violence, author of the article, description of the article title, sensational headline, type of coverage (dramatic/episodic/thematic), whether the article used a picture of the victim, the sources of information, characterisation of the victim and the perpetrator, and whether blame was placed on the victim for failing to prevent the crime.

For purposes of this study, an article title that is ambiguous to the crime refers to the one that simply reports on the actions committed by a perpetrator or against the victim and is not immediately identifiable as a femicide or intimate partner homicide. This includes titles such as "Woman found dead in Nakuru", "Mombasa man arrested for murder". An example of a title that describes the details of the crime as femicide or intimate partner homicide includes "Egerton University student stabbed by boyfriend over alleged love triangle".

A sensational news headline can be defined as one that contains "content features or formal features of messages that have the capability to provoke attention and arousal responses in viewers" (Kleemans & Hendriks Vettehen, 2009, p. 229).

Dramatic coverage or reporting is also known as sensationalism/sensational reporting. Molek-Kozakowska (2013, p.173) defines it as "a discourse strategy of 'packaging' information in news headlines in such a way that news items are presented as more interesting, extraordinary and relevant than might be the case." She points out that there are two key aspects to sensationalist reporting, that is, the choice of topic to report on (such as

sex, crime, scandal) and the actual method of packaging or delivery of a story. In that sense, the topic itself may not be sensational but the way that the media chooses to report on it makes it seem more dramatic than it ideally would be in a different context.

Thematic reporting positions the news story within a contextual narrative – which in this case is the wider context of domestic violence and intimate partner violence – and pays attention to the trends within that context in order to preserve the story as part of the general evidence that it is part of a wider phenomenon (Wouters, 2015). On the other hand, "episodic news treats events as particular cases in the form of event-oriented reports." (Wouters, 2015, p.6).

Researchers Coleman & Thorson (2002) observed that episodic reporting often leads the audience to assign blame or responsibility to the individual while thematic reporting is mostly associated with societal causes. They also argue that episodic reporting is more commonly selected for entertainment and/or dramatic purposes rather than for their veracity. Conversely, thematic reporting frequently involves an in-depth discussion of the fundamental issues regarding the subject matter to encourage public consideration and reflection.

Richards et al. (2011) describe direct victim-blaming language as the use of perceived questionable behaviour or characteristics possessed by the victim that may have directly contributed to the commission of the crime. This includes failing to report previous assaults or attacks, withdrawing charges after reporting, failing to leave an established or potentially abusive relationship/situation and actual or perceived infidelity especially on the part of the victim. These are defined as such because they place explicit responsibility on the victim for the crime or for failing to take action against the perpetrator.

As per the definition of Richards et al. (2011), indirect victim blaming includes references to alcohol and/or drug consumption, choice of dressing as well as allusions to the real or perceived mental health of the victim and/or the perpetrator. These scenarios are considered indirect victim blaming because although they may not necessarily place the onus of preventing the crime on the victim, they suggest possible justifications for the crime and sometimes even go so far as to absolve the perpetrator of responsibility.

This study analysed the article based on five key frames that were identified by Gillespie et al. (2013) as commonplace media frames that are employed specifically in the reporting of domestic violence:

The first frame is "Focusing on the behaviour of the victim, including blaming the victim or excusing the perpetrator" (p.227). This is mostly done through insinuations about the actions

or inactions averts attention from the perpetrator. It is for this reason that this frame is often identified through direct victim-blaming language.

The second frame, "Normalising the event as commonplace" (p.227) can be identified when the crime is reported along with other general homicides (Gillespie et al.,2013). Another way in which it is often identified is when the news report makes vaguely mentions a history or propensity to violence but does not explicitly describe it as a history of domestic violence.

The third frame, "Suggesting the incident was an isolated event" (p. 227), fails to acknowledge the commission of the crime as part of a series of domestic abuse incidents, rather it describes it as a random event. This frame especially occurs when the source of information is neighbours who may either not be aware of the history of abuse or may be trying to cover it up (Taylor, 2009). Taylor points out that news reporters heavily rely on neighbours as a source of information for cases of domestic violence and femicide. However, they can be an unreliable source because the community often perpetuates stereotypes and myths about domestic violence and spousal abuse, especially by failing to recognise it as a rampant problem and ascribing its occurrence to individual pathology. In addition, this framing is also fostered by the legal system. Domestic violence is one of the most underreported and under-prosecuted crimes at between 2% and 12% globally (Garcia, 2004).

The fourth frame, "Indicating the victim and/or perpetrator are somehow different from the norm" (p. 227) usually manifests through references to the victim and/or perpetrators socio-economic status, ethnic or religious group, or some other stereotyped identity. It can also sometimes refer to their criminal past of involvement in criminal activity.

The fifth frame, "Asserting that domestic violence perpetrators are "disordered" and should be easily identifiable" (p. 227) is observable through surprise or shock at the crime, the perpetrator's actions or some other peculiar characteristic about them that should are supposedly obvious to society and should have been immediately identifiable to the victim. Indirect-victim blaming applies to this frame because references to addiction, infidelity or even abusive tendencies are often alluded to in this scenario.

In addition to these frames, Gillespie et al. (2013) also define five other frames that are often employed in media reports on criminal justice in general, and can therefore be manifested in the reporting of domestic violence and femicide. These include;

> Blaming a crime event on a faulty criminal justice system; Suggesting the victim or offender has experienced blocked opportunity at a structural level; Noting social and

moral breakdown in the recent past; Considering institutional racism; Placing blame on violence portrayed in the media" (Gillespie et al., 2013, p. 227).

The frame on "Blaming a crime event on a faulty criminal justice system" places emphasis on what is perceived to be a failed justice system either as a catalyst or the most defining factor of the victim's death.

Suggestions of blocked opportunities can be recognised from the mentions of the perpetrator's educational level, socio-economic situation and occupational circumstances that are identified as possible stress factors that could have led them to kill out of frustration or exasperation with their life's trajectory.

According to Gillespie et al. (2013), the frame on social and moral breakdown is often supported by arguments about the perpetrator's failures and/or breakdowns arising from struggles with mental health, including depression, anxiety, fear of abandonment and even suicidal thoughts. An example of this would be the perpetrator being mentally unstable but lacking the requisite psychosocial support to seek treatment.

The final frame, which attributes the increase in violence in society to its portrayal in mass media, argues that the consumption of violence on television has cheapened human life and therefore made people more desensitised to violence in real life (Surette, 2007).

Due to the research site of these study, the frame on institutional racism was eliminated from the study.

2.5.2 Feminist Criminology

Other than media framing theory, this research paper also uses Feminist Criminology in its methodology and analysis. While media framing is a useful tool for analysing the ways in which the media packages information for its audience, it does not fully interrogate the motives behind those frames especially in regards to its reporting on women and issues affecting women. Furthermore, since this study focuses on intimate partner femicide, it is important to interrogate these media frames and narratives in regard to crime reporting and criminology which itself has been faulted for having biases in how it deals with crimes involving women. It is for this reason that the study employs the lens of feminist criminology to complement the media frames that are identified in the research.

Feminist criminology aims to distinguish femicide as a unique aspect of homicide studies. At the heart of feminist criminology is "the willingness to accept a theoretical framework that comprises multiple intersecting inequalities" (Burgess-Proctor, 2006, p.27) that women, and

especially African women face on a daily basis. Contemporary feminist criminology must engage an inclusive lens that analyses race, class, gender, sexuality, age, nationality, religion, physical ability, and other positions of inequality.

Before delving further into the ideology of "feminist criminology", one must understand that "feminism" itself is not hegemonic theory, rather it encompasses different (and sometimes conflicting) viewpoints, each with their own assumptions about the roots of inequality between the sexes and the oppression of women (Basu, 2018, Westford, 2011). In this regard, feminist theory often follows five major categories (Nye, 2013): liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxism feminism and socialist feminism.

The transition from second-wave to third-wave feminism in the 1990s and 1990s shifted focus from hegemonic identities to the idea that there were multiple genders, races and sexualities. It was during this time that other feminist theories arose including African feminism, Black feminism, Womanism, and Critical Race feminist theory, which aim to address the unique experiences of Black and African women, remain equally important in the analysis of women's oppression across both gender and race (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991). The idea of intersectional feminism arose with contemporary third-wave feminists who emphasised the inclusion of class, race, sex and sexuality as well as various other positions of inequality within mainstream feminist research and scholarship (Price & Sokoloff, 2004). Intersectionality emphasises the re-conceptualisation of identities in a way that acknowledges that structural systems of power are not mutually exclusive, rather, that "they are multiplicative, inextricably linked, and simultaneously experienced" (Crenshaw, 1990).

Although each of these feminist perspectives offer unique ways of theorising about women's oppression by associating crime with inequality, feminist criminology must be anchored in the multiplicity of African women's identities for proper application in the context of this study. Thus, Feminist criminology sits at the cross-section of all these feminist theories with its objection of (liberal) feminist scholarship to the omission of gender parameters from criminological analyses and investigations. Feminist criminologists considered this to be a particularly conspicuous oversight given the fact that gender is often a great predicator of offending (Barberet, 2014; Houston, 2014; Daly, 2010) and sentencing (Liddell & Martinovic, 2013) outcomes. Feminist researchers were unhappy with mainstream criminology's blindness to underlying factors such as issues of gender which are often key determinants of economic disparities that lead to criminal activity (Beirne & Messerschmidt,

2000). Female criminologists pointed out the ways in which mainstream criminology relied heavily on male population samples to calculate probabilities and draw conclusions on the issue of male delinquency.

It should be pointed out that feminist criminology arose during a historical turning point of the feminist movement, at the tail end of the first wave feminism and the onset of the second wave in the late 1960s and early 1970s. During this time, feminists who belonged to minority groups (as defined by markers such as race, nationality and sexuality) observed that their lived experiences were not represented in the mainstream feminist agendas. There was intense criticism from these minority groups who felt that they were deliberately silenced and side-lined by their counterparts who fit squarely in "majority" status. Black feminists, as well as other feminists of colour, non-heterosexual feminists and feminists from developing (global south) countries as well as feminist groups who felt that their identities were not reflected in the mainstream which was characterised as predominantly white, middle-class and heterosexual. However, the same assertions of reductionism and bio-essentialism that plagued first-wave feminism found their way into the analyses and critiques of feminist criminology.

Scholars of feminist criminology emphasise the interrogation of the ways in which women navigate criminal justice systems which predominantly uphold masculine perspectives (Carlen, 1992). They are also critical of research and scholarship that fails to interrogate the implications of power and privilege in its analysis of criminal predilections and patterns. Feminist criminology calls for the prioritisation of sex and gender in criminology studies. The words of Daly and Chesney-Lind (1998, p. 506) are a constant reminder of this; *"Turning to the future, we wonder what will happen as increasing numbers of white women, as well as men and women of colour, enter the discipline and try to find their place in it."*

Daly & Chesney-Lind emphasise that while they do not expect the coming generations of women and "non-white" scholars to be perfect in their research, they do expect them to explore the research problems that have for so long been ignored in mainstream (white) academia.

