Pathways to African Feminism and Development

The African Women Studies Centre is a training, research, evidence-based policy, advocacy and lobbying institution of the University of Nairobi. The Centre is committed to promoting African Women’s experiences and worldview in scholarship, policy and institutional development. Among the Centre’s publications are: The Beginnings; Rebuilding the Broken African Pot; Gender and Policy Analysis Tools; Making Women’s Perspectives Count in Policy Development and Implementation; and Status Report on the Kenya National Food Security. In the spirit of the multi-disciplinary nature of the AWSC, Pathways to African Feminism and Development promotes African women’s studies in all aspects of scholarship and development.

A Journal of the African Women Studies Centre
University of Nairobi-Kenya

Vol 5, No 2, 2020  ISSN 2309-3625
Vol. 5, No. 2, 2020
Pathways to African Feminism and Development
A Journal of the African Women Studies Centre

A Biannual Peer Refereed Journal
The focus of the Journal is on all aspects of African women's studies, both on the continent and in the Diaspora. This Journal promotes scholarship on African women in all spheres of life.

In this issue:
Technology and Changing Gender Roles
Mary Lou Williams Examined in the Context of Race and Gender
The Implications of Religion and Culture on Gender Equality
Parents’ Social and Financial Status as Determinants of Child Gender Preferences
Persistent Gender Inequity in Academic Employment at Makerere University
An Expansive Realization Perspective

Access this journal online at: awsc@uonbi.ac.ke
http://uonjournals.uonbi.ac.ke/
Pathways to African Feminism and Development
Journal of the African Women’s Studies Centre, University of Nairobi
ISSN 2309-3625
Key title: Pathways to African Feminism and Development

Editorial Board

Chair of the Board
Prof. Patricia Kameri-Mbote, Professor of Law, University of Nairobi

Members
Prof. Henry Indangasi, Professor of Literature, University of Nairobi.

Dr. Gloria Nwando Ozor- Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Nigeria,

Prof Elishiba Kimani, Dean School of Post graduate Studies & Prof. Education, Kenyatta University.

Prof. Philomena Mwaura, Dept. of Philosophy & Religious Studies/Director, Centre for Gender Equity and Empowerment, Kenyatta University

Dr. Alex Wanjala, Department of Literature, University of Nairobi.

Prof. Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira, Professor of Literature & Founding Director, AWSC, UoN
Dr. Grace Nyamongo, Lecturer, AWSC, UoN

Anna Petkova Mwangi, Department of Literature, University of Nairobi (Editor-in-Chief)

Peer Reviewers
Prof Jane Akinyi Ngala Oduor, Chair, Department of Linguistics and Languages, UoN

Prof. Charles Owuor Olungah, Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies, UoN

Dr Joseph Muleka, Department of Literature, University of Nairobi

Prof. Henry Indangasi, Professor of Literature, University of Nairobi.

Prof. Ciarunji Chesaina, Professor of Literature, University of Nairobi

Prof. Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira, Professor of Literature & Founding Director, African Women’s Studies Centre, University of Nairobi

Prof Elishiba Kimani, Dean School of Post graduate Studies and Professor of Education, Kenyatta University.

Editor-in-Chief
Anna Petkova Mwangi, Department of Literature, University of Nairobi
TABLE OF CONTENTS

From the Desk of the Editor-In-Chief by Anna Petkova Mwangi…………………………………….. 5
Introduction by Rosemary Wanjiku Mbugua …………………………………………………………… 7
Technology and Changing Gender Roles: A Paradigm Shift in the Utilization of Environmental Resources by Joseph Muleka……………………………………………………………………………….. 10
Mary Lou Williams Examined in the Context of Race and Gender by Fabu Phillis Carter and Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………… 21
The Implications of Religion and Culture on Gender Equality: Observations from the 2014 Elections in Malawi by Anthony M. Gunde………………………………………………………………………………………………………40
Parents’ Social and Financial Status as Determinants of Child Gender Preferences: A Study of Igbos in Lagos West Senatorial District, Lagos State, Nigeria by Ubendu, C. Chika and Sulaiman, Lanre Abdul-Rasheed…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..63
Persistent Gender Inequity in Academic Employment at Makerere University: Is There a Gendered Agenda? By Elizabeth Kaase-Bwanga…………………………………………………………………………………………………………………85
An Expansive Realization Perspective: Access and Use of ICTs By Young Women of Mathare’s Informal Settlements by Grace Githaiga and George Nyabuga…………………108
FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Anna Petkova Mwangi

Women have traditionally been marginalised in the structures of society. However, it appears that currently this situation is changing significantly in the way societal norms and roles are being re-defined. This issue of the Journal gives a cross dimensional study of women issues and presents an exploration of emerging factors empowering women, pulling them out of the societal prejudices and cocoons they had been confined in and putting them to sit at the table at the same level with men, to discuss issues and make key decisions.

This issue of the AWSC Journal is very informative as it highlights women issues from a global arena since the authors come from Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Nigeria and the USA, thus providing both regional and global perspectives. It is clear from the various articles that the traditional paradigm is shifting and women are finding their voice to correct the gender imbalance and come to the fore of society.

While we hope that you will find the articles in this issue informative and useful, we are now inviting your articles for the next issue on the broad topic of women economic empowerment. For more information, please read the Call for Papers.

---

Call for Papers

Pathways to African Feminism and Development
the Journal of the African Women Studies Centre (AWSC),
University of Nairobi, Kenya

Original articles are invited for Volume 6 (special) issue No 1 of Pathways to African Feminism and Development on the theme: Women Economic Empowerment: Theories and Practice. The theme allows for a wide range of research or literature reviews on:

1. Evaluating the impact of affirmative action funds in promoting women’s entrepreneurship
3. National Budget Policy Statement, 2020 and its implication on sectors that support child care and women’s work
4. Assessing what works for WEE in Policy Advocacy and strengthening women’s self-mobilization for WEE
5. Analysis of strategies that women’s movement used to realize the gains in the Kenya Constitution 2010 for strengthening self-mobilization for policy advocacy for WEE and learning from past experiences
6. Feminist Perspectives on Economic Development
7. Women Economic Empowerment Indicators
8. Translating theories into practice in the field
9. Lessons learnt from practical experiences enriching the theoretical perspectives.
10. Policy Advocacy Strategies to influence policies and programs and promote WEE: Challenges and opportunities

Case Studies should be based on real-life situations and highlight decisions taken that can be replicated in other similar situations.

A single article should not exceed six thousand words; Times New Roman, Font size 12. Each manuscript should include an abstract of about 250 words. Key words used in the paper should also be given.

Clarity and Consistency: Please check your manuscript for clarity, repetition, grammar, spellings, punctuation, and consistency of references to minimize editorial changes.

There will be a Book Review corner: Book Reviews on recently published books on Women Economic Empowerment are welcome.

Please submit an electronic copy of your papers in MS-WORD format by 30th June 2021 to: awsikenya@yahoomail.co.uk

Editor-in-Chief
INTRODUCTION

Rosemary Wanjiku Mbugua

Ten years ago, the idea of establishing an African Women Studies Centre was a dream. The Centre was born out of the recognition that the experiences of African women in almost all spheres of life had not been part of the mainstream knowledge development. In other words, African women had often not spoken for themselves, and their experiences had not shaped, ordered, and named our world. African women’s experiences had for far too long remained outside the debates in our academic institutions and were often not used to inform the policymakers and other key leaders in our region. Furthermore, scholarship on women based its arguments mainly on experiences of women in the West, while African women’s experiences remained invisible, even in Africa.

Prof. Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira, a professor of Literature and the founder of the African Women Studies Centre, envisioned that through the establishment of the Centre, African women could challenge and push the frontiers of knowledge by firstly, interrogating traditional theoretical, conceptual, and methodological frameworks for their capacity to capture African women’s experiences and their world view; secondly, enhancing and enriching African women’s scholarship and experiences through sharing and collaborating with African women in the Diaspora; thirdly, by bringing African women’s experiences into mainstream knowledge development; and fourthly, by informing policy and institutional development through the utilization of African women’s experiences, perspectives, and worldview.

This issue of the Pathways to African Feminism and Development captures the spirit of the AWSC by presenting articles that are both intellectually stimulating and thought provoking. It brings aboard diverse topics, thoughts, perspectives and experiences of scholars from different geographical locations and environments. It is an issue that provides a platform for interrogating and sharing knowledge and evidence of new trends that make the society of today more inclusive.

In the first article, Technology and Changing Gender Roles: A Paradigm Shift in the Utilization of Environmental Resources, Dr Joseph Muleka from the Department of Literature of the University of Nairobi, interrogates the changing gender roles and how this impacts the women and environment of the Luhya community of Western Kenya. He says that the changing times
and emerging technologies appear to be reversing traditionally assigned gender roles, where the woman, previously the cook (*omudekhi*), is now charting new waters. He says that, "With modern technology, the macho man is getting put into a paradoxically unprecedented position that seems to inadvertently re-assign the gender roles.

In the second article titled *Mary Lou Williams Examined in the Context of Race and Gender*, Fabu Phillis Carter, a PhD candidate and Prof. Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira from the African Women Studies Centre, look at Mary Lou Williams, a jazz musician, through two critical lenses: as an African American and as a woman, and how both race and gender impacted her career as a jazz musician. She examines the extent to which Mary Lou Williams was conscious of multiple jeopardy and multiple consciousness. The article demonstrates how she used her musical creativity to resist both racism and patriarchy.

In the third article titled, *The Implications of Religion and Culture on Gender Equality: Observations from the 2014 Elections in Malawi*, Dr Anthony M. Gunde, discusses ways in which patriarchal discourses, rooted in religion and culture in many African societies, may be manipulated by politicians to aggravate gender disparities in power relations. The article looks at how a major opposition party used a campaign slogan laden with sexist religious and cultural overtones, to vote out Joyce Banda, Africa's first ever female President.