This study uses feminist criminology to examine the ways in which gender and gender differences impact the reporting of femicide cases in Kenyan mainstream print media. This is in regard to any androcentric biases that may be held by reporters in the portrayal of the victims and/or the perpetrators. It is also useful in analysing the system gender, power and

social differences that influence the framing of news stories, the perspective from which the story is told and the context of the narrative. A key part of feminist scholarship and women's studies entails analysis and critique of the limitations and strictures that are currently placed on the research field by a predominantly androcentric academia (Fonow & Cook, 1991). By extension, Feminist Criminology was therefore employed in this study to analyse the ways in which women's historical and contextual conditions, as well as commonly held stereotypes, affect the portrayal of women as victims of intimate partner violence and femicide. The researcher used this framework to derive crucial insights about the lived experiences of female victims of domestic and intimate partner violence in Kenya that would otherwise be ignored by the mainstream to "illustrate how such fissures can support robust critical enquiry" (Henne, 2017, p.8). Besides the inclusion of gender dynamics in criminology studies, Henne (2017) mentions that feminist criminology must also account for the identities of indigeneity and other identities of women who are located on the margins of what is considered mainstream womanhood as dictated by gender, race and class.

Media reporting on crimes, including intimate femicide, includes an account of parameters such as motives, weapons/mode of crime, victimology, characterisation of the perpetrator among others. This study employs Feminist Criminology to analyse the media framing of these parameters and the issues surrounding them, in their reporting, especially as influenced by contemporary culture and existing social structures.

Feminist criminology requires the researcher to ask questions such as who is telling the stories and what biases do they hold? How is the victim portrayed? How is the perpetrator portrayed? What language is used in the reporting and analysis of the crime?

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter specifies the research techniques that were employed in the collection and analysis of data for the study. The chapter outlines the research design, the sampling procedure, the data collection procedures, the article selection criteria, coding and data analysis as well as the ethical considerations of the study.

This research study employed a mixed method approach, using descriptive quantitative data and a largely qualitative research process through a media frame analysis of newspaper reports of femicide. Qualitative research aims to gain comprehensive understanding of human behaviour and the rationale behind such behaviour. It interrogates the "why" and "how" of people's decision-making processes.

3.1 Research Site

3.1.1 Country Demographics

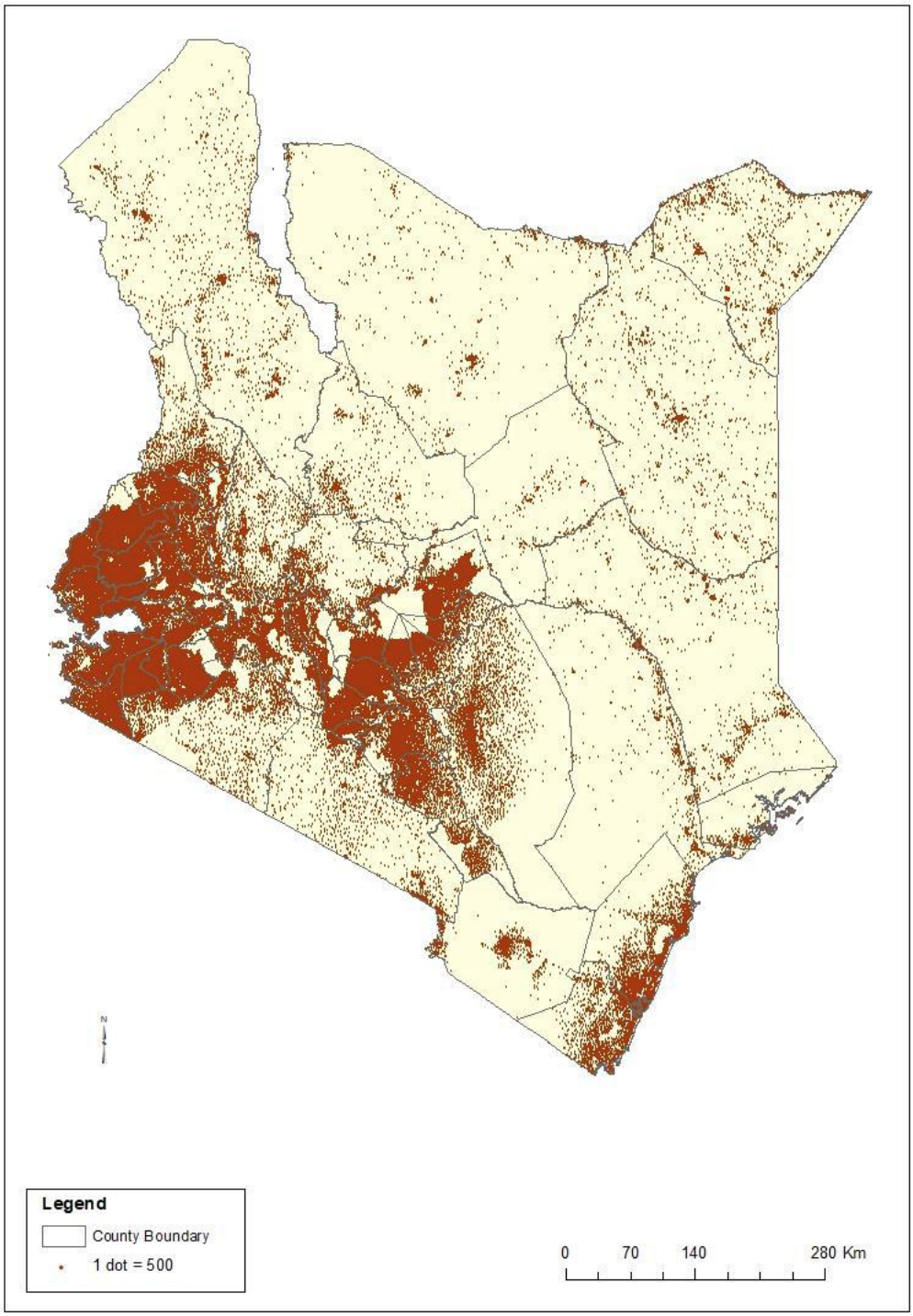
Kenya covers an area of 581,309 square kilometres and has a population density of 82 people per square kilometre (KNBS, 2019). The total population in Kenya in 2019 as per the National Census is 57.56 million (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

The country is divided into 47 counties. The population density however varies county with the ten most populated counties being Nairobi, Kiambu, Nakuru, Kakamega, Bungoma, Meru, Kilifi, Machakos, Kisii and Mombasa while the largest in terms of size being Turkana, Marsabit, Wajir, Garissa, Tana River, Isiolo, Kitui, Kajiado, Samburu and Narok per as illustrated in figure 3.1.

Kenya's estimated GDP is US $99.246 billion as at 2019 with a per capita GDP of US$ 2,010. Most Kenyans are employed in the informal sector which accounted for 83.6 per cent of the 840,600 that were created in 2018 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). A significant portion of the adult population (17.8 million) is involved in small scale agriculture and pastoral activities. A majority of formal employees (69.5 percent) are employed in the private sector while the public sector accounts for approximately 842,900 employees.

Although Kenya has a high literacy average, there is a large discrepancy in literacy levels between men (91%) and women (78%) in the country (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2015).

Figure 3.1: Population Distribution by County



3.1.2 Print Media Demographics

Mass media in Kenya as is currently defined was established by British missionaries and colonial settlers in the late 19th Century as a means of communication among their groups that were scattered across the country (Abuoga & Mutere, 1988). Some of the first media publications in Kenya include the Taveta Chronicle that was founded by Rev. Robert Stegal in 1895 and The Standard.

Today, Kenya has over ninety-one FM radio stations and over sixty-four free-to-air television stations. The exact number of print newspapers and magazines is difficult to determine because print circulation is challenging to regulate compared to radio and TV that require frequency allocations.

However, there are several mainstream print media houses that are recognised by the relevant regulatory and oversight bodies such as the Communications Authority of Kenya, Media Council of Kenya, the Kenya Union of Journalists, the Kenya Audience Research Foundation among others. These include The Nation Media Group, the Standard Group and Radio Africa Group.

The Nation Newspaper is a publication of the Nation Media Group (commonly abbreviated as NMG). The Nation Media Group was founded in 1959 by Aga Khan IV and is currently the largest privately-owned media company in East and Central Africa in terms of audience reach. It is headquartered in Kenya, with an additional presence in Tanzania and Uganda (AKFED, 2007). The Nation Newspaper has one daily publication, the Daily Nation, which is circulated every weekday, and two weekly publications, the Saturday Nation and the Sunday Nation. The most recent figures by media measurement firm GeoPoll (2018) estimate that the three publications command 74% of the newspaper market share. The daily circulation is currently above 205,000 copies with an estimated audience reach of 816,797 for the Daily Nation, 379,771 for the Sunday Nation and 328,971 for the Saturday Nation (Kenya Audience Research Foundation, 2019).

The Standard Newspaper, a publication of the Standard Group, is the oldest newspaper in Kenya. It was founded in 1902 by Alibhai Mulla Jeevanjee as a weekly newspaper, the African Standard (AKFED, 2007). It is the second largest newspaper publication in the country, with a 20% market share (GeoPoll, 2018). The Standard Newspaper publication cycle is similar to that of the Nation, with one daily publication and two weekly publications on Saturday and Sunday, respectively. The newspaper has an average circulation of 74,000

with an estimated daily audience reach of 423,332 for the Standard Daily, 212,105 for the Sunday Standard and 147,434 for the Saturday Standard.

The Star Newspaper was launched in 2007 as the Nairobi Star, before it was rebranded to The Star in 2009. It has a daily print circulation 22,084 with a similar reach (Kenya Audience Research Foundation, 2019). The Star is published the Radio Africa Group media house.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher used an exploratory design to conduct the study. Exploratory design is conducted in cases where there is limited or no prior research studies for reference (Shields & Rangarajan, 2013). It aims to gather insights and created a well-grounded picture of an issue or phenomenon for further investigation. This is because it assists in gaining background information on a specific topic and can be used to address various research questions which explore the what, how and why of phenomena. Exploratory design can be used by other researchers to generate formal hypotheses and research problems for further studies by helping to establish research priorities.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

This subsection outlines the techniques that the researcher applied to select the study population that was used to test the research questions.