The fourth article: *Parents’ Social and Financial Status as Determinants of Child Gender Preferences: A Study of Igbo in Lagos West Senatorial District, Lagos State, Nigeria* Dr Ubendu C. Chika and Dr Sulaiman, Lanre Abdul-Rasheed, examine the social and financial factors underlying child gender preference among the Igbo people in Lagos, West Senatorial District. The study finds, among others that there is a "significant relationship between education and parental preference for the gender of their children. The higher the education of the parents, the lower the parental preference was for a particular gender". It concludes with the recommendation that "efforts should be made to raise the educational levels of people and to ensure that the government tackles poverty aggressively in the society".

In the fifth article, Dr Elizabeth Kaase-Bwanga from Makerere University, Uganda, in her article titled: *Persistent Gender Inequity in Academic Employment at Makerere University: Is There A Gendered Agenda?* Investigates gender inequity in academic employment to establish, what explains and maintains gender inequity and what can be done to close the gap at Makerere
University. The study finds that gender inequity in academic employment was not a gendered agenda but rather, it was influenced by various factors, which she discusses extensively. She concludes with some recommendations on what could be done to remedy the situation.

Last but not least, Grace Githaiga a PhD candidate from the Institute for Development Studies and George Nybuga from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, in the sixth article titled, An Expansive Realization Perspective: Access and Use of ICTS by young women of Mathare's Informal Settlements, seek to establish the access and use of ICTs by young women in the informal settlements of Mathare, Kenya. She finds that young women in these settlements are enjoying the same opportunities as men in the access and use of ICTs. She concludes that access and use of ICTs have facilitated expansive realization among young women of Mathare.

This issue of the Pathways to African Feminism and Development provides a platform to discuss African knowledge and experiences on gender and women, from different perspectives and pushes the boundaries of new knowledge creation.
TECHNOLOGY AND CHANGING GENDER ROLES: A PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE UTILIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Joseph Muleka
University of Nairobi

Abstract
Among the Luhya community of Western Kenya – whether in the traditional or modern social setups – the woman was, has been and largely still is defined as a cook. A man looking for a wife, for instance, is said to be looking for omudekhi, (a cook). If not, the man could be looking for amaika, (cooking place), which by implication still points to a cook. Consequently, a woman getting married is going to okhudekha, (to cook). Expectedly, the gender roles of the woman as a cook, place on her the attendant duties of fetching water and firewood for the cooking; food to be cooked (vegetables and grains, which may also need grinding); and other requirements to facilitate ‘successful cooking’. Her patriarchal macho husband will on his part, sit waiting for the services of omudekhi. However, changing times and emerging technologies appear to be reversing this age-old modus operandi. With modern technology, the macho man is apparently getting put into a paradoxically unprecedented position that seems to inadvertently re-assign the gender roles. Basing on oral performances and personal testimonies from a number of men and women living with their spouses in different urban and suburban environments in Western Kenya, this study interrogates the apparently changing gender roles and how this impacts the women as well as the environment. In an attempt to investigate what has changed: how and why, the study draws on ‘reversal theory’.

Key words: amaika, environment, macho man, okhudekha, omudekhi, reversed gender roles, technology, woman

Introduction
This paper was inspired by performances of different groups of women dancers in Busia County that I have attended on different occasions, from which I picked a number of songs, two of which I have included here below. The messages emanating from the performances prompted me to undertake random interviews with different couples and individual respondents from Busia and the larger Luhya community of Western Kenya. This was so that I could interrogate and/or validate the messages. The question(s) in my mind was/were: Are the gender related messages in the songs a reality on the ground or simply the imaginations and aspirations of art? Meanwhile, what kind of light were the messages throwing on the age-old gender roles in the community? And of what significance were the gender roles to the environment as the stage for the age-old
gender practices?

**Song 1**

Soloist:

- *Bakhaye ba Mundika* (Women residents of Mundika)
- *Khwenyanga obweruki* (We seek to govern ourselves)

All:

- *Lero bakhayire* (Despite resistance)

Soloist:

- *Bakhaye ba Mundika* (Women residents of Mundika)
- *Khwenyanga obweruki* (We seek to govern ourselves)

All:

- *Lero bakhayire* (Despite resistance)
- *Muche mulole bakhaye* (Come and see the women)
- *Bakhenga iyeka* (With a claim to land)
- *Lero bakhayire*.

**Song 2**

Soloist:

- *Ikhuba, ee firingi ikhuba* (Signal, eh a whistle signals)

All:

- *Ilanga bandu* (Gathering people)

Soloist:

- *Ikhuba, ee firingi ikhuba* (Signal, eh a whistle signals)

All:

- *Ilanga bandu* (Gathering people)
- *Abasacha bali bakana* (Men had vowed)
- *Sibacha machi* (Never to fetch water)
- *Lero ngabacha machi* (Now they fetch water)
- *Muyingananga* (You thought it unthinkable)
- *Khane bindu bichenjanga* (But things have changed)
- *Basacha bacha machi* (Men now fetch water).
From the lyrics of the two songs above, one notes revolutionary demands and changes that we may guess could shake the very core of the hitherto patriarchal setup and its beliefs. As it appears, Song 1 brings out two issues that are crucial to a patriarchal setup: firstly, women governing themselves and by extension becoming part of the society’s leadership; and secondly, laying claim to land ownership. Meanwhile, Song 2 brings society together to declare men as part and parcel of household chores such as fetching water, a chore that had hitherto been considered as a woman’s duty. Of course the song in later stanzas also mentions other chores including, but not limited to cleaning the compound; fetching firewood; looking for food; grinding corn and even cooking.

This paper analyses the significance of the messages in the two songs, not only for societal gender roles, but also for the society’s relationship to the environment. What, for example, is the impact on the environment if men are now involved in fetching firewood, among other household chores?

**Methodology**

My initial attendance and observation of the performances by the different women’s traditional performing groups, was for entertainment and partly for the promotion of interest in cultural dances. This lasted only until some of the messages in the performances began to arouse my
interest and curiosity in what the singers were saying about the environment as well as gender matters. In particular, I could see an implied relationship between the role of women in society and the state of the environment. Even of greater interest to me was the aspiration in the songs to change gender roles, or, in fact the declaration that the roles had actually changed in today’s technological advancement.

To satisfy my curiosity, I identified a number of songs, from which, due to the space of this paper, I have quoted only two, the messages of which I undertook to analyse for greater depth. With the assistance of some of the performers whom I interviewed in order to understand the actual spirit and nuances of the messages in their songs, I translated the songs and found a number of themes coming out. One theme was the aspiration of the women to either, take up leadership roles, or, at least be included in decision making. The other was about the steps taken by women towards acquisition of land. Of course there was the underlying theme of resistance by the society against the two possibilities, where the reason could be the wish to protect the patriarchal structures of leadership and land ownership. Another pertinent theme was that of how the changing technologies are causing a change in gender roles.

I set out to seek opinion on the above themes by interviewing men and women from different walks of life, mostly confining myself among the Luhyä community of Western Kenya, from which the performances I was studying came. I later, however, extended my interviews to other respondents who were not necessarily from Western Kenya, for the purpose of being able to rate the universality of the issues under investigation. Meanwhile I also benefitted from my own observation of certain situations. The choice of respondents was mostly random, while the interviews were conversational but focusing on the scope of the ongoing research. I sought opinion on the question of decision making by women, particularly, as concerns the utilization of land as a factor of production and the pertinent concerns of environmental preservation and conservation. I also investigated the facts of division of labour in society, in particular, whether, what and how men were taking up roles traditionally considered as women’s, as some of the songs appeared to suggest. I also interrogated the consequences to the environment, of men working where and on what had from time immemorial been left for women.

**Women’s Control over Land and Environmental Conservation**

The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, gender disaggregated data analysis report of 2014 indicates that land under women-alone ownership is about 7%. Meanwhile, the Kenya Land
Alliance Progress Report on Land Ownership shows that between 2013 and 2017, out of the 10,129,704 hectares of land titled, women only got 163,253 hectares while men got 9,903,304 hectares. This ratio represents approximately 1.63% for women compared to 97.76% for men. These figures reveal that land ownership is almost entirely a preserve for men.

With the above figures as they are, one begins to wonder what one of the songs cited above was really celebrating, as it calls, in its last stanza upon the audience to (Come and see the women, with a claim to land). I wish to share my own guess that the song was perhaps celebrating two achievements, one, present and the other futuristic. In the present, the celebration would still be justified despite the dismal percentages of women with land titles. The reason is that at 1.63% ownership, this is a huge improvement on the ‘nil ownership’ in the past.

On the other hand, the celebration could be based on the hopes of women who see their aspiration to greater say on land ownership succeed, perhaps in the near future. Notably, they say in the song that they seek to govern themselves. It, of course, goes without saying that the possibility of the women governing themselves could open greater opportunities for a greater claim to land ownership.

From the findings of my research, land ownership by women has a close relationship with women governing themselves. A woman who owns her own land is always likely to make decisions on how the piece of land will be utilized without facing the restricting control of the man. On the other hand, a woman who has also built on the land she owns is almost always likely to be free to make her own decisions on how to run her home. Indeed, it is becoming less and less surprising today that women are now buying land and building. The trend seems to develop exponentially with the growing number of single parents – single mothers, for the sake of this study. Apparently, a single mother – even if she has not built her own home – has much more latitude to make her own decisions on how to live her life and that of her child/children.

The case also applies to women who are in well-paying employment. Kenya’s one third gender rule, though not strictly adhered to, has opened more space for women in public offices. Of course, the rule was targeting both men and women, however, in the prevailing imbalance in the sharing of positions in the majority of setups, the law appears to favour women much more. And so, with more and more women getting employment, possibilities of women staying on their own and making their own decisions are more enhanced.
It is not clear if the song presented above was talking about the possibilities of the women governing themselves by avoidance of the control of men that comes through marriage. However, since the majority of the performers were married women, anyway, one concludes that the women were in fact appealing to their wish to be in charge of decisions on issues touching them – including land – regardless of whether the men/husbands were present or absent. Of course the phrase “despite resistance” indicates that the song already recognizes the fact that society would go to all lengths to prevent this, since decision making is perceived as a role for men, leave alone talking about owning land.

Meanwhile, while Song 1 decides to take a more winding and slippery route to the change of gender roles (women’s involvement in decision making and owning land), Song 2 is more exacting. The song states unequivocally that the change of gender roles has in fact occurred. The men who had “vowed never to fetch water, now fetch water”. The song continues to point out that this may have been unthinkable, but things have since changed and men now fetch water. Of course the song does not end with the stanza on the men fetching water. Men now fetch firewood, another chore that traditionally was left to women. As the song progresses, many more household chores that men have now taken up are named. These also include grinding corn, cleaning the compound and even cooking, thereby prompting the question: What has necessitated, if not, prompted the change?

Technology and Changing Gender Roles
According to women respondents (especially those with some income), they are now less burdened with household chores initially always left to women, thanks to modern times and technology. It sounded quite interesting the way modern technology has militated the change in gender roles – roles that apparently the men have taken over without coercion and perhaps without knowing. One woman narrates laughingly how she has never bothered with looking for firewood since her husband opted for cooking gas in the house. “Mine is simply to inform him that the gas cylinder has emptied. He will then leave me sitting at home as he rushes to the gas depot for a refill.”

The above scenario identifies a really interesting development. In the past, it would be the husband who would remain at home as the woman searched for firewood. Of course it was a big surprise to the men as they had not realized that by them going to buy the gas, they were, in fact, doing what their wives had done before. The use of gas for cooking is, thus, technology that has
changed the dynamics of cooking as well as the person who fetches the cooking materials. As it came out, men play a major role in providing the kitchen with materials that facilitate cooking; if not going for gas, they could be paying for electricity tokens or solar panels or litres of kerosene. All these actions demonstrate that men were taking over roles hitherto performed by women, as is confidently expressed through the songs above.

Notably, technology has made many other activities that were considered specific to women to become gender-shared, if not wholly transferred to men. In some households where water supply is not stable, it is a common practice to see the men carrying jars of bottled water that they have bought from supermarkets, or collected from the mushrooming water distribution kiosks. Often, some of the men who work in institutions with a clean supply of water, will sometimes be seen packing water containers in the boots of their cars to take home for family use. Families are also beginning to take more interest in harvesting rain water and refining it for use. Before the onset of these sources of water, it would have been unthinkable for a ‘normal’ man to be part of the water fetching team.

Incidentally, men also grind corn, in another turn of events on an activity which in the past was the duty of women and the performance of which was not negotiable. Indeed, with posho mills as the preferred technology for grinding corn, and with more and more men accessing upgraded means of transport such as bicycles, motor cycles and cars, the men apparently have no problem going to grind. As one man explained, he found it not a problem to have a bag of maize or millet put in the boot of his car, for him to drop at the posho mill and pick it after it has been ground. This was, in the recent past, clearly the responsibility of women. The list of activities which men perform now and which were strictly seen as a woman’s work, cannot be exhausted.

As explained in this paper's abstract, the symbol of a woman’s existence and occupation was and still largely is, *okhudekha* (to cook); where even marriage for a woman is itself defined in terms of *okhudekha*. Indeed the woman in the community from which this paper started is synonymous with cooking. The man, therefore, stayed away from cooking, lest he was associated with womanhood. But cooking has also been traditionally associated with the hearth, soot and smoke. However, modern technology has with time been setting alternative cooking stages, a development that starts to remove cooking from the singular traditional hearth allocation. For instance, cooking with gas or electricity does not strictly demand for a hearth. Perhaps it is this apparent, if not possible disassociation of cooking from the traditional hearth that appears to ‘un-
tether’ the men from the age-old stigma usually attached to them (the men) cooking. Now with the technology in cooking improved, the man will warm his food in a microwave; make his tea on a gas cooker or boil his water in an electric kettle. He will, without any qualms, fry his egg on a stove. This, indeed, confirms the argument of this paper that technology is causing a change in gender roles, whereby cooking as an activity that from time immemorial was treated as woman’s work, can now be shared.

The Significance for Women of Changing Gender Roles
Given the excitement with which the women performers appeared to announce the prospect of men now engaging in chores that they earlier abhorred, I found it logical to engage the former on what this emerging trend meant for them. For a majority of the women, the direct involvement of men in some of the household chores meant one major achievement: men could finally appreciate the difficulty that preceded setting a meal on the table. As one woman explained, men could now realize that, for example, buying a piece of fish did not always mean that a meal was assured. The piece of fish was only one of the many requirements that were necessary for people to be able to eat. Indeed, as she further explained, her husband had of late, had the sense to ask if she had water, fuel, flour, and so on, even after making fish available. If this was an experience to be universalized, we would perhaps conclude that the men were becoming more sensitive to what it takes to run a family.

For other women, men’s willingness to prepare a meal for themselves, or even the rest of the family, meant that the pressure of running the household was reduced and women could have some time to do other things. This means that they would become productive even in areas away from the confines of the home. One woman, who was enrolled on a study programme that took her away from home for days, expressed joy that she could be away without worrying about the children because their father was now willing to look after them in her absence. “He has no problem preparing meals for our children,” she remarked. “It makes me feel that we both care about the family and we can share the challenges that go with running the family,” she added. One woman’s observation which she pointed out laughingly, was about the quality of the food set at table. She commented:

Since he too sometimes cooks, he can now understand and forgive when I sometimes serve soup that is slightly over salted, or vegetables that were beginning to burn. He now knows that even an expert chef every now and then experiences small accidents that occur in the course of preparing a meal. It of course, has happened to him. He now realizes that only ten seconds away from the gas cooker
could determine if one will have milk in their tea, or not.

This was a confirmation that she, perhaps like other women, was celebrating greater partnership with her husband as a result of the latter’s participation in household chores.

I found it worthwhile to also capture men’s sentiments about the situations that led them to sharing in the household chores. While some could not forgive a situation that made them carry out chores that were traditionally done by their wives, others found it refreshing to share the chores. “It makes me feel closer to my family,” one man said. Indeed, another man advised that instead of wasting their energy jogging, it was more rewarding to participate in the more engaging household chores. “The alertness that I have to maintain when I am taking up duties, say, in the kitchen, keeps my brain more engaged than just jogging,” he argued. Of course, there were those who lamented that women tended to back away from their duties every time they saw the man take the lead. They accused their wives of hiding their own money when they realized that they (the men) were ready to go for gas, buy water, or take up other engagements that would otherwise have involved them. All in all, the majority of men agreed that times were changing and no one was likely to escape using modern technology in the running of their family. And that with greater embracing of the emerging technology, men were going to be called upon to directly or indirectly take part in household chores, including cooking and other kitchen related activities.

**What Modern Technology Means for the Environment**

As I watched the women who had performed celebrating the milestone of men eventually taking up chores they had vowed never to touch, (some of the women looked triumphant as if it was their own power which had reined in the men) I wondered if they were aware what role technology had played. Of course, one must appreciate the force of the changing times, especially the emergence of liberating discourse on the rigid patriarchal cultures that shared out roles based on gender. One cannot, however, deny the role technology has also played in easing the abhorrent features of the chores. One cannot, for example, deny the contribution of technology in, say, reducing the soot, smoke, and heat associated with cooking at a hearth – a discomfort that the proud, macho man domiciled in the male egoistic patriarchal setup has considered an environment only habitable by women. Of course, this designation of women is not surprising in a patriarchal African setup in which the man has assigned himself the role of the special overseer for whom things have to be done by those subordinate to him, that is, women and children.
Meanwhile, if the women dancers were aware of how technology had contributed in causing a paradigm shift in their men’s view of household chores, the same women should be equally celebrating what the very technology has done for their environment. As the area Chief explained to me, there was less pressure on the environment now that many more people were turning to the use of gas and kerosene. This meant that tree cutting for firewood was reducing and that the environment was getting greener. Besides, electricity power connections had reached some of the most interior places, thereby, further reducing the need to burn matter to cook or boil water. He admitted that the use of gas, kerosene and electricity was not by any chance comparable to the level one found in up market environments in towns and cities, but the switch over was slowly but surely gaining ground. The more technology became widespread, the less the destruction of the environment happened.

On their part, the women who use modern technologies, whether in part or in full, confirmed that they lived in a cleaner environment devoid of the suffocating smell of soot and smoke associated with the use of firewood. Besides, those who still solely depended on firewood were adopting modern jikos distributed by organizations that were promoting more modern styles of constructing fire places that used minimal firewood. These jiko types such as Jikokoa, for example, enabled cooking that would reduce the time and fuel for cooking in half, to cook as much food, meaning that fewer trees would be cut.

The jikos also use simple cooking materials such as saw dust, rice and wheat straw, dried cow dung, recycled charcoal dust and much more of the material that would otherwise not be usable in ordinary hearths. These, of course, demand conventional cooking fuel like firewood that can only be available after felling trees or cutting shrubs and thickets. Indeed, evidence that technology is a crucial player in environmental preservation and conservation cannot be overemphasized.

**Conclusion**

This paper has argued that decision making by women is gaining greater space, with more and more women entering the public space as employees, employers and business women. Besides, the number of women living on their own and those acquiring personal land has been rising, thereby increasing the number of women who depend on themselves to make decisions touching on their lives. Meanwhile, gender roles are changing from the strictly traditional way they were allocated to men and women. In particular, tradition had always spared men household chores,
prescribing the same for women. The change has been attributed to two reasons: the changing societal attitudes towards the initially rigid patriarchal allocation of gender roles and modern technology. This is because with more and more people getting exposed to other cultures, the perceptions of what belongs to men and what belongs to women begin to change.

Meanwhile modern technology appears to influence the way certain tasks are performed including household chores, such as fetching firewood, water or cooking. The use of gas, for example, tends to make cooking less abhorrent, therefore, more attractive to the men who had earlier on given the activity a wide berth. But even of greater significance is the fact that with technology, the environment is better conserved. This is because with improving ways of running the household such as the use of gas, kerosene, or electricity to cook, there is less pressure on the forests to provide firewood. I conclude by asserting that technology has had a monumental impact of changing gender roles. It is also helping improve environmental conservation.