3.3.1 Purposive sampling

This study employed a purposive sampling approach by undertaking a content analysis of newspaper articles for the period dating January 2018 to May 2019, which saw a significantly high number of reports on femicide when the media began to conduct an inventory of the same. Purposive sampling is a non-probability method in which the researcher exercises personal judgment to select a representative population based on predefined characteristics and the study objectives. It is also known as subjective, judgemental or selective sampling (Tongco, 2007).

Purposive sampling strategies are designed to enhance understandings of selected individuals or groups' experience(s) or for developing theories and concepts. Researchers seek to accomplish this goal by selecting "information rich" cases, that is individuals, groups, organizations, or behaviours that provide the greatest insight into the research question (Devers & Frankel, 2000, p.264).

Purposive sampling was used to specifically examine femicide cases reported in the news.

The researcher analysed a total of thirty-six cases across seventy-eight articles primarily from three daily newspapers; The Daily Nation, The Standard and The Star as well as four weekly newspapers; *The Saturday Nation, The Sunday Nation, The Saturday Standard and the Sunday Standard,* which are Kenya's most widely read newspapers (Kenya Audience Research Foundation, 2019). All the selected newspapers are published in English, which is one of the official languages in Kenya.

Although multiple newspaper publications were referenced in the analysis, the researcher anchored their reference point to the Daily Nation which has the highest circulation and reach nationwide. Since this is an exploratory analysis, emphasis is placed on the information contained in the articles rather than the number of articles sampled. First, the researcher selected all the copies of The Daily Nation, the Saturday Nation and The Sunday Nation that were published within the research period. The Nation Media publications were chosen as the baseline because they have the widest circulation and audience reach compared to the other newspapers. Once the researcher identified the specific issues that published stories on intimate partner violence based on the article selection process and coding criteria that are described in sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3 of this study, the researcher then selected the newspaper issues from the other media houses that were published within four days of the Nation articles.

3.3.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used in this study. This descriptive quantitative data was used to inform the qualitative part of the study. That is to comprehend frequency and the breadth of issues pertaining to femicide. A total of 1,564 newspapers of the selected print publications were issued by the selected media housed during the study period. The newspapers were published daily except on 26th December (Boxing Day). The total number of news articles selected was seventy-eight while the total number of unique cases reported on was thirty-six.

Table 3.1: Selection of Newspaper Articles

Newspaper	Total Publications	Femicide	Intimate Partner Femicide	News	Non-News
Daily Nation	412.00	64	38	25	13
Standard	412.00	53	33	25	8
Star	412.00	29	21	18	3
Saturday Nation	82.00	17	11	4	7
Sunday Nation	82.00	11	3	1	2
Saturday Standard	82.00	18	13	3	10
Standard on Sunday	82.00	10	2	2	0
	1564.00	202	121	78	43

3.3.3 Qualitative Techniques

Qualitative techniques were used to analyse the media frames that were utilised in the selected media reports. A series of coding artefacts as explained in subsection 3.4.3 were used in the analysis of the reports.

3.4 Data Collection Procedures

This subsection outlines the data sources that were used in this study, the criteria that was used to select the articles for analysis as well as the coding artefacts that were used in the analysis of the articles.

Since the main focus of the study was to explore the framing of media news stories, the main concern was the qualitative content of the news stories rather than obtaining a representative quantitative sample of articles.

3.4.1 Data Sources

This study primarily utilised secondary data sources in its analysis and presentation.

The main data source for the study was mainstream print news reports. Other than the news reports on femicide cases from the study population that were analysed, the researcher used several other sources to gather additional information to supplement the analysis of the news reports. These additional sources included books, government publications, non-news newspaper articles, reports, journals, theses and dissertations as well as internet sources (blogs and websites).

Data from the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the National Police Service and the Gender Violence Recovery Centre were used to provide context as well as for the qualitative analysis.

3.4.2 Article Selection Criteria

The article selection process prioritised articles that were covered in multiple newspapers in order to ensure a large enough sample size. The articles were selected in chronological order and were first reviewed independently to establish the framing constructs that were employed for each story. The researcher then eliminated non-news articles, that is, opinion pieces, editorials, features and inserts. These were eliminated because they were not reporting specific cases, rather they discussed the general topic of femicide. A total of thirty-six news cases were sampled across three publishing houses with a collective three daily newspapers and four weekly newspapers amongst them. Factoring in cases that were reported in more than one media house, a total of seventy-eight articles were analysed for the period of the study.

The researcher first selected cases on femicide based on the coding matrix, before narrowing down to articles specifically about intimate partner femicide. The daily publications had the highest number of articles on femicide, with Daily Nation carrying the highest case reports at sixty-four cases. The researcher further separated the articles into two categories: news articles which were the main focus of the analysis, and non-news articles (editorials, opinion pieces, letters to the editor, news analysis, feature articles, and pull-outs) which provided supplementary information. Some of the cases were reported across various print publications while others were reported by only one publication.

The selected articles were then coded based on how they discuss the victim vis-à-vis the perpetrator, or whether they addressed either of them. Additional coding also factored in articles that discuss the cases within the context of articles that categorise the crime as a domestic violence issue and those that report them as general violence crimes. The articles

were also grouped according to whether they discuss the crime as an isolated incident or whether they tie it back to a wider societal problem.

3.4.3 Article Coding

The research looked out for information regarding the victim, the perpetrator and the crime, that is provided and the information that is not provided. This is insightful in understanding not only the framing and lenses that are employed in the reporting but also the erasure and silencing techniques. The study used three broad categories in the article analysis; the characteristics of femicide-suicides in media coverage, the framing of femicide coverage and the characterisation of victims and perpetrators.

This study employs the coding and elimination guidelines defined by Russell (1992). A range of key terms was used in order to identify the respective news stories: Femicide, Murder, Homicide, Intimate partner violence, Intimate partner homicide, Domestic Violence, Woman killed, Man kills woman, Husband murders wife, Woman found murdered, Killing, Slaying, and Slay queen

The researcher examined the articles to determine whether or not the articles were reporting on non-intimate partner femicide, intimate partner femicide or domestic homicide. Careful deliberation was made in the article selection and elimination. The articles that did not fall under the category of intimate partner femicide were then eliminated from the research sample. Any article which clearly outlined a motive that was not aligned to gender-related killing was also excluded. This included articles such as “Son kills mother in row over maize harvest”.

3.5 Data Analysis and Findings

The descriptive data analysis and article selection was done with the assistance of a researcher. The results were first keyed into an excel sheet based on the coding artefacts described in subsection 3.4.3. Once the selected articles were identified and coded, the information and articles were analysed using a qualitative analysis software tool, Atlas.ti 8.

An exploratory frame analysis was conducted to analyse the media frames that were utilised in the newspaper reports. Some additional contextual information was derived from opinion pieces, editorial articles and reports from both government bodies and NGOs.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

This study addresses a topic of a sensitive nature so there is some ethical concern as to how the researcher collected and analysed the information that is presented herein.

Firstly, all information that was sampled in the study was collected from mainstream print media, reports and other publications that are available in the public domain and data that was cleared with the relevant bodies.

The researcher was also introduced to representatives from various institutions such as the Kenya National Bureau of statistics who provided most of the data that was used in this study.

Additionally, as part of protection of the research subjects, confidentiality was maintained because the researcher noted that in many of the cases, the suspect either had not been apprehended, or if they had been, the outcome of the prosecution process was as yet undetermined. For this reason, in the description of the crime, the researcher opted to leave out the names of the suspected perpetrators.

Finally, all sources of data and information have been duly cited and acknowledged as per the University of Nairobi research policies.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the findings of the content analysis in accordance with the research objectives in order to determine the framing of femicide in the mainstream print media in Kenya.

4.1 Characteristics of femicide stories

Following the increasing reports of women murdered by men in 2018, mainstream media began to do an inventory of these cases in an attempt to highlight what was emerging as a worrying trend across the country. Between 1st January 2019 and 30th July 2019 alone, there were over fifty-one cases of women being murdered covered in local newspapers and mainstream media. Out of these, thirty-seven of these women were killed by husbands or intimate partners. Add in the figures from 2018 and the number rises to over 100.

This study analysed a total of thirty-six stories of intimate partner femicide that were reported in the media between 1st January, 2018 and 31st July, 2019 in three daily newspapers: *Daily Nation*, *The Standard* and *The Star* as well as four weekly newspapers: *Saturday Nation, Sunday Nation, The Saturday Standard* and *The Standard on Sunday.* These newspapers represent three media houses, namely, The Nation Media Group, The Standard Group and Radio Africa Group.

The monthly distribution of articles was deemed important to the study. An analysis of the reporting trends was analysed and it was found that no cases of intimate femicide from the selected sample made it to the newspaper in August, November and December (Figure 1) while the months of February and May had the highest number of articles. On the other hand, the period ranging from February to May had the highest number of articles.

In addition, there were a total of fifteen articles written by female reporters (40.5%) and twenty articles by male reporters (54.1%). One article was written by both a male and a female reporter while one was attributed to an unidentified editorial team. The Standard had the highest number of female reporters, with nine articles (25%) written by females, followed by the Daily Nation with four articles (11%) written by female reporters.

Figure 4.2: Frequency of cases per month from January 2018 to July 2019

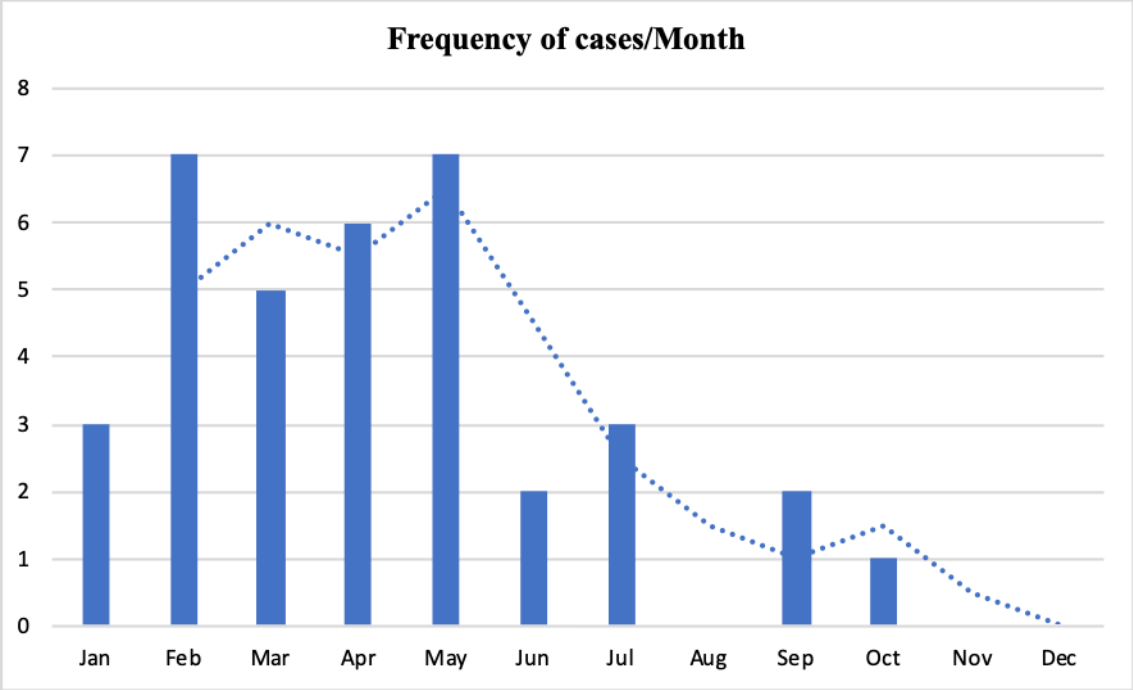


Table 4.1 illustrates the ways in which the media reports on intimate partner femicide. These media accounts draw a picture of predominantly young, educated and upwardly mobile women with a majority of them between ages of 20 to 29.

Table 4.1: Characteristics of the crime

Variable	Values	Percentage	N=36
Femicide followed by suicide	Yes	33.33%	12
	No	66.67%	25
Method	Gunshot	16.67%	6
	Stabbing	36.11%	13
	Strangulation	13.89%	5
	Physical force	11.11%	4
	Poison	5.56%	2
	Slit throat	8.33%	3
	Unclear	8.33%	3
Relationship Status	Boyfriend	33.33%	12
	Husband	52.78%	19
	Lover	13.89%	5
Motive/Reason	Separation	16.67%	6
	Infidelity (actual or perceived)	19.44%	7
	Unknown Argument	41.67%	15
	Rejection	5.56%	2
	Unknown	16.67%	6
History of domestic violence	Yes	41.67%	15
	No	58.33%	21
Victim Age	15-19	2.78%	1
	20-24	11.11%	4
	25-29	36.11%	13
	30-34	5.56%	2
	34-39	8.33%	3
	40+	5.56%	2
	Undetermined	30.56%	11
Perpetrator Age	15-19	2.78%	1
	20-24	5.56%	2
	25-29	5.56%	2
	30-34	16.67%	6
	34-39	11.11%	4
	40+	13.89%	5
	Undetermined	44.44%	16

Of the thirty-seven cases that were analysed, over half of the victims (54.1%) were killed by their husbands (current or estranged). This is in line with the KDHS statistics on domestic violence where a majority of the victims experience violence at the hands of their husbands. This was followed closely by women who were murdered by their current or former boyfriends. In the case of former boyfriends, a pattern emerged of the women being killed for leaving or attempting to leave the relationship. There was also a recurring theme of jealous former boyfriends who resorted to violence in cases where the women (19.4%) may have been or perceived to be in a relationship with a new partner. Five of the victims (13.5%) who were killed by their lovers who were not their primary partners.

The most common method of killing was stabbing (37.8%) either with kitchen knives or with other weapons that are commonly available in the house such as machetes and axes. Although there were only four identified cases where the cause of death was determined to be physical force (which in this case means that the perpetrator did not use any weapons in the commission of the murder), there was still evidence of physical violence in most of the other cases, with the weapon as a means to deliver the fatal blow. In the case of women who were shot to death, the perpetrators were all police officers. The age of both the victim and the perpetrator was listed in most of the cases, with 35.1% of the women falling within age 25-29.

4.2 Media frames used in the stories

Table 4.2 illustrates the framing of media in the coverage of the stories. The headlines of the articles were examined to determine whether they made the story apparent to readers as a femicide case or even an intimate partner violence case, or whether it was reported as an ambiguous crime. Only 19.2% of the stories had ambiguous headlines that simply reported a woman had been killed. Majority of the time (80.8%), the headline was clear as to what had occurred. However, off the seventy-eight articles sampled, none of them had the title "femicide" and only four articles mentioned the word in the body of the article. In relation, 39.7% of the headlines used sensational language in their reporting. This included phrases such as "A man, his dead wife, and a daring mistress." (Wambui & Wainaina, 2019, p.8).

Most of the headlines simply summarised the crime in using variations of the phrase "male perpetrator kills female victim" or "female victim killed by male perpetrator." On the other hand, the coverage of the stories mostly bordered on the dramatic, especially in the case of younger (below age thirty) victims. In similar fashion, the articles about the younger victims,

especially university students and women from urban areas tended to be longer and contain more details about the lives of the victims. The articles with victims over 30 and those from rural areas tended to contain little detail beyond a summary of the crime with details about the alleged perpetrator, the motive, a sound bite from a news source while giving little to no detail about the lives of the victims. The articles were also accompanied by a picture of the victim 46.2% of the time. It was noted that the picture of the victim was more likely to be included in cases of victims below age thirty.

The use of dramatic reporting was noted in 50% of the articles, which mostly covered victims in their 20s. The cases of episodic reporting (32.1%) were mostly observed in articles about married women in rural areas. There were few cases (17.9%) of thematic reporting. However, the researcher noticed a rise in thematic reporting in the articles from April 2019.

Table 4.2: Framing of Femicide Coverage

Variable	Values	Percentage	N=78
Reporter	Male	64.10%	50
	Female	26.92%	21
	Unknown	6.41%	5
	Both	2.56%	2
Descriptive Title	Ambiguous to the crime	19.23%	15
	Describes as femicide	80.77%	63
Sensational Headline	Yes	39.74%	31
	No	60.26%	47
Type of Coverage	Dramatic	50.00%	39
	Episodic	32.05%	25
	Thematic	17.95%	14
Picture of Victim	Yes	46.15%	36
	No	53.85%	42
Sources of Information	Family/Friends/Neighbours	97.44%	76
	Police	55.13%	43
	Perpetrator of the violence	11.54%	9

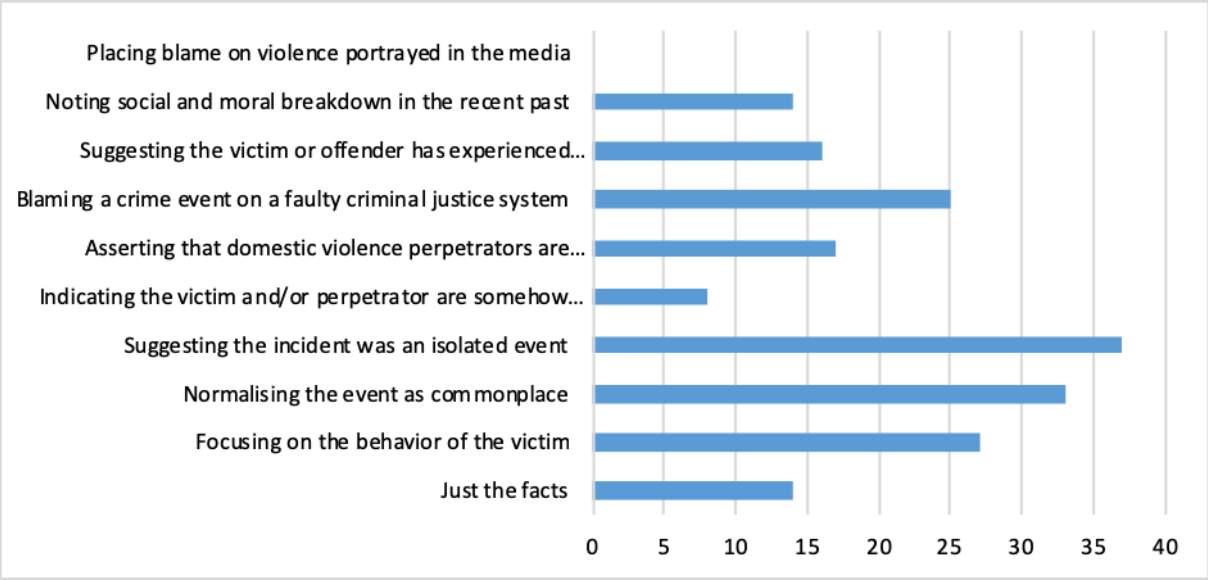
Almost all the cases (97.4%) used family, friends and neighbours as the primary source of information. However, over half of the articles (55.1%) quoted the police as a primary source of information and used statements from family, friends and neighbours for additional

witness accounts. In nine of the news stories, the perpetrator was also interviewed as a source of information.

The researcher noted that the police frequently underplayed instances of domestic violence as quarrels, disagreements or squabbles.

> He was on patrol, but he went back to the house and picked a quarrel with the wife. It was about midnight and there was a power outage in the area," said Mr Bitok (Rutto, 2019, p.8)

Figure 4.3: Media Frames Used in News Reporting of Femicide



News reports that only conveyed the facts of the case accounted for 14% of the analysed articles. The researcher noted that these were mostly news articles reporting on femicide cases in rural areas where the victim was over the age of 35.

The newspapers were more likely (34.62%) to report on the behaviour of the victim in cases where she was below 30 years old and living in an urban area or town such as Nairobi, Kisii and Eldoret. There was an intersection between this frame and the contextualisation of the case within the pattern of gender-based violence. However, rather than decry the situation, these crimes were reported as consequences of the victim's perceived poor behaviour or a breakdown in the urban society's moral fabric.

In some instances, although the newspaper article framed the crime as the result of domestic violence, the language used either by the writers or the information sources seemed to downplay the event or present it as a fight of equals.

> Government Pathologist Peter Ndegwa said that Ms Ouma, who died after a domestic brawl with her husband last week, suffered head injuries as well. (Kimuyu, 2019, p.5)

4.3 Characterisation of Victims and Perpetrators

The researcher noted a significant difference in the profiling and characterisation of the victims and perpetrators as illustrated in Table 4.4. The victims were characterised as good only 35.9% of the time while the perpetrators were characterised as good 47.4% of the time. Additionally, there were fewer occurrences of problematic characterisation of the perpetrators (21.8%) compared to the victims (43.6%). There was also a noticeable use of victim blaming language (64.1%) especially in stories featuring younger victims. These victims are seen as opportunists who get into relationships with men for material benefits. Their deaths are then presented as a teachable moment for their peers.