Works Cited
The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, Gender Disaggregated Data Analysis Report of 2014
MARY LOU WILLIAMS EXAMINED IN THE CONTEXT OF RACE AND GENDER

Fabu Phillis Carter & Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira
African Women Studies Centre, University of Nairobi

Abstract
There is a dearth of scholarship on the historical experience of any black, female, musician in twentieth century U.S.A. Mary Lou Williams, a child musical prodigy, was born in the United States under a stifling system of racism and patriarchy. She persevered to mature into the most gifted pianist, composer, arranger and jazz innovator of her time. Jazz is indisputably one of America’s gifts to the world as an original music created by African Americans. As a new musical phenomena, jazz developed in the early 1900’s and Williams was born a decade later in 1910. She grew up to learn and play all the styles of jazz over her seventy-one years of life. She also created Sacred Jazz, a new genre that melded her Catholic faith with her love for jazz. At the apex of her career, she had her own radio show, and toured throughout the United States and Europe. Despite all of her national and international fame, after her death she slipped into obscurity, and she and her music were forgotten. This paper explores the jazz genius, Mary Lou Williams in two critical aspects: as an African American and as a woman, and how both race and gender impacted her career as a jazz musician juxtaposed against the life and career of another jazz musician Hazel Scott. This paper examines the extent to which Mary Lou Williams was conscious of multiple jeopardy, multiple consciousness. Multiple jeopardy, and multiple consciousness, in the context of black feminist ideology, means that the multiple forms of discrimination that one experiences negatively affects a person’s ability to perceive any other forms of discrimination when you are a victim of more than one system of discrimination. This means that the effect of race is multiplied when combined with the effects of gender, and further multiplied when combined with the effect of class. Williams grew up with the negative effects of gender as a woman musician, and race as an African American. In addition, she was extremely poor. This paper shows how she used her musical creativity to resist both racism and patriarchy. Jazz for her was a protective shield. Williams did not see being black and female as a source of innate strength or resistance to the racism and patriarchy that she experienced. In published statements, she never appeared to see herself globally, in terms of race nor gender, nor envision connections to women or African American outside of her personal or family space. Previous
scholarship has not adequately explored or explained the conundrum of this strong black and highly gifted woman’s decision to never be defined by her race or gender, but solely by her creative talent. The constructs of multiple jeopardy and intersectionality in the context of Black Feminist ideology helps to explain the limitations of Williams’ understanding about the reality of race and gender in her life as a black woman musician in the U.S. Yet, her limitations do not diminish her brilliance as an artist. Williams’ legacy as a jazz musician, arranger and composer is legendary and she deserves to be remembered. She did utilize her musical creativity as a shield against racism and patriarchy, although with limited success. In her entire life, she seemed unable to view herself as one integrated being who is Black, woman and jazz genius was. I began building up a defence against prejudice and hatred and so many other miserable blocks by taking my aching heart away from bad sounds and working hard at music. Looking back, I see that my music acted as a shield.

Mary Lou Williams, Box 5, the Jazz Institute, Rutgers University

There is a scarcity of scholarship on the historical experience of any Black, female, musician in twentieth century U.S.A. and the extraordinary Mary Lou Williams is no exception. Williams, during her lifetime, was considered one of the greatest jazz pianists, yet she slipped into obscurity after her death. Jazz contemporaries and critics acknowledged Williams as one of the most accomplished pianists in jazz, yet qualified their praise with gendered language that limited her to an extraordinary “woman” musician. Williams always refused to identify herself or allow music critics to categorize her either by race or gender. It is important to examine why she refused as well as to examine how she used her musical creativity to resist racism, patriarchy and all of what she considered “miserable blocks…and bad sounds…” in her career. Williams did not view being Black and female as a source of strength or resistance to the racism and patriarchy that she experienced. In her interviews that spanned 60 years, she never appeared to see herself globally, in terms of race nor gender, nor envision connections to Black people or women, outside of her personal or family circles.

This paper investigates the extent to which Mary Lou Williams was conscious of what Deborah King calls “multiple jeopardy, multiple consciousness.” By “multiple jeopardy, multiple consciousness, in the context of Black feminist ideology, King states that the multiple forms of discrimination that one experiences affects their ability to perceive any of the forms of discrimination when you are a victim of more than one system of discrimination. This means

1 Mary Lou Williams, Handwritten Autobiography, The Jazz Institute, Rutgers University.
that the effect of race is multiplied when combined with the effects of gender, and further multiplied when combined with the effect of class. Williams, a victim of multiple oppressions, was born Black, female, and poor under extremely racist and patriarchal systems in the rural south in 1910. She focused on her music as a creative, protective shield against the racism, sexism, and poverty that adversely affected her career. This exploration is significant to the scholarship on Black female musicians since Mary Lou Williams’ was a pioneer and role model for women musicians and her stance on race and gender, is a conundrum that previous scholarship has not adequately explored or explained.

Born into intense racial hostilities in the south, the hostility lessened very slightly due to the family’s migration to Pittsburgh during Mary Lou Williams’ childhood. There are stories, in her autobiography and subsequent interviews, about being bullied as a child by White children. One German girl in particular, Amy Franks, bullied her the most, but she was also physically attacked by White adults. It was during her childhood that her musical talent, for the first time, mitigated the racism she daily experienced. The physical assaults stopped after she became known for her musical prowess, as the “Little Piano Girl.” As the “Little Piano Girl,” she was invited into White neighbourhood homes and paid to play piano. She was given respect. In this specific way, her creative talent, early in life, lessened the trauma of being Black with the Whites in Pittsburgh who were aware of her growing fame. This newfound respect did not completely eradicate the impact of racial prejudice in her life, because outside of this growing circle of admiring Whites, was the bigger reality of racist Whites who saw her as just another “nigger”.

In her autobiography, Williams shared more incidents of racism as she grew up, from a child of 12 to a young adult of 21, while performing at various jazz venues across the U.S. She wrote about a White man from Mississippi who paid the cook to kidnap her at 19 from the club and take her to his plantation, forcing her to stay at home until the threat passed. She wrote about another incident on a streetcar, where tired from her jazz schedule, she fell asleep and didn’t move to the back of the bus when the front filled up. She was threatened with arrest by the conductor who asked if she “…was one of those Northern niggers…”

A horrific example of racism, was once while being driven to a club, the White driver saw an elderly man on a bridge and yelled, “There’s a nigger, run over him, and he’s too old to live

---

6Book One Folder Two, MLW archives, Jazz Institute.
anyway!”  

Williams remembered that she was with too many White people in the car, and too far out in the woods, so she “kept quiet, counted to ten very fast, and thought of a beautiful composition.” She maintained that writing a composition in her head kept her alive and sane in this racially charged atmosphere.

Outside of her personal life, she simultaneously experienced racism in her professional life too. She stated categorically that “White men in the music industry stole, misappropriated copyrights, and swindled Black artists…” Calling them “ofays,” a derogatory term for Whites, Williams reflected “ofays” make me nervous, I could not stay around them or work with them.”

This comment is from the same woman who contradicts this statement by working with White jazz musicians such as Jack Teagarden and Benny Goodman, along with having numerous White lovers, both in the U.S. and abroad. Williams knew White women who she termed her friends as well. When she wrote “friends” to reference White men in her autobiography, it was her personal code that meant they were her intimate lovers, like the sculptor and illustrator for her album, David Stone Martin. Martin’s favourite word for her was “pussycat.”

In discussing race in America, Williams continued her odd ideas about Africa and slavery, we were sold into slavery by our African chiefs…perhaps if all Black Americans went to Africa, we’d be treated worse. We would perhaps be rejected by the native Africans and (who knows) even put us in concentration camps.

This extreme extrapolation of Africa and the enslavement of Africans indicated Williams’ internalized negative stereotypes. Despite her thinking that she knew all about jazz, she did not know that jazz was already on the African continent, in South Africa, brought there by Black men serving on a Confederate warship in 1862, who entertained White sailors. These early jazz musicians were later followed by McAdoo’s Minstrels and an all-White New Orleans Band.

For Mary Lou Williams, everything important in life, hinged on music and what she wanted from her race was for every Black person to know and love jazz. “Our people don’t know anything about their own music.” Her convoluted way of exhibiting her Black pride was to be...

---

7 Dahl, Ibid, 60.
8 Dahl, Ibid, 60.
9 Dahl, Ibid, 10.
11 Book 2 MLW archives, Jazz Institute, Rutgers University.
the best jazz musician that she could be, yet she refused to publicly address the issue of racism in jazz or in the U.S., as her contemporary, pianist Hazel Scott consistently did.

Hazel Scott was also a bandleader, composer, arranger and pianist like Williams, but who used her art as a political tool in the struggle against racial inequality.¹⁵ Both Mary Lou Williams and Hazel Scott performed in the All Star Victory Show to Re-Elect rising African American military officer Benjamin Davis Jr. to City Council (Sunday, October 28, 1943) at the Golden Gate Ballroom in Harlem. Williams was a part of an impressive roster of great Black artists. This political rally was a unique undertaking for Williams, although a common occurrence for Scott. Scott, by 1943, had already appeared in the Benefit for the American Committee for Chinese War Orphans in 1940, The Amsterdam News Midnight concert at the Apollo on behalf of the Harlem Welfare Centre, the 1941 Benefit for the Medical Fund for Local 802 of New York and the 1942 Salute to Negro Troops at the Cosmopolitan Opera House. These were only a few of the causes she supported outside of being the headliner at Café Society Club.¹⁶

Hazel Scott was described by jazz vocalist Lena Horne as “Hazel is a beautiful West Indian and like most people from those islands she has the fiercest sort of racial pride.”¹⁷ Scott’s racial socialization may have had much to do with her perception of racism. She was four when she came to the U.S. with her two formally educated parents and her middle-class background. Scott’s childhood was very different from Williams. Scott grew up affirmed in her talent by her parents and cushioned by money, education and enough resources.

Scott and Williams were two contemporary, formidable black women pianists who had similar career trajectories, but who utilized their talents in different ways in support of racial equality. One historian’s assessment is that Scott’s decision to promote racial pride in the roles she took in Hollywood, her public stance on racism and suing and winning racial discrimination lawsuits, cost her an outstanding career and halted her ascent as a superstar.¹⁸ Promoting jazz, and focusing on her musicality through performance, arranging and composing, to the exclusion of all else, may have been one of the reasons for Williams’ career lasting 60 years.