> Locals used the platform to advise students against getting into relationships that later turn nasty insisting that they should use their time well to pursue studies. (Koskei, 2019)

Table 4.3: Characterisation of Victims and Perpetrators

Variable	Values	Percentage	N=78
Victim Blaming	Yes	64.10%	50
	No	35.90%	28
Victim Characterisation	No	35.90%	28
	Good	20.51%	16
	Problematic	43.59%	34
Perpetrator Characterisation	No	30.77%	24
	Good	47.44%	37
	Problematic	21.79%	17

The media seemed to question the socio-economic class of victims whose standard of living was not immediately attributable to familial or generational wealth, with vague and veiled references to debatable sources of wealth that then presented them as an "at-risk" target who may have invited violence into their lives based on their questionable behaviour. Meanwhile, the same characteristics were used to seemingly humanise the perpetrators, with their wealth and background used as a mitigating factor for why they would not easily resort to crime.

> It also emerged that [redacted] had never worked at the Kenyan Embassy in Juba as claimed by her family and that her suspected murderer, Irungu is a pastor's child just like her. Why a preacher's son is suspected to have killed a preacher's daughter who like him had a high-flying lifestyle is a question that no one has an answer to, yet. (Achuka & Ombati, p.3).

Some of the articles also fall back on the issue of mental health by drawing parallels between the rising reports of mental health, especially among young men and their increasing proclivity to violence. In the case of victims and perpetrators aged 30 and above, the recurring theme that precipitates the violence has been economic strife, as well as separation/divorce, with the former being more prevalent among those between age 34-40 and the latter being most prevalent among those over the age of 40, especially regarding marital property.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Media Framing of Femicide Reporting

The framing of media stories is dependent on three key components, namely, the sources of information (including the reporters), the language used in reporting and the context within which the stories are reported.

This section therefore outlines information on who is telling the stories of femicide in mainstream print media, the media frames that are utilised, including language artefacts and characterisation of the victims and perpetrators, as well as the implications of these media frames on societal perceptions.

5.0.1 Who Tells the Story of Femicide in Print Media?

Feminist criminology points to the male-dominated composition of mainstream criminology studies as a key contributor to the androcentric nature of criminology studies which contributed to both the framing of female victims (Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1998). Similarly, it is important to interrogate who tells the stories of femicide in print media. From the findings in the previous chapter, the researcher observed that a majority of the news reports (64.1%) are written by male journalists.

Over the past decade, mass media and especially print media in Kenya has experienced reduced growth in revenues while overhead costs continue to decrease. This has resulted in massive layoffs among the journalistic fraternity. For example, the Nation Media Group announced the layoff of 140 staff in January 2018 (Business Today, 17th January, 2018). According to the media houses top management, this move was done as part of a restructuring to improve the company's competitive edge on the digital space. Unfortunately, this downgrade and downscaling of media houses means that there is little to no reporting, in the traditional sense, happening in the newsroom. Instead, the news is now done as consumption soundbites, by prioritising the sensational aspects which are more likely to resonate with the audience instantaneously. Furthermore, the emergence of sensationalism in media has been fuelled by the democratisation of reporting on the same digital space in which the media houses want to compete. Everyone with a social media account has become a reporter, creating a "me-first" approach to breaking the news, rather than the traditional

"accuracy-first" reputation for which mainstream media was often known for. It also means that the staying power of a story is dictated by the attention span of social media communities that have been known to be dangerously fickle (Bergström & Belfrage, 2018).

Although the researcher was not able to get the exact ratio of male to female journalists, the impact of downsizing of the media houses on diversity in the newsroom due can be inferred through the lens of Anderson's study (1982) on the Last Hired, First Hired human resources principle. The researcher observed that, although marginalised groups comprising especially of black women and persons living with disability were the last to enter the (paid) work force post World War II, they are often the first to be fired in the event of layoffs, downsizing and restructuring. Consequently, the composition of the newsroom, especially in editorial decision making, is slowly reverting to its homogenic and androcentric roots. This means that the selection of stories, their prominence and placement, the resources dedicated to reporting on them are increasingly being made by men who at best, may not be aware of their prejudices and at worst may be purposely reinforcing them. This rings especially true when one observes the reasons identified by Anderson (1982) for this downsizing tactic which is plagued by traditional gender stereotypes which place men as breadwinners and providers, while women and persons with disability are relegated to the role of dependents of these men. These stereotypes then find their way into the framing and discussions of the news reports.

This shift in mainstream media priorities has therefore resulted in a reduction of female reporters in the newsroom as evidenced by the research findings in Chapter 4 of this study. The domination of crime reporting, and in this case specific reporting on femicide then takes an angle that is rife with male bias as previously decried by feminist criminologists (Henne, 2017; Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1998). Daly & Chesney-Lind, emphasise that the ways in which men "think, theorize, and collect and marshal evidence" in criminology and victimology (p. 500) makes it difficult to navigate women's stories and lived experiences without centring men and their viewpoints. This in turn affects the framing of the news stories, in terms of the language used, the news sources that are amplified, the packaging of the information and the level of importance that is assigned to the story. The use of passive voice, for example, increases considerably when perpetrators of domestic violence are men. The headlines often highlights a crime happening to a victim rather than a perpetrator committing a crime (Frazer & Miller, 2009), that is "In Kenya, x number of women are raped every year" rather than "In Kenya, x number of men rape women every year".

5.0.2 Frames Utilised in the Reporting of Femicide Cases

It was not until recently that the media began to frame the killing of women in Kenya as femicide. Prior to that year, cases of women being killed or murdered were reported either in episodic fashion or within the context of domestic/intimate partner violence. Even then, the initial reporting on femicide focused on victim characterisation in a negative light, with the suggestion that the victims somehow brought the violence upon themselves. There was a propensity to use sensationalised headlines such as "A 24-year-old beauty queen prison warder found murdered with several stab wounds" (Gachane, 2019, p.12). This kind of sensationalised and dramatic reporting only serves to draw the audience's attention away from the important details of the crime and focusing on the victim's behaviour.

There are various narratives that have been pushed by the media in framing femicide as a consequence of the social and economic breakdown of the society. The three narratives that most stand out are: women eschewing their "natural" role of motherhood and caregiving, economic hardships that render men unable to fulfil their role as provider and therefore taking it out on women; and mental health issues in men that lead them to violent outbursts.

The first narrative is represented in language such as "beauty queen who loved partying" (Gachane, 2019, p.12). It frames the victim as a hedonistic rebel and contrasts women who spend all their time partying against the home makers whose lives revolve around caring for their families. It essentially implies that "bad" things happen to "bad" girls. The main problem with this narrative is that it perpetuates the myth that women often provoke their attackers into killing them (Meyers, 1997) and places an unnecessary burden on women to change their behaviour in an attempt to prevent the violence. It also creates the perception that femicide is a personal problem for specific women with certain personalities and/or preferences to deal with on their own (Richards, Gillespie & Smith 2011).

The second and third narrative shift blame from the specific actors to external factors. These two frames do the work of shifting accountability of the perpetrator's actions from them, to factors that are seemingly beyond their control. The former also works to reinforce the narrative of poor men as inherently more violent than their wealthy counterparts (Berns, 2017).

The news reports continuously diminish intimate partner violence (and the resultant killing of the women) as spousal arguments and petty squabbles.

> Sibilo assistant Chief [redacted] said they suspect the attack was occasioned by an unresolved domestic squabble. (Kangogo, 2019, p.4)

In some cases, the news reports even indicate familial or community interventions to reconcile victims with the perpetrators.

> [Redacted] brother [redacted] indicated the couple had wed in a colourful ceremony in October 2017. Their troubles, however, began early 2018… 'We sat them down last year and talked and they reconciled,' (Kimuyu, 2019, p.5)

More often than not, the media reports on the age of the victim, the perpetrator's motive and their weapon of choice. Whilst these aspects of the report may seem unrelated, they are quite significant from a feminist criminology perspective. As mentioned in Chapter 2 of this study and presented in Chapter 4, young women of reproductive age are the most likely to be killed by stabbing and other close contact, hands on methods such as strangulation. Mize et al. (2011), also noted that younger men tended to be more violent than older men. These were more likely to use weapons that were easily accessible to them such as kitchen tools and farming equipment. Furthermore, the researchers theorised that this degree of violence is largely driven by jealousy that is borne of their desire for reproductive control. These men resort to violence to minimise the chances of infidelity by their female partners. This ties back to early research from Daly & Wilson (1998) that women are most likely to be killed when they leave or decide to leave a relationship, thus undermining their partner's control. This narrative is most commonly framed in cases of women's infidelity (the bad woman) or used as a stress factor where the perpetrator's mental health called into question.

Although the news reporting on femicide is largely male-centred, the conversations on interventions and preventions of the same are then relegated to pink silos (women's problems to be solved by women).

5.1 Characterisation of Victims and Perpetrators

This subsection discusses the ways in which the media portrays and/or discusses the victims and the perpetrators of femicide in terms of their behaviour and their personalities.

5.1.1 Representation of Femicide Victims

On 9th April 2019, a sixth-year medical student at Moi university was hacked to death in broad daylight. The sources of the article were the victim's friends, her family, the perpetrator (who confessed to the crime), the perpetrator's family, his colleagues and the

police. According to the victim's friends, the perpetrator was a former school-mate who was obsessed with her. The perpetrator and his family maintained that he was her boyfriend. In the days following the murder, the media ran stories. In addition, initial media reports portrayed the victim as a "slay queen", a term that is used to describe women who are perceived to use dubious or malicious acts to obtain money, alcohol or expensive items from men, and who are also perceived to be promiscuous. The victim's behaviour was brought into question through in multiple ways. The pictures in her news stories portrayed her as dressed in the latest fashion, with the intention of depicting her in a sexual manner. This is further compounded by the media interviews by her father in the Saturday Standard (13th April 2019), where he sought to dispel rumours, some of which were allegedly supplied by her friends, that she had infected her perpetrator with HIV. He also decried malicious newspaper reports which in his view seemed to justify the killer's actions.

There was a focus on the behaviour of the victim as a gold-digger who was only interested in the perpetrator's money which she then used to fund a hedonistic lifestyle. This was especially brought out by the assertion that her perpetrator sent her money for her birthday celebrations, only for her to reject his desire to spend time with her during the said birthday. (Saturday Standard, 13th April). It implies that the victim could have averted the crime had she either not accepted the perpetrator's money or if she had acquiesced to a relationship after accepting his money. This focus on the victim's behaviour as a "slay queen" is also reported within the frame of moral and social background in which women are depicted as having strayed from their traditional roles as good wives and mothers.

The victim's parents took a media interview just two days after her killing to counter the perceptions of their daughter as an immoral woman who was only interested in her boyfriend's money. It is important to note the media emphasis on their socio-economic status as middle-class parents (usually implying high education levels and good command of the English language) as important to the context of this narrative. The prioritisation of a news story, the sources of information, the language used and the overall presentation of the story is packaged differently based on the perceived living standards of the audience. It can be observed that informants and interviewees who present a higher socio-economic disposition are also considered more credible witnesses and narrators than those from a lower socio-economic background.