Mary Lou Williams began her career, as a precocious, talented little girl, who moved quickly to the top of her profession as an extraordinary pianist. Just a few of the titles she earned were “The Little Piano Girl from East Liberty,” “The Lady Who Swings the Band,” The Boogie

---

¹⁷ Hairston, 77.
Woogie Queen,” “The First Lady of Jazz,” and the “Queen of Jazz.” 19 Williams’ opinion of herself was not that she was the best “woman” jazz pianist or that she competed with other women jazz pianists like Hazel Scott or Dorothy Donegan, but that she was the best jazz pianist period, as evidenced by her statement, “I’ve always been a leader of men.” 20 Williams’ statement that she was a leader of men, in her estimation moved her to the top of the jazz world.

Buzzin’ Harris’ *Hits n Bits*, in her first professional job as a teenager, continued her praise about the young Williams on the tough vaudeville circuit,

> I’d played with women piano players and they’d be just tinkling…I’m not lying…and musicians were kind of ruffians-drinking and hanging out and staying out all night…(society) looked down on us. There was no thought of a girl like Mary ever playing with a band.” 21

Yet Mary Lou Williams did play with this band and lead other male bands for decades. When Williams began with another act, *Seymour and Jeanette*, she was asked to dress “like a man” which was the usual practice for women musicians. Her husband John refused that request, believing that the “oddity” of a woman pianist would bring crowds. He was right. William was a draw as a pianist who wore dresses and shoes as expensive as her vacillating finances would allow. 22

As her career progressed, she bore the flip side of gender bias when white jazz critics categorized, and too often described her based on her physical looks, rather than focusing their writings on her playing.

Susan McClary’s work in musicology with feminist music criticism, points towards ways in which musical narratives, techniques, rhythms, gestures, and codes may reflect, produce, or sustain embodied gendered meanings. McClary maintains that music is a space in which ideas about gender are negotiated, sustained, contained and contested. 23 Published interviews by White critics described Williams in her 20’s as “A kitten on keys, sinewy young Negro woman playing the solid, unpretentious, flesh and bone kind of jazz piano…” 24 “Kitten” conjurers up an animal and a pet image. “Sinewy” is not a description of her musicality, but rather describes the physicality of a muscular, brawny person. According to her niece, Williams was small and tiny. 25

19 Dahl, Ibid.
20 Book 2, MLW Archives, Institute of Jazz, Rutgers University.
22 Dahl, Ibid, 49.
Williams was described sexually in the same way that pianist Hazel Scott was described, not by her musicality, but by her physical looks. Similar to Williams, Scott was a bandleader, composer, and arranger, who was beautiful. “Although she had serious keyboard chops that spanned genres and the ability to sing in multiple languages, she was remembered by White critics as an overly flashy entertainer who, by swinging the classics, did not play “real” (authentic) jazz.”

Racism, sexism and gender bias was evident in these depictions. The real Mary Lou Williams and the real Hazel Scott were neither seen accurately in describing their physical looks nor in defining the jazz musicians that they were. No male musicians, in any published interview, were ever described by their physical body parts.

Over the decades, Mary Lou Williams, in interviews, was asked the familiar question of what did it mean to be a woman in jazz and her answer was always the same with slight variations. In a 1957 article, Marian McPartland, asked her again, “How does it feel to be a woman in a man’s world?” Williams gave her the same answer she had consistently given,

You’ve got to play, that’s all. They don’t think of you as a woman if you can really play. I think some girls have an inferiority complex about it, and this may hold them back, but they shouldn’t feel that way. If they have talent, the men will be glad to help them along. Working with men, you get to think like a man when you play. You automatically become strong, though this doesn’t mean you’re not feminine.

There are many fallacies in her statement. It wasn’t enough that Williams played piano like other men pianists, she had to be better than men. An inferiority complex is evident from the men who demanded more of women, even talented women like Williams, than they did of their own playing or other men’s musicality. The idea that a woman had to think like a man, when actually she is thinking like the woman she is, indicated that Williams didn’t realize that she was also perpetuating gender bias.

In attempting to express the hierarchy of male domination, Williams should have realized that men were dominating women, but her solution was to try and think like a man and to outplay men. It was not automatic that a woman’s talent created equality or that men would “be glad to

26 Hairston, Ibid, 65.
28 McPartland, Ibid.
help them along.” Even Williams’ prodigious talent had limited success in pushing aside patriarchy to make room for her in the jazz arena.

A year later in 1958, jazz critic Barry Ulanov asked, basically, the same questions again in an article, “Women in Jazz: Do They Belong?” He further clarified the question by asking specifically about women instrumentalists without realizing that the very question itself was sexist. He cited statistics that more than two-thirds of all pianists were men, and wondered if women are not seen as “oddities” strictly on the basis of merit when they played piano and other instruments as jazz artists. He continued by wrongly assessing Williams as a women’s rights advocate just because she was a talented woman,

Mary Lou has for years been a champion of women’s rights in jazz.
She hasn’t picketed clubs or record companies for being unfair to her sex.
She hasn’t carried banners in parades or sent indignant letters to the papers,
jazz or any other kind protesting the treatment accorded jazzwoman…
For all the progress made in jazz in the last couple of decades, women have not yet won a fair hearing, except as singers or pianists with male assistants and colleagues. They are still more looked at than listened too.

Williams was a reluctant pioneer who opened up the way for women pianists that followed her, and she did it grudgingly. Ulanov considered himself to be a Mary Lou Williams fan and believed that she was supportive to women by recording with “girls” of notable jazz skill, like bass player June Rotenberg, drummers Bridget O’Flynn and Rose Gottesman, guitarist Mary Osborne and vibist Margie Hyams. He commented that Williams played in clubs with all-girl outfits, but added the caveat, “not, it must be said, with the success her other groups have had, but with sufficient musical accomplishment to remove from the whole undertaking any suggestions of the freakish or capricious.”

Ulanov gave what is referred to, in the South, as a “backhanded compliment,” in that, what seemed like a compliment was really an insult. He referred to the women jazz artists as girls, when no Black man would have been referred to as a boy. He complimented Mary Lou as a great jazz pianist who helped other women in jazz by simply playing her instrument with those who had less skill. This sacrificial act alone, according to Ulanov proved that women do belong

30 Barry Ulanov, Ibid, 17.
31 Ulanov, Ibid, 17.
in jazz. Ulanov considered himself a supporter of jazz women, yet his gender bias is readily apparent. Decades later, speaking at Williams’ funeral, he still didn’t understand the patriarchal oppression of jazz, when he stated “…a basic truth about jazz that it is a driven, competitive music…that made it difficult for a woman to participates in as equals.”

What Ulanov viewed as competitiveness was an oppressive patriarchal system in jazz that worked to keep women out. Monica Hairston, an ethnomusicologist, wrote in her dissertation that “lumping the work of artists like Billie Holiday, Mary Lou Williams, Lena Horne, and Hazel Scott into taxonomies and hierarchies that were developed in many cases to highlight jazz great men, obscures women’s genius…”

Mary Lou Williams was the featured performer at the First Women’s Jazz Festival in Kansas City in 1978, a city that she had always loved, and in a newspaper interview at age 68, she declared

“As for being a woman, I never thought much about that one way or the other. All I’ve ever thought about is music. I’m very feminine, but I think like a man. I’ve been working around them all my life. I can deal better with men than women.”

Williams could not have been more honest about her stance. Over the six decades of her career, she declared that she never thought about being a woman and that women were more difficult than men. Feminists in the city were enraged at her but didn’t see their own unconscious bias either. This festival focused on women, and was organized by women, yet the master of ceremonies was former record producer Leonard Feather, considered a foremost jazz critic and historian. According to the organizers, Feather was chosen because he was one of the first people to get behind female jazz musicians when, in the 1940s he produced record albums featuring all-female groups. It was Feather who hired Mary Lou Williams to be in his “all-girl band”. Feather disliked Williams’ remarks in the interview and disparaged what he called her “all-but-anti-feminist posture,” while he went on in the same interview to praise Marian McPartland, a white British pianist.

Race and gender intersected in Feather’s disparaging comments about Williams. Feather didn’t see anything wrong in praising McPartland, who was White like him. He did not recall the true circumstances when he recorded Williams in the 1940’s. She played with his all-girl band, but

---

33 Hairston, Ibid, 208.
34 Dahl, Ibid 341.
railed against his insistence that there be only women performers. Williams believed she was being used for his gimmick and ultimately that he was not serious about music. She did not want to pick “sidemen” to accompany her based on their gender, instead of picking them for their talent. When one of the women musicians didn’t show up at the studio, Feather had Mary Lou substitute male bassist Billy Taylor who masqueraded on the record notes as “Bea Taylor.”36 Nothing was ever said about Feather’s exploitation of women jazzers in order to make money. Feather wanted to keep working with her, but Williams refused. She had this to say about the women musicians chosen for the recording, “It was the cattiest session I’d ever encountered; the girls talked more music than they played.”37 I wanted to see if they can think like a male.38 She never recorded with Feather or this all-girl-band after playing a second session. Feather persuaded Williams to record one more time and according to her, she gave the women one additional chance to play well, but they did not.

After reading Feather’s well-publicized criticism, Williams wrote him to ask if his mean-spirited comments were because she requested due payment for her compositions, in the 40’s39 She was not happy with the bad press, though once again she was revealing the confusion in her mind on the matter of women in jazz and the issue of gender. Her comments lent support to the idea that all the other women musicians, with few exceptions, really were inferior to men. Another complicating factor is that although the members of the all-girl-band were women, they were certainly not Black women. Why was Mary Lou Williams the only Black woman invited to play in the all-girl band?

Black jazz musician Howard McGhee, a trumpeter from the Bebop generation, had a familiar biased male perspective about women musicians which included Williams. “When a woman is on the scene, it’s different. Even with the grandmother of all the lady musicians, jazz pianist Mary Lou Williams, you really have to be extra respectful. She expects it. So if you hire women, it’s just going to mean hassles,”40 His remarks are incredibly sexist in that he would rather miss her extraordinary playing than deal with his preconceived notions of whether he would be able to ‘curse’ around her. Williams was the “Queen of Bebop” and excelled at playing this style of music. He was not the only biased jazzman. Miles Davis, a jazz trumpeter maestro, told Mary Lou years later with personal regret, “I should have asked you to be in my band.”41

41 Dahl, Ibid 255.
Mary Lou Williams was highly competitive on the piano. In her early career, as a teenager, she was shy and retiring. Once she left the stage, she would not mingle with folks after her performance. On stage, she was fierce, playing her piano. African American pianist Billy Taylor recalled “She was very competitive musically, but she was never mean, and off the bandstand, she was quite shy.” One of the features of jazz is that jazz musicians like to get together in “jam” sessions after club dates, bring their instruments and play their personal style of music. Through a process called “chopping,” they tried to outplay each other and see who would reign supreme. Williams loved these jams and the pianist, Count Basie, revealed that when Mary Lou was on the piano, he would stay out of her musical territory because she was so good. “Anytime she was in the neighbourhood, I used to find myself another little territory, because Mary Lou was tearing everybody up.” Did this mean that the renowned Count Basie didn’t want a woman outplaying him, since he certainly competed in jam sessions with men? Her professional relationship with men was only slightly less difficult than her personal relationships. She never acknowledged that there was conflict with male jazz musicians because of her gender. “No one ever rejected me or my music.” she insisted. She and her music were both rejected until the sheer genius of her talent won most over, not all critics and players, but most. Williams grew up getting love, advice and protection from her stepfather, and so her ex-husband, John Williams, took on that same paternalistic role. He recalled, “She was the type of person who needed fatherly guidance.” He also said in an interview, “I was a take charge person…Mary really needed to have a male to take care of her, look out for her…” She was a young fourteen when I met her and only sixteen when they married. Williams’ response to her also young husband of nineteen was, “I feared John more than I loved him…” Her husband would take her around other men musicians to exhibit her talent. If she didn’t want to go, he would tell her, “If you don’t play, you are going to get a beating.” and she hated the one dollar a day budget they put her on, since as the man, he must manage all of her money. Williams was dominated by men in all of her personal relationships but traded their domination for their protection and assistance in furthering her career. The effort to get her royalties from records and her compositions, to earn decent money for bookings and expand her opportunities forced Mary Lou, as she grew older, to become more
assertive with men. Later in life, she demanded what was her due from club owners, record producers, booking agents and the like. By the time she was in her 40s, touring in England, English jazz singer Annie Ross said as she watched Williams at business, “Women had to have a sense of aggressiveness to survive, it was absolutely necessary and Mary had that.”

Unfortunately, as jazz artists, women only barely survived economically and professionally.

Her relationship with her two White male managers was even worse. The first, Joe Glaser, had the role of “Big Daddy” in her life and he “stole from all the Black acts he had.” Glaser was a crook in the truest since of the word, but it was tacitly agreed and factually true that Black jazz musicians had to have a White man working for them, in order to play venues and to earn any significant amounts of money.

Father Peter O’Brien, a Catholic priest, became Williams’ last manager. Their connection was Catholicism and now race, gender and religion became intertwined in a volatile relationship that only ended when she died. “The push-and-pull of their relationship … as manager and artist was set…” While Williams still had a White man to advocate for her and her career, this particular White man twisted the roles when she became artist-in-residence at Duke University. Father O’Brien demanded that Williams take him with her and pay him to help with her classes. In a letter to O’Brien in 1970, she wrote,

Peter, I think you have a grudge somewhere because you’re telling lies. You see things in a very mixed-up way…When you accuse me of stealing and abusing kindness, I began thinking—what have I done wrong? I tried to teach you the business…I have taught you and given you ideas to go on your own to make millions because you’re White…Man, I’m a creative artist. The mind has to be clear at all times….You have done quite a few bad things to me and acted if you knew it all.

From his perspective, O’Brien felt that he had revived Williams’ career after she converted to his religion and subsequently stopped playing jazz for three years. He revealed their two diametrically opposed perceptions of the value of his role in her career. After one of her performances, he telephoned her and “I cussed her up and down. I told her she put me through

---

50 Dahl, Ibid 104-105.
51 Dahl, Ibid, 305.
52 Dahl, Ibid 211.
Williams believed that because O’Brien was a Jesuit priest and that was the highest form of religion, she should forgive his failings. Others remarked on the ugly scenes caused by his behaviour and his cursing. O’Brien felt he needed more money from her for his commission and that he should be hired as staff too while she was teaching at Duke University. He convinced her to give him a 20% commission on her earnings and to get the President to give him housing and a salary. Williams made O’Brien the executor of her Mary Lou Williams Foundation when she died, a role he kept until his death in 2015.

Against the backdrop of her professional life, the Women’s Movement was gaining momentum in the 1970’s. Mary Lou Williams experienced about a decade of it before she died in 1981. She is not on record for a public response to feminism, yet her comments about women in the jazz world led to the supposition that she was not a supporter of this movement either. Her lived response to gender bias was to overcome it in her personal and professional life by performing and thinking like a man, a process inherently impossible to do. Her position gives further evidence of patriarchal victimization and confusion about healthy relationships between women and men.

Williams’ biographer, Tammy Kernodle, agrees with this assessment of her lack of involvement with the Women’s Movement. “At times, Mary was pushed into the centre of discussion regarding women’s place in jazz and criticized heavily for her claims that she had not experienced prejudice or discrimination because of her gender.” Kernodle maintains that “Mary had no intention of being an activist or spokesperson for what could safely be termed feminist causes.” Bell Hooks notes that White woman, in turn, were not promoting Black women’s rights either. She states about White women that “…many of these individuals move from civil rights into women’s liberation and spearhead a feminist movement…it did not mean that they were divested of white supremacy notions that they were superior to Black females.” Hooks analysis means that Williams had the option to be oppressed by White men or be oppressed by White women.

Mary Lou Williams’ personal relationships with men were as difficult as her professional relationship with men. As a young woman, she wrote in her autobiography about growing up

---

55 Dahl, Ibid.
56 Kernodle, Ibid, 2, 82.
57 Hooks, Ibid, 55-56.
sexually while traveling the roads on jazz gigs. She described vaudeville as an “animal life” 58 and she was on that circuit for five years. Her autobiography and later her diary are the places where she wrote her true, secret thoughts about what was happening to her sexually. In the 1930s, when she was twenty, she had two searing experiences back-to-back, with a man who was “abnormal sexually” and who caused trauma to her uterus and the next night on a train to Chicago to record an album, she was raped by the conductor.59 She never told her husband about these incidents.

She exercised sexual freedom in later relationships, more than most women of her generation. In her handwritten notes, Mary Lou Williams wrote a fascinating line about her liaisons with men, “I did the picking and I never had more than one boyfriend at a time.”60 All of these men, she chose as boyfriends could assist her in the pursuit of her art and each brought something Williams wanted professionally. They were brilliant musicians, capable agents or accomplished men in their vocations. She, in turn, assisted their careers by sharing her genius in jazz. The majority were musicians, but there was also a sculptor and a Booking Agent, and other men connected to art in some capacity.61

Mary Lou Williams appeared to define womanhood with an emphasis on her sexual self. She never gave any indication in her autobiography that she felt anything was exceptional about having all these numerous sexual partners she had over the years. These were men who were single, married and sometimes engaged. Her position on the matter was, “being around guys all my life, I knew they always felt they still loved their wives, even if they cheated once in a while.”62

Along with these lovers came a great deal of domestic abuse and sexual violence. Williams’ childhood was fraught with violence and it continued into her adulthood. She excused the men who said they loved her, but also beat her, gave her black eyes, broke her nose, tore up her apartment and worse. Her ex-husband, John Williams commented years later, “Other guys treated her like so many men treat women. Fight ‘em…cuss ‘em and run them off. She hadn’t been used to that…”63 Her last known lover was in Paris, France who said “before she got religion, she was not a nun at all, I can tell you. But after that, the pleasures of the flesh fell

59 Dahl, Ibid, 75-76.
60 Dahl, Ibid, 220.
61 Dahl, Ibid.
63 Kernodle, Ibid.
away.”64 She was forty-four and her last lover was thirty. When Mary Lou Williams returned to the U.S. from Paris she decided, “I was still looking for peace of mind, and I was determined to give up music, night life, and all else that was sinful in the eyes of God. After that, I wouldn’t play anymore.”65

Bell Hooks’ *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre* asserts that sexism – which mostly affects women – is a form of oppression, perpetrated by institutional and social structures, by “individuals who dominate, exploit, or oppress; and by the victims themselves who are socialized to behave in ways that make them act in complicity with the status quo.”66 This analysis speaks to the life of Mary Lou Williams who only saw her talents in masculine terms and her value in relation to, or in competition with men in jazz. Only with male references did Williams believe she was successful in the male-oriented jazz world.

In her work on intersectionality, Hooks looks at how race, gender and class combines in the lives of black women. Mary Lou Williams never gave an indication that she realized the connection between race, gender and class, despite being born black, female and poor, and that she represented the bottom of the racial, sexual and working populations in the United States. Poor all of her life, Mary Lou Williams struggled financially except for four years at the end of her life when she was an artist-in-residence and teacher at Duke University in North Carolina. For the first time in North Carolina, she owned a home, had health insurance and earned enough money to purchase what she needed, pay her bills and still help others.67 This was very different from her childhood when Williams went barefooted until she went to school because her mother couldn’t afford to buy her shoes. She constantly gave the same example of her poverty by reciting an incident in grade school. She sneaked a pair of her mother’s shoes and wore them to school. Her mother had small feet and Mary Lou’s feet were much bigger. The children teased her because she had bent the back of the shoes down to turn them into slides. She had to fix them before she returned them, so her mother wouldn’t know she had taken her shoes.68

Williams loved stylish shoes for the rest of her life, and that was one of the biggest arguments with her first husband, John Williams. He controlled Williams’ money and felt that since people couldn’t see her shoes as she played the piano, she didn’t need beautiful shoes. Not having gorgeous shoes was a symbol to Mary Lou of her poverty as a child. As a hard-working musician, she was determined to wear the kind of shoes that she wanted. It is telling that she never shared that childhood story with her husband, who was an only child and who came from

---

a middle-class background. Was she ashamed of coming from a poor, lower class family? Did her shame indicate that she didn’t understand that the systematic poverty of African Americans was bound to race and gender in the U.S.?