In their paper on Feminist Criminology, Daly & Chesney-Lind (1998) point to this stereotyping as key component in victimology of women which creates a dichotomy of those

who are deserving of empathy and those who brought the crime upon themselves. Therefore, while the victim would have ideally been a respectable woman based on her career choice (she was working towards a medical degree) and her socio-economic status (middle class), she is still judged for her perceived materialism. The idealistic narrative of a hardworking woman was seemingly marred by the narrative of her allegedly dating a man with a respectable job (Systems Analyst) for his money then ignoring his advances, not even for another man but for her female friends who should ideally be lower prioritised in the patriarchal hierarchy.

On the other hand, the perpetrator, through interviews with his co-workers and his family, is described as a professional (systems administrator) and a quiet teetotaller who always went home after work (Daily Nation, 11th April). This description of his daily routine is important to his characterisation when juxtaposed against the reputation of Kenyan youth as frequent patrons of nightclubs and bars in after work (Spronk, 2012), and that of the victim who went out for drinks during her birthday. As part of the same article, the Daily Nation interviewed the perpetrator's father who expressed his initial shock by stating that he thought that his son had been bewitched as he believed him incapable of committing the crime for which he had been accused.

Although financial disputes are not listed as the primary motive in the analysed cases, it is a recurring theme which underlies the other listed motives. In the case of the victim who was killed in September 2018, although the motive for the killing was concluded as infidelity, there are several other recurring themes in the narrative. The victim, who is described by the media as a girlfriend of the married perpetrator and pregnant with this child at the time of the killing (Daily Nation, 24th September, 2018). Furthermore, the newspaper reports indicate that the victim sought to legitimise her relationship with the perpetrator due to her pregnancy. Part of this legitimacy included financial and other material support from the perpetrator. In this instance, there is little background detail that is revealed about the perpetrator beyond his name, occupation and societal standing. The narrative was told primarily from the victim's point of view. There is reference to her socio-economic status, with the implication that she had the responsibility of supporting her family financially. Thus, the thinly veiled insinuation of her motives for initiating a relationship with a high-profile man with significant wealth. Henne (2017) points to the power dynamics of these socio-economic differences as a contributor to the ways in which victims are further victimised in the reporting of the crime.

Media reports of young, seemingly attractive women seem to get more attention and coverage than those of older, married women. Majority of the victims that have been featured in the media inventories have been young, conventionally attractive and were either at the university of had recently graduation.

The media has largely been reporting on these cases using phrases "crimes of passion", "love affairs gone wrong", "scorned lovers". This kind of phrasing lends credence to the idea of love as a motive for punishment and/or violence. It gives life to the oft-held notion that men use violence to discipline women and children out of affection for them and commitment to the relationship (Goldner, Penn et al., 1990).

One of the earliest media reports on the inventory of victims of femicide was laced with language that painted the women as somewhat complicit in their own murders due to their perceived lifestyle choices. The media painted these women as young, upwardly mobile and engaging in apparently superficial and hedonistic lifestyles characterised by celebrity, flamboyant fashion choices and vibrant social media presence. One news article drew up the following media frame for allegedly profiling potential victims of:

> Are you a modern woman in her mid to late 20s? Do you rub shoulders with the high and mighty and hobnob with celebrities?
>
> Do you live what looks like a flashy lifestyle? Are you active on social media?
>
> Do your updates create the impression that you have everything going for you and your life could not be in a better place?
>
> If the answers to all these questions is yes, then you fit the profile that is at highest risk of being a victim of a crime of passion if recent trends are anything to go by. (Daily Nation, 2018, p.6).

Following the rising reports of femicide cases in 2018, the media was quick to profile the victims as "slay queens" who were killed because of their personal life choices. It should be pointed out that the etymology of the term "slay queen" mirrors the shifts in the newsroom as described in section 5.0 of this study. The term "slay" as used in popular culture traces its roots to (predominantly) Black American slang unique to the drag and LGBTQI culture scene with the intention to promote affirmation and acceptance amongst themselves. In that way, the term "slay queen" was an affirmation to appreciate a person's looks, fashion and general demeanour (Ward, 2017). In Kenya and as used by mainstream print media, the use of the term has taken on a derogatory meaning that is used as a veiled insult used to refer to women who are perceived as vein, and only care about their appearance, (men's) money and luxury

material items such as expensive cars and suburban houses. (The Standard Newspaper, 11th November 2017).

The idea of the "slay queen" is at the heart of the dichotomy of the good woman versus the bad woman that has been discussed by feminist criminology scholars (Henne, 2017; Chesney-Lind & Pasko 2004; Chesney-Lind, 1984). According to these scholars, the good woman/bad woman school of thought demarcates the polarised perceptions of women as either chaste and uprightly moral or as promiscuous and seductive teases. In this way, the continued characterisation of victims of intimate partner femicide can also serve as a warning and reminder the "good" girls not to "step out of line". It also serves to emphasis or reinforce – societal and largely patriarchal attitudes which suggest that "bad women" often come to a bad end.

There is a noticeable difference in the way the media reports older victims (those above age forty), especially married women in the rural areas. Most of those articles carry little detail about the victims beyond their marital and maternal status as well as their occupation. Overall, these victims are granted very low visibility, with more focus given to the perpetrators especially through the accounts of friends, family and neighbours. Considering the dramatic and sensationalised reporting that has been favoured by the media, one can conclude that urban women are more likely to elicit scandalous narratives as compared to their rural counterparts. Women in rural areas, who are more likely to be married at a younger age, are viewed as matronly and respectable with their lives revolving around homemaking and caregiving for the family. Urban women on the other hand are perceived to be promiscuous and immoral (Maloiy, 2016) and therefore likely to invite the wrath of scorned men.

There is also a noted bias against women's agency in romantic relationships in their presentation as transactional situations, where women are expected to trade their independence for freedom from violence and respectability. The news coverage of the victims in these cases is still largely rooted in gender stereotypes that portray perceived slay queens as bad women who are preying on the men's money and goodwill.

By mid-2019, some of the language of article reporting seems to shift from victim blaming, to more neutral reporting and in some cases even sounding the alarm over the increasing murder of women. However, even in cases where the articles somewhat acknowledge that the women in question were not responsible for their deaths, the language still shied away from

recognising the role that men play in the perpetuation of these deaths. Many of the articles failed to explicitly frame the crimes within the context of IPV even in cases where it was implied through phrases like "the couple was known to have squabbles in the past" or "the two argued frequently" This kind of vague reporting creates the illusion that of equal power structures in the relationship and reduce the level of violence down to petty quarrels.

5.1.2 Representation of the Perpetrator

The researcher noted a pattern in media reporting to somewhat sanitise perpetrators either through their profiling and characterisation or by ascribing socially acceptable motivations for their actions. This can be ascribed to the gatekeeping function of patriarchy where men are more inclined to protect their fellow men against the other (Richards, Gillespie & Smith 2011; Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1998). This especially rings true when one considers the rampant cases of sexual harassment of female journalists by their male colleagues (Wangusi, Abuya & Osogo, 2018). It can be deduced to be a case of the journalists recognising themselves in the perpetrators, therefore offering what they presume to be acceptable justification for the crime or at least mitigating factors for why a perpetrator deserves leniency.

Many of the reports describe the perpetrators as good men/husbands/boyfriends who prior to their violent episodes were fairly harmless. This is especially true in the cases where the victims are characterised as having provoked the perpetrator either through direct action or through lifestyle choice.

Many of the sources quoted in the analysed articles are friends, family and neighbours of the perpetrators, who are interviewed in an attempt to humanise them and portray them as calm, rational people who were provoked into an unexpected fit of rage. Even in situations where a history of domestic violence is apparent, there is an attempt to distance that pattern from its pathology and is quickly glossed over as part of the news soundbites.

> […] the mother to […] the man accused of killing Moi University student […], has revealed her son was always calm and she is surprised that he was behind the heinous act (Kejitan, 2019, p.5)

In the case of the sixth-year medical student, the media ran several articles with interview excerpts with the perpetrator's parents depicting him as a polite and harmless person. These attempts to humanise the perpetrator are a recurring theme in the reviewed articles, with family, friends and neighbours frequently serving as character witnesses to the accused. Significant media attention was given to the perpetrator through his characterisation and

disposition which was used in an attempt to rationalise his actions by both the Daily Nation (11th April 2019) and the Standard (11th April 2019). The perpetrator explained that he killed her because he had invested a lot of money on her, only for her to turn around and rebuff him by ignoring his phone calls.

There is, however, a noticeable difference in the media reporting of perpetrators from lower social classes as compared to those from the higher echelons. The study observed a propensity to pathologise perpetrators from low-income backgrounds as predisposed to violence as compared to those from the higher echelons. The media is more likely to mention their history of domestic and intimate partner violence or other issues such as unemployment and addiction problems. On the other hand, men who were relatively well off were more likely to be described as distressed, and their violence characterised as a one-off event that was contrary to their otherwise calm demeanour.

5.2 Implications of Media Framing of Femicide on Societal Perceptions

This subsection discusses the ways in which the news reporting on femicide shapes public opinion, as well as the impact of new media (social media) on traditional mainstream print reporting.

5.2.1 Print media and the shaping of public perception

Femicide has become common and even normalised in Kenyan society. Reports on cases of femicide are treated as just another "water-cooler" conversation moment rather than an opportunity to discuss what is essentially a national disaster that has half of the nation's population living in fear.

Based on the sampled stories, researcher noted that although the mainstream print media may be cognizant of the fact that femicide is a socio-cultural phenomenon, there is a propensity to dismiss it as a culturally and traditional phenomenon that women must simply accept and adjust their lives around, rather than an issue that requires socio-legal intervention. The general trend of reporting and placement in the newspaper could be summarised thusly: first it is shocking with a prominent lede, then it moves to page something before eventually moving to victim-blaming as it slowly fades out of the public consciousness.

The analysis of the selected articles indicates that the reporting on femicide is still mainly episodic and fails to draw the requisite attention to the phenomenon. On the other hand, media attempts at thematic reporting failed to properly capture the issue and instead mostly translated into dramatic commentary that cast doubt on the perceived innocence of the

victims. The media still seems fixated on a duality of a "perfect" versus a deserving victim. In most cases concerning young, conventionally attractive women, the victims end up on trial, with every minutiae of their lives put on display for public scrutiny and judgement, which exacerbates what is already a vicious victim-blaming culture (Meyer, 2016). Thornton & Ryckman (1983) observed that victims who are perceived as unattractive are often assigned more responsibility for their victimisation. Their behaviour prior to and leading up to the crime is also placed under more scrutiny than victims who are considered conventionally attractive. The study also notes the continued existing bias of against women's agency in romantic relationships, where they are considered to be passive participants as beneficiaries of their male partner's benevolence rather than active decision makers. The likelihood of violence then increases when there is a perceived shift in power dynamics and the women are perceived to have more leverage over the decision to stay in or leave the relationship. Maloiy (2016) has noted that women who live independently without a male protector and have an independent means of income are deemed women of ill repute. Feminists theorising may conclude that it is patriarchal values and attitudes that deter women from exercising agency by depicting such women in a bad light – so as to avoid more women from doing so.