In addition to her parents holding low paying menial jobs, Mary Lou’s aunts from the Riser side were domestic servants to the millionaire Andrew Mellon family. One can only wonder how the aunts felt when their little great niece Mary began to play at afternoon teas for the Mellons and the Olivers, not just two of the wealthiest families in Pittsburgh, but in the nation. In her autobiography, she recalled the story that the Mellons gave her, the “Little Piano” girl a huge check for a performance.

Williams told the story that her parents stayed up all night looking and holding onto the check until the bank opened because they had never seen that much money at one time. While her biographies report the check as $100 dollars, it would have been almost more than her great aunts earned as maids in a year, Williams said the check was for $150, not $100 as often reported. What it indicated was that Mary Lou Williams’ talent opened an opportunity to socialize with aristocrats, royalty, wealthy billionaires, and millionaires, yet as a jazz artist, she was considered, by society in general, and middle-class blacks in particular, as the lowest of entertainers.

Though a popular jazz artist, Williams’ music and the rights to her music were often stolen, which meant she seldom received royalties from most of her compositions. She fought for the publishing royalties but rarely won. It was always others who were making money off her talent, no matter how hard and brilliantly she worked. She recalled “I did 20 things for Decca Records. They were all hits and people stole like mad.”

Eventually she owed the Internal Revenue Department for back taxes and was constantly wrestling with managers, record producers and promoters for decent wages. Not understanding class structures inherent in capitalism, she thought that “All my life I’ve thought my greatest block to big success was my weakness in stopping along the way to help an unfortunate…” Williams actually thought she was mired in poverty because she helped others in whatever ways that she could. She did not realize that an economically compressed life due to gender, race, and class was normal for African Americans in her lifetime since unfair legal, political, economic systems operated in capitalist America are to the detriment of the majority of African Americans.

---

72 Dahl, Ibid, 256.  
In *Women, Race and Class*, Angela Davis discussed the peculiar situation of the black woman starting in slavery, where “the oppression of women was identical to the oppression with men, but women suffered in different ways as well, for they were victims of sexual abuse and other barbarous treatment that could only be inflicted on women.”\(^{74}\) Mary Lou Williams’ great-grandparents and grandparents were slaves and she heard the stories of their cruel treatment by listening as a child when she was supposed to be sleeping or out of the room. Although later in her adult life, she would vehemently deny any connections with Africa, she felt deeply impacted by their stories of slavery. She talked about an incident at her grammar school.

“One day I went to school and grabbed a long ruler and hit my teacher…I said ‘You White people made slaves out of us.’ She (the teacher) was very upset…from that day on, she brought me presents every day—little things I liked…I use to return home with a lot of money tied up in my handkerchief.”\(^{75}\)

That was a brave act for a child in the 1920’s, but it seemed as if Williams never moved beyond the emotionalism to understand the structures that were in place to keep economic slavery in place and keep her family in poverty despite their hard and long work days. She did not appear to grasp although she was an artist, she did not control the product of her talent, which was why she was always waiting for a record deal, royalty payments or White men to provide opportunities to showcase her music. African American leaders Anna Julia Cooper and Mary Church Terrell understood multiple jeopardy and how it uniquely applied to Black women in the U.S. and wrote about it fifty years before Williams was born.\(^{76}\) Cooper and Terrell graduated from Oberlin College and became lifelong scholars, colleagues and women advocates. Williams was a high school drop out that, through her talent, spent her last years of life teaching at the university. Signing on at Duke University, she said “Ha----look at me! A high school dropout. Now I’m a college professor.”\(^{77}\)

**Conclusion**

Mary Lou Williams acutely felt the harmful effects of the intersection and multiple jeopardies

---

\(^{74}\) Davis, Ibid.

\(^{75}\) Dahl, Ibid, 31.


\(^{77}\) Dahl, Ibid, 33.
of race, gender, and class, yet she did not have a framework for understanding the reasons behind these biases or for working to dismantle them in her life. Williams had one constant presence in her life and that was jazz music. Due to the high regard she had for jazz, she coupled that with an insistence on artistic freedom despite the deleterious manipulations of race, gender and class on her career. A friend, Gray Weingarten, observed that Williams “…was determined to do what she wanted to do—which was bad for her career.”

Williams lifted up high the shield of music to hide her artistry behind, only this shield was dented by heavy blows from race, and gender. Her last manager, Father Peter O’Brien summed up Williams’ use of creative resilience to battle racism, gender bias and economic deprivation, even when she wouldn’t admit she was in a war against them, “Here was a really intelligent person, a creative artist who did not produce on demand, but from inside herself. But this was not allowed in Black women in that period.” For Mary Lou Williams the issues of identity in race and gender were summed up in simplistic sentiment, “I’ve worked all my life on my own merits.” The constructs of multiple jeopardy and intersectionality in the context of Black Feminist ideology helps to explain the limitations of Williams’ understanding about the reality of race and gender in her life as a Black woman musician in the U.S.A. Her limitations do not diminish her brilliance as an artist. Williams’ legacy as a jazz musician, arranger and composer is legendary. She did utilize her musical creativity as a shield against racism and patriarchy, although with limited success. In her entire life, she seemed unable to view herself as who she really was - one integrated being who is a Black, a woman, and a jazz genius.

References


78 Dahl, Ibid. 256.
79 Dahl, Ibid. 141.
80 Dahl, Ibid. 369.
Kernodle, Tammy. Interview with John Williams, 1990.
Williams, Mary Lou. Institute of Jazz, Rutgers University.
THE IMPLICATIONS OF RELIGION AND CULTURE ON GENDER EQUALITY: OBSERVATIONS FROM THE 2014 ELECTIONS IN MALAWI

ANTHONY M. GUNDE

Abstract

The Fifth United Nations Sustainable Development Goal highlights the importance of promoting gender equality and empowering women as the avenue of reducing global poverty and human deprivation. This article discusses ways in which patriarchal discourses embedded in religion and culture in many African societies may be manipulated by politicians to exacerbate gender disparities in power relations. The analysis is drawn from the 2014 Malawi elections in which a major opposition party used a campaign slogan peppered with sexist religious and cultural connotations to ridicule and vote out of office southern Africa’s first ever female President – Joyce Banda of Malawi and her People Party (PP). In May 2014, Malawi held national elections and the main contestants were the then incumbent President Joyce Banda representing the PP, Peter Matharika of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), Lazarus Chakwera of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and Atupele Muluzi of the United Democratic Front (UDF). Matharika and the DPP won the elections to wrestle away the presidency from Joyce Banda and her People’s Party. The eventual winning party (the DPP) created a campaign slogan – Sesa Joyce Sesa¹ – to attack the femininity of then President Joyce Banda. Eventually, picked up by the social media, the slogan appeared to resonate with the religious and cultural identity of the electorate. It is against this backdrop that this article analyses the DPP campaign mantra and illuminates the implications of deeply entrenched religious societies on women empowerment, specifically in political leadership roles. The article suggests that for Africa to make strides with regard to the fifth Sustainable Development Goal, stakeholders ought to engage and rethink over retrogressive and manipulative beliefs that constrain women’s roles in the political arena.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, religion, gender, culture, women empowerment

¹ In Malawi’s dominant Chichewa language it means “Sweep Joyce [Banda] away”
**Introduction**

In September 2015, world leaders gathered at the United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York to adopt an agenda aimed at transforming the world by 2030 through 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015:1). These were built on what had earlier been known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted in 2000 when the UN General Assembly set up eight targets which were meant to be achieved by 2015 but were not fully achieved by the deadline (Sexsmith & McMichael, 2015:581). The MDGs stemmed from agreements made at major UN conferences in the 1990s and were framed as a compact between the global North and the global South and this was reaffirmed at an international conference on financing development held in Monterrey, Mexico in 2002 (Haines & Cassels, 2004:394). According to the UN Development Group (UNDG, 2012:13), consultations involving UN technical experts, governments, civil society groups, among other multiple stakeholders, commenced in 2012 to stimulate an inclusive debate that has been coined as a 'Post-2015 Development Agenda: What Future do you want?' The consultations led to the reformulation of the MDGs to new global 17 SDGs (UN, 2015:1).

Paramount to this article is the fifth of the 17 SDGs which notes that to transform the world by 2030, UN member states should make efforts to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” (UN, 2015:18). In engaging with this issue, the United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) underlines that advancing the rights of women and children advances humanity (UNICEF, 2015). Garcia-Moreno, et al (2005:1282) contend that the fifth Sustainable Development Goal is of great importance because recognising equal rights and opportunities for women and men is critical for social and economic progress.

Measuring women empowerment encompasses multifaceted areas. For Moghadam and Senftova (2005:389), critical areas of concern include women’s poverty, educational attainment, reproductive health and rights, employment and economic resources, political participation, violence against women, armed conflict, women and the media. Similarly, Sachs (2005:20) points out that promoting women’s “access to economic and political opportunities” is among major strategies aimed at mitigating global poverty. Sachs further notes that SDGs provide a powerful opportunity to help give voice to the hopes and aspirations of the world’s poorest and “voiceless.”
people. Simwaka, et al (2005:708) are of the view that in Africa, there is an urgent need to take a holistic approach to achieving gender equality and women empowerment including “increasing women’s participation in political bodies”.

Besides being a member of the UN Sustainable Development Goals project, Malawi is a signatory to the 2008 Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development that calls for gender parity in all areas of decision making by 2015 (Mdlongwa, 2009:6). The country is also part of the Economic Commission for Africa’s Gender Development Index, launched in 2009 to measure gender disparities and women empowerment (Machinjili, 2012:v). In this regard, presidential, parliamentary and local government elections provide a window of opportunity to evaluate the progress Malawi has made towards gender equality and women empowerment.

On May 20, 2014, Malawi went to the polls to elect the country’s fifth president after twenty years of democracy in which for the first time, one major contestant was a woman – President Joyce Banda. Principal candidates in the elections were: President Banda representing the People’s Party (PP), Lazarus Chakwera of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), Peter Mutharika of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and Atupele Muluzi of the United Democratic Front (UDF). The elections were won by Mutharika of the DPP with 36 per cent of the votes, Chakwera of the MCP amassed 27 per cent votes while the then incumbent President Banda of the PP came a distant third with 20 per cent of the votes; the remaining votes were split between the UDF and other smaller parties (National Democratic Institute, 2014).