On May 28th 2019, one of Kenya's leading breakfast radio shows ran a question on their social media platforms asking men what the worst thing a woman could to that would make them (the men) end her life. This very questioning is patriarchal as it assumes or the underlining assumption is that women are children that need to be punished. This was in the same week where three women had been reported murdered by their significant other. This line of inquiry can easily be construed as a justification of the killing of women as a perfectly acceptable reaction to women's actions in their relationships with men. This was especially alarming because most of the respondents to these questions were men who offered up responses to hypothetical situations either in romantic relationships or in pursuit of women for romantic relationships. There was especially a recurring theme of men stating that rejection by women in whom they had romantic interest in was an acceptable motive for killing them. Moreover, most of the media reports still cling to the idea of these femicide cases simply as situations of scorned lovers acting in a moment of rage, rather than drawing a pathology of men acting within a socio-cultural structure that allows them to get away with the crime. Within the context of Kenya's traditional patriarchal culture, these women are being disobedient and therefore need to be disciplined to redeem the established power

structures. This establishes women as perpetual minors being punished by their parents, their husband, elders and further on their adult sons.

This laissez faire attitude to women's lives warrants further research, considering the sacred nature of human life in traditional African society. Scholars (Ndulo, 2011; Metz, 2010, Cobbah, 1987) theorised on the sacredness of human life in traditional African society. They point to the ways in which taking a human life is considered a grave crime that can bring misfortune, not just to the perpetrator but to the entire community. These traditional customs do not discriminate on gender, age or socio-economic status, rather they consider every human life within the community to be sacrosanct. Consequently, this idea of women's lives as disposable and so easily dispatched seems to be a new phenomenon whose genesis should be questioned.

The conflation of some of these men's violence with mental health sets dangerous precedent that pathologizes mental patients as violent and dangerous people and makes it difficult for genuine patients to seek assistance. The use of mental health as an excuse for femicide and gender-based violence serves to further stigmatise actual patients who suffer from mental health illnesses. It also serves to erase accountability from perpetrators. Furthermore, the way that the stories on the assumed mental health of the perpetrators are presented, their assumed mental health is weaponised as an excuse or mitigating factor to not hold them accountable (Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1998). Even more telling is the fact that the media makes these suppositions without consultation with mental health experts, seeing as none of the analysed articles quoted mental health experts as sources of information. One would expect that such an epidemic of mental illness among men that results in violent outbursts against women would necessitate additional media interest in mental health practitioners as sources of information and editorial commentary.

The trivialisation of young women in mainstream media as "slay queens" has created a perception that there abuse and subsequent murder is a natural progression for or acceptable consequence of their chosen superficial lifestyle. This has relegated their killing into cautionary tales for other women who may be considering adopting that same lifestyle, and entertainment men and "well-behaved" women.

5.2.2 Impact of Digital Media on Media Reporting

Due to the symbiotic nature of social media and mainstream media (Hanna, Rohm & Crittenden, 2011), all the analysed articles were published on both print and online platforms,

inviting audience feedback that shaped the way the media covered the story in subsequent updates, especially in their representation of the victims.

Digital media has changed the way that news reporting and the discourse around it are conducted. In the case of the articles that were reviewed for this study, the media houses broke the news through their social media handles and provided further details on their online publications before the stories made it to press the following day. This meant that most of those stories were discussed on social media, either through the media houses' social media accounts, or by amplification and sharing by other social media users. Moreover, the media houses were able to generate further discussion on the stories and gain audience feedback through polls and requests for comment. This meant that the audience interaction with the stories was no longer a one-way medium as used to happen when newspapers were strictly physical. The audience participation swayed the media reporting depending on the volume of negative or positive feedback.

In relation to this, the online feedback and conversation generated by the media houses provided some insight into how the notion that these women may have been deserving of murder is entrenched in the national psyche.

As previously mentioned, the tone and frame of media reporting on femicide changed significantly towards the middle of 2019. This can in part be attributed in part by the increased visibility and activism of Kenyan feminists on social media who continuously used their platforms to critique the media coverage of these cases and other cases of violence against women (Wasuna, 2018).

At the same time, social media has provided a new avenue for news creation and consumption because of the perceived democratisation of information (Saez-Trumper, Castillo & Lalmas, 2013). It should be observed that this pushback against masculine journalism has predominantly come from women and women's groups on digital media which is more easily accessible to them. As more women and feminist collectives organise, theorise and document their lived experiences online, mainstream media has been forced to pay attention to the ways in which their framing of violence against women harms and victimises not just the subjects of their reporting, but also the women who most at risk of falling victim to this violence. This reinforces Daly's (1988) that the inclusion of women's voices is an important factor for comprehensive and inclusive analysis of women as victims, sources of information and theorists of gender-based crimes.

Still, it would be fool-hardy to assume that mainstream media has been welcoming of women's citizen journalism through their online presence. Several mainstream news outlets (Quintons, 2017; Coursey, 2012; Lee, 2012; Poirier, 2006; Meyer 2004) have published rebuttals about blogging and social media publishing as unprofessional, unregulated and not bound by journalistic guidelines. While these observations about lack of regulations may be true, these writers fail to account for the nuances behind the popularity of blogging especially in terms of accessibility to marginalised groups. The gaps in critiques against blogging from mainstream media follow the same patriarchal nature of the newsroom reporting style.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

This section provides a brief statement on the main points of the findings and discussion, conclusions of the study as well as recommendations to academia, mainstream print media, and policy makers.

6.1 Summary

The analysis of data in this study led the researcher to some thought-provoking observations regarding the portrayal and framing of femicide cases in mainstream print media.

Firstly, femicide has become common and even normalised in Kenyan society. Reports on cases of femicide are treated as just another 'water-cooler' conversation moment rather than an opportunity to discuss what is essentially a national disaster that has half of the nation's population living in fear.

Other notable elements of the framing of femicide include the androcentric nature of the newsroom, the prevalence of episodic reporting which presents cases of femicide as isolated and divorced from the wider context of domestic violence as well as the media attitude towards femicide.

Through the identification of these tropes, the researcher observed that the conversation of femicide in Kenya takes shape in the following ways:

- Men speaking to a male audience which affects the language used, the questions asked about the crime and the way that the news reports are framed. The male reporters often interview or seek information from male police officers, male neighbours, fathers and brothers. The news pieces are then reviewed and approved by male editors.
- Men speaking down at women and using their deaths as a teachable moment for their peers on how to interact with men, and to 'police' women's behaviour.
- In the event that women's voices are sought, it is in their capacities as mothers or maternal figures to either the victim or the perpetrator to serve as a character witness who pulls at the heartstrings of the predominantly male audience. This means that

women's voices and experiences are largely missing from news reports about femicide.

Although the media reporting of femicide in the past couple of years evokes a semblance of optimism in the increase in coverage of femicide within the wider context of domestic violence, it is not lost on the researcher that majority of the cases are still waved away as instances of the usual "lovers' quarrels", random acts of jealousy and momentary loss of control or lapse in judgement. Furthermore, the depiction of these crimes as one-off occurrences presents a missed opportunity for the media to wield its power and reach on educating the public on the realities of the manifestation of domestic violence. As earlier stated in the paper, one of the reasons that makes it difficult to determine the true extent of domestic violence is the varying definitions and descriptions of it. By according these cases the proper coverage, the media can illustrate the many ways in which intimate partner violence manifests and escalates.

6.2 Conclusion

The media in Kenya wields significant power and influence in capturing the attention of its audiences and determining the issues that are considered important to the society. This study validates, Surette (2017) who describes the authority of media as both an opportunity and a barrier to social change. Mainstream Kenyan media is still very patriarchal in nature and can be characterised as an elderly man chastising errant women by implying that their murder is a just reaction to their perceived wayward behaviour. This kind of reporting is misplaced as it downplays the magnitude of taking a life which is a serious crime regardless of the victim's actions or behaviour prior to the crime. Furthermore, justice should be upheld within the constitutionally recognised legal system and not in the 'Kangaroo' court of public opinion as led by the media.

The increasing access to technology and online news that has created an abundance of information (Boczkowski, 2010) means that we are no longer as desperate for knowledge as we were a generation ago. We are now surrounded by knowledge and information which is easily accessible at the touch of a button. The challenge within social conversations has therefore evolved from merely seeking knowledge to asking the right questions. Thus, in order for society, especially mainstream media, to be active rather than reactive in dealing with femicide, they must do the active work of embedding cultural competency into established systems of governance and reporting. This involves changing, not just the content

of media discourse, but also changing the purpose of the conversation. The media must hold a mirror to itself, and examine the ways in which it perpetuates harmful perceptions on issues of gender-based violence and femicide. Likewise, the academic institutions in the country can help this process along by investing intensive research on femicide discourse with an aim to influence the conversations that drive societal perceptions on the same.

6.3 Recommendations

6.4 Recommendations for Academia

As pointed out in the study, there has been limited academic research so far in Kenya on the issue of femicide. This research project therefore opens up many possibilities for further research on femicide in Kenya including but not limited to the representation of femicide cases in national statistics, the various forms of femicide in Kenya (intimate femicide, culturally-based femicide, non-intimate femicide etc), the factors that promote femicide, and the possible interventions to address femicide.

There is an urgent need for further academic research on the subject of femicide in Kenya. A good place to begin would be to establish a definition of femicide in the Kenyan context. This needs to be done within homegrown theoretical frameworks that account for both the socio-cultural context of Kenyan communities as well as the feminisms currently in practice. There also needs to be an analysis of the suitability of existing feminist theories and whether they are adequate to address the issue of femicide. What are the appropriate lenses for the interrogation of femicide in Kenya? Is African feminism adequate to cross-examine the subject? Is there room for African feminist criminology?

Furthermore, there needs to be additional research on how to adequately map out the occurrences of femicide in Kenya, considering the low rates of reporting on domestic and gender-based violence.

There is little understanding of the causes of femicide beyond speculation. There are some suggestions in this study on the correlation between the increase in femicide and shifting gender roles in society occasioned by various factors such as economic upheaval. However, more research is required to investigate these issues due to the complex socio-cultural nature of the phenomenon. There is even less scrutiny of the media's involvement in shaping societal perceptions of femicide. Considering the significant influence of Kenyan media on both perception and public policy (Mwangi, 2018), there needs to be more communication research on mass media and femicide.

This study also suggests a history of domestic violence in several cases of femicide. Since there exists an extensive body of research on the issue of gender-based violence in Kenya, it would therefore be prudent for scholars to examine connections between femicide and domestic violence as well as the factors that lead to these escalations of violence.

The researcher also noted several instances (32%) where the perpetrators attempted to or successfully committed suicide after killing their partners. This presents another area of research to explore the cases of murder/femicide and suicide among intimate partners and the factors that may contribute to the phenomenon.

Due to the overlapping nature of mass media and social media, perhaps there is need for academic research on issues such as cyber bullying and the ways in which social media influences societal perceptions of domestic violence and femicide.

This study is limited to cases of intimate partner femicide. Other scholars could explore other femicide situations such as honour killings, non-intimate femicide, and armed conflict femicide among others. This area of inquiry would be beneficial in terms of determining the possible socio-cultural as well as policy interventions that can be implemented to prevent and perhaps even eliminate femicide in the country.

During data collection, the researcher also noted that in cases where women who were shot to death, the perpetrators were members of the uniformed forces (either police or the armed forces). This exposed another potential area of research regarding the predisposition of members of uniformed forces to domestic and physical violence.

6.5 Recommendations for Media

6.5.1 Journalistic Ethics of Covering Femicide

The media fraternity needs to interrogate its complicity in perpetuating myths that shroud the magnitude of intimate partner violence and femicide in Kenya. The media industry in Kenya should expand its journalistic ethics to include guidelines on reporting on femicide and gender-based violence in general. There is a need for media sensitisation and training to effect an attitude change regarding the reporting on femicide cases. Mainstream print media framing on intimate partner femicide should place accountability and responsibility on the perpetrator of the crime, rather than placing blame on the victim.

The mainstream print media should commit to accuracy and avoid the use of euphemisms. They should name the crime as femicide/intimate partner femicide rather than referring to the

story as a “tragedy”, “shock for villagers as man kills wife”. The media should accord the victim dignity by avoiding the use of dramatic or sensationalist language and frames in the reporting of femicide cases. The media should not strip the victim of their identity and individuality by reducing their identity to their relationship with the men in their lives, most especially with their perpetrator. Reporters should refer to victims by their names rather than reducing them to “farmer’s wife”, “teacher’s girlfriend.” This kind of reporting is patriarchal as a woman’s identity is attached to that of her male partner. The media should also refrain from providing details of the victim’s life that do not serve the narrative beyond placing blame and responsibility on them or attempting to absolve the perpetrator of their crime.

Media in Kenya wields still considerable power in shaping societal perceptions to issues, educating the masses and setting socio-economic agendas at a national scale (Wandera & Mugubi, 2014). The media should use this responsibility for social change management and to counter harmful stereotypes about femicide and its victimology.

The media needs to question the selection criteria for information sources as well as the language tropes used by these sources. The police force is still notoriously male-dominated and patriarchal in nature. How then does a similarly male-dominated and patriarchal media ensure that there is balanced and women-friendly reporting on femicide and gender-based violence?

6.5.2 Use of Statistics for Contextualisation of Femicide

As stated in previous chapters, violence against women is one of the most underreported crimes both nationally and globally. Femicide is even less reported and is often hidden within other homicides. Habitual use of data in the reporting of femicide serves two purposes: it urges the government and policy makes to regularly provide accurate data on the issue and it provides adequate context on the extent of the problem, rather than present each case as an isolated incident. This also goes a long way in demonstrating the impact of femicide on the society.

6.5.3 Who Tells the Story of Femicide?

It is important for the media to diversify both the newsroom and the sources of information to incorporate input and perspectives from women, legal professionals, social workers, medical practitioners (mental health professionals). The current predominantly male, pro-law enforcement reporting promotes one-sided narratives with limited information not just for the readers but also for researchers.

6.6 Recommendations for Policy

Femicide is still largely invisible from institutional record and memory. This stems from two things: (1) the socio-cultural issue of what and whom is considered important in society and whose story is deemed worthy of memorialisation and (2) the priorities of a largely male dominated government both in terms of representation and psychology (Muthuki, 2006). The classification and documentation of crime statistics do not provide room for interrogation of important factors such as victim-perpetrator relationships or criminal history and pathology, which could be taken into consideration when designing legal instruments that would be useful for intervening solutions to the phenomenon.

Kenya currently ranks 138 out of 230 in the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime index of intentional homicide, with approximately five people killed per 100,000 annually.

According to the 2019 Economic Survey released by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), the crime rate in Kenya increased by 13.2% from 77,992 in 2017 to 88,268 in 2017. Additionally, there were 2,856 reported murder cases reported in 2018, compared to 2774 cases in 2017, with murder accounting for 74.9% of homicide cases. Urban areas reported a majority of these cases, with Eldoret registering ninety reports, followed by Nakuru with eighty-eight and Nairobi with sixty-six. The distribution pattern of femicide mirrors that of overall homicide as Nairobi County registering the highest body count of murdered women, followed by Kiambu and Nakuru counties respectively. The survey depicts a trend of murder cases increasing steadily over the past five years.

The National Police Crime Statistics between 2013 and 2018 show a steady upsurge in homicide cases across the years, with men being 80% more likely than women to be reported for violent crimes. In 2018, 1,126 men were apprehended for murder against 186 women. In 2017, the ratio of male to female homicide perpetrators was 1,213 to 222 and in 2016 the figure stood at 1,236 against 203. However, in 2017 and 2018, more women than men were reported for the reproductive crimes of abortion, infanticide and abduction (of children). It should be noted, however, that although most of the reported perpetrators this does not automatically mean that their victims were all women. Equally, the victims of the female perpetrators were not only men. During this reporting period, the High Court registered a total of only 357 murder convictions out of 1,065 registered cases.

In relation to the statistics quoted above, homicide cases in Kenya are currently classified into seven categories: murder, manslaughter, infanticide, procuring abortion, concealing birth,

suicide, and causing death by dangerous driving, making it difficult to determine characteristics of the victims and perpetrators from public legal documentation. This stratification of crime and homicide statistics makes it impossible to determine specific cases of femicide because they do not factor in the characteristics that are analysed in this study, which differentiate femicide from general homicide. This, in turn, renders the crime "invisible" to policy makers, despite the work of activist bodies and non-governmental organisations to rally them around the phenomenon. This invisibility of femicide statistics at a national policy level has resulted in the public's reliance on the media to report on the issue. This is less than ideal because privately owned media has its own agenda in news reporting which may not necessarily prioritise public welfare.

The disaggregation of data on homicide cases is an urgent gap in national reporting that must be immediately in order to solidify the fight against femicide and crimes against women in general. A major prerequisite of this data disaggregation is for there to be a comprehensive definition of femicide in the contemporary socio-cultural Kenyan context. Policy makers could then be guided by the following questions:

- How do we define femicide in Kenya?
- What are the prevalent types of femicide in Kenya?
- What is the extent of femicide in Kenya and how do we measure it?
- Are there any recognisable patterns in different settings and environments across the country?
- Who is at greatest risk of femicide, and how do we assess and analyse these risks?
- What responsibilities and obligations do the state have in addressing femicide in Kenya?

There needs to be a concerted effort by the government and the civil society groups to undertake extensive research on the prevalence of femicide and violence against women outside of demographic surveys that are few and far between, and do not necessarily paint an accurate picture of the situation on the ground. This should be coupled up with widespread sensitisation and the implementation of proper recourse structures for victims of violence and femicide.

In order for this to be achieved, there also needs to be a review on the representation of women in all government sectors, beyond numbers and optics. There must be constant and

consistent effort to ensure that women who are elected or appointed to government positions are empowered to make policy decisions and influence agendas at both the national and the county level. Furthermore, government institutions must be committed to including feminist discourse and values in all their operations. This includes issues of inclusion, diversity equality, dignity, empathy and compassion.

It is also important for the legislature to review the existing laws and policies on domestic and intimate partner violence as well as those on murder to determine the ways in which they have failed to address the concerns of female victims of these crimes. The government should comply with the Academic Council on the United Nations System and set up a national femicide observatory for research and policy making. From this, a National Action Plan Against Violence and Femicide should be developed under the guardianship of both women leaders and grassroots organisations. There should be punitive laws for perpetrators of gender-based violence and femicide that must be applied constantly and consistently to ensure that the criminals are brought to justice and that the law does right by the victims and/or their next of kin.

The "gender desks" at police stations must be properly implemented and institutionalised to properly deal with cases of violence against women and femicide cases. This includes development of robust training and sensitisation plans as well as the realisation of this training not just for the officers handling these cases but also for all officers. It should be noted, however, that the gender desks are essentially a short-term affirmative action measure towards a permanent solution of making the police force as a whole, a more gender-sensitive and inclusive institution. In order for this to be achieved, there must be deliberate efforts for significant police and judicial reforms in terms of recognising the various forms of gender-based and domestic violence as well as recognition of femicide as a unique form of homicide.

The government and civil society groups should also conduct mass awareness campaigns on the prevalence of violence against women and on femicide in order to influence the socio-cultural mores that contribute to the phenomenon.

Finally, there should be affordable and accessible legal aid options for victims of domestic violence and femicide. This includes the cost, time and proximity to legal instruments and institutions. It also includes emotional and psychological care to ensure that they are not further victimised and/or further traumatised in the process of seeking justice.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: ARTICLE SELECTION

Section 1: General Information

Serial Number: ----------

1. Name of Publication:
    i. The Daily Nation
    ii. The Saturday Nation
    iii. The Sunday Nation
    iv. The Standard Newspaper
    v. The Saturday Standard
    vi. The Standard on Sunday
2. Date of Publication
3. Title of the article
4. By-line attribution/Reporter
5. Sex of reporter/journalist: Male/Female

Section 2: Article Description

1. News
2. News inventory/analysis
3. Features
4. Editorials
5. Opinion Piece
6. Letter to the editor
7. Pictorial
8. Insert

APPENDIX II: FEMICIDE CODES FOR FRAME ANALYSIS

Section 1: Framing Artefacts

1. Domestic violence language / no domestic violence language used
2. Domestic violence as a social problem
3. History of domestic violence
4. Sources referenced
5. Victim characteristics
6. Perpetrator characteristics
7. Overall tone of the article

Section 2: Research Variables

1. Femicide followed by suicide
2. Method of Killing
3. Relationship Status
4. Motive/Reason
5. History of domestic violence
6. Victim Age
7. Descriptive Title
8. Sensational Headline
9. Type of Coverage
10. Picture of Victim
11. Sources of Information
12. Victim Characterisation
13. Victim Blaming
14. Perpetrator Characterisation