Serving the shortest presidency in Malawi’s history, President Joyce Banda ascended to power in April, 2012 by the virtue of being Malawi’s Vice-President, according to Malawi’s constitution, following the sudden death of President Bingu wa Mutharika. This development made her Africa’s second ever female President after Liberia’s Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who was elected into office in 2005. The political campaigns ahead of the 2014 elections provided multiple platforms for candidates to showcase to the electorate their abilities to foster Malawi’s democratic governance since abandoning a 30 year-one party repressive rule for plural politics in 1994. But it was an organised sexist religious analogy created by the eventual winners – the DPP under the leadership
of Mutharika – that went viral in social media to resonate with the cultural identity of the majority of the Malawians and their religion and to a great extent, contributed to the defeat of the caretaker President Banda and the PP.

It is against this backdrop that this article analyses Malawi’s 2014 elections through the lens of the DPP’s *Sesa Joyce Sesa* campaign mantra, to assess the implications of religion and deeply embedded cultural beliefs on the third Millennium Development Goal. The article observes that issues of religion and cultural beliefs, particularly among the semi-literate and even more so illiterate communities of African societies like Malawi, are of great challenge with respect to the enhancement of gender equality and women empowerment encased in the third MDG. It further suggests that it is incumbent upon stakeholders, including governments, the civil society, religious leaders and the media to make concerted efforts aimed at addressing gender issues literacy within the context of religion and longstanding cultural beliefs.

This article is in five sections. The first section is a brief contextual look at the DPP’s *Sesa Joyce Sesa* campaign slogan. The second section is a historical overview of the link between religion, culture and Malawi politics. The third segment is a review of literature on religion, gender and identity. The fourth section is an analysis on the political campaign slogan under discussion in this article and the fifth section concludes the discussion with policy recommendations.

**Sesa Joyce Sesa: The Campaign Slogan of the Dpp in the Malawi 2014 Elections**

*Sesa Joyce Sesa* (Sweep away Joyce), first came into the public domain in November, 2013 when the then DPP Presidential aspirant, Mutharika addressed a political gathering in Thyolo district, southern Malawi. In a prelude to Mutharika’s speech, George Saonda, a key member of the DPP, delivered a speech that contained rhetorical questions to the audience which were peppered with misogynistic religious and cultural images about the then President Banda’s credibility to lead a country because she was a woman. In response, the audience, which included hundreds of women, joined the orator – Saonda – by heckling Banda’s name.
Following the political rally, Saonda uploaded a video recording of the gathering on You Tube with a background of jazz-rhythmic sounds and the thematic slogan instantly went viral in the social media, instantly generating 3,781 views (Saonda, 2013). *Sesa Joyce Sesa* had a nationwide impact preceding the elections, nearly turning into a household song across the country. The campaign mantra was then picked up by two of Malawi’s significant online news media – *Nyasatimes* and *Malawivoice* – which further provided multiple platforms such as Twitter and Facebook to share the *Sesa Joyce Sesa* video (*Nyasatimes*, 2013; *Malawivoice*, 2014). The following is an excerpt from the *Sesa Joyce Sesa* You Tube video clip².

**Saonda:** *Kodi kumpingo wa a katolika, wansembe akachoka, munaona asisteri akudyetsa mgonero?* (In the Roman Catholic Church, in the absence of a priest, does the nun bless the Holy Communion for congregants?)

**Audience:** *Ayiii! (Noooh!)*

**Saonda chorus:** *Sesa Joyce Sesa* (Sweep Joyce away!)

**Audience chorus:** Sesaaaah! “Sweep her away!!!”

**Saonda:** *Nanga ku Chisilamu, ku mzikiti Shehe akachoka, munaona mzimayi akupita kutsogolo?* (For Moslems, when the Sheikh/Imam is away at the Mosque, do you ever see women conduct the prayers?).

**Audience:** *Ayiii! (Noooh!).*

**Saonda chorus:** *Sesa Joyce Sesa!* (Sweep Joyce away!).

**Audience chorus:** Sesaaah! (Sweep her away!).

²The video clip is attached to this article but is also available online as cited above.

Saonda then caps the rhetoric with a local proverb to argue that: *Fisi akalowa mnyumba, mwini ake akamwalira, sindiye kuti mkaziyo ndi wache* (A man hired to sleep with a widow in order to cleanse off evil spirits following the death of her husband is not necessarily expected to take over the household).

As noted above, the slogan contained rhetorical jibes drawn from the Bible and the Qur’an; in other words, Christianity and Islam, which were suggestive to the notion that women are not expected to lead but to be subservient to men. This thus leads to the discussion on the relationship between religion, politics and gender in Malawi.
Religion, Politics and Gender in Malawi: Historical Overview

Malawi has a population of about 16 million people (Government of Malawi, 2012a). Of this population, 76 per cent are Christians, 11 per cent are Muslims and the rest belong to other indigenous faiths (Government of Malawi, 2008a). Of all religions in the country, Christianity has had the most enduring impact on people’s socio-religious life world (Matemba, 2011:329).

Multiple scholarship reveals that the influence of religion in Malawian politics dates back to the colonial times when the country was called Nyasaland under the British Protectorate (cf. MacDonald, 1970:106; McCracken, 2000:59; Power, 2010:8). For instance, McCracken (2000:5) points out that in the late 19th century, the mission of the Church of Scotland to spread Christianity in Malawi and the rest of the east and central African region, was closely interrelated with that of the majority of the British settlers’ desire to own and control the region’s economy.

Ironically, some locals that had been acculturated into Christianity, led by Reverend John Chilembwe of the Providence Industrial Mission (P.I.M) launched an abortive uprising against the British colonial rule in Malawi in 1915 (McCracken 2012:127; Mtewa, 1977:227). While a few white settlers died in the revolt, Chilembwe and the majority of his followers were killed by the colonial government (Phiri, 2004:271). As the locals continued to press for independence between the 1920s and the early 1960s, both the white settlers and the natives used religion as a platform to air the manifold grievances of the society because it was one aspect of community life in which other socio-economic influences could not be ignored (Pachai, 1973:212). Pachai further underscores that “issues of religion and politics became interwoven”. The church as it were, in many aspects was an avenue for natives to promote political teachings and social movements, according to Pachai. As McCracken (1998:234) observes, Levi Mumba – the first President of the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) – a grouping of locals in the nationalist struggle in the 1940s, was trained by the Church of Scotland missionaries and he “linked his political beliefs to the Christian values” he had learnt earlier. This is in line with an argument advanced by Linden and Linden (1971:629) that Christianity, far from being opiate, provided radical apocalyptic themes
through which Africans articulated opposition to colonial rule. Natives, Linden and Linden further argue, used Biblical texts to legitimise their struggle for independence.

As Nyasaland geared towards independence between 1960 and 1964, there were three political parties led by natives – the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) under Kamuzu Banda, the Christian Liberation Party led by Thamar Banda, and the Christian Democratic Party led by Chester Katsonga (Pachai, 1973:243). But according to Pachai the MCP, which commanded the largest following, early on “harassed the Christian based political parties” accusing them of spreading “imperialistic propaganda”. It was for this reason that by 1964, the MCP under Kamuzu Banda had pulverised all the other opponents and “it was this party alone that had to decide the destiny of the country” (Pachai, 1973:243).

Worth a special mention is the fact that in the prelude to independence, specifically in 1961, Kamuzu Banda formed a transitional legislative council “but no women candidates were chosen” (McCracken, 2012:383). This, according to McCracken, demonstrated the nature of the MCPs leadership for it advocated for a “strong-man government” through the writings of one of its founders and key member of the legislative council – Dunduzu Chisiza (McCracken, 2012:409). In an excerpt from a 1961 publication – ‘What lies ahead’ – Chisiza underscores that new African governments must help African women to adjust themselves to their expected roles because “modern African young men want their wives to know how to rear children . . . prepare traditional and western dishes . . . master the art of washing and ironing clothes” (Chisiza, 1961:21). For McCracken, Chisiza’s views towards women were self-contradictory in that he spelled out in the same publication that under the MCP government, respect for the dignity of the human individual and the sanctity of his personality shall be recognised “and basic human rights shall be guaranteed” (McCracken, 2012:409). As mentioned earlier the role of women in politics during the 30 years of Kamuzu Banda’s dictatorship was that of dancing praise songs at political rallies. Of cumulatively 72 male cabinet ministers appointed by Kamuzu Banda between 1966 and 1992, only three were women (Semu, 2002: 85; Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership, 2014).

The intertwining of religion and politics in Malawi, however, came to the fore in 1992, when the Roman Catholic Church played a crucial role in galvanising the masses against the dictatorship of
President Kamuzu Banda and the MCP (Ross, 2004:91). Although that turbulent year was characterised by industrial action; serious urban riots; student demonstrations; the emergence of new domestic political groupings; and the MCP government’s agreement to hold a national referendum on the future of the one party system in the country, in retrospect perhaps what was most remarkable about these developments was that they were sparked off by the Roman Catholic church, and that their momentum was sustained at crucial stages by other Christian denominations in Malawi (Newell, 1995:243).

Through a pastoral letter entitled Living our Faith on 8th March, 1992 a grouping of Roman Catholic bishops, the Episcopal Conference of Malawi, openly criticised Kamuzu Banda and his autocratic rule (Cullen, 1994:37; Ihonvbere, 1997:226). Although ostensibly addressed to the Catholic faithful, the pastoral letter clearly targeted a wider audience and was written in a language designed to provoke public action and political change (Dulani, 2009:143). The letter, published in Malawi’s predominant Chichewa and Tumbuka languages, was read out and distributed in all Catholic churches nationwide, according to Dulani. Through references to Biblical texts – Ephesians 4:7-16 and Peter 4:10-11 – and local proverbs, Living our Faith identified some of the key weaknesses and failings of the one party regime (Dulani, 2009:144; Ross, 1996:39). One of the concerns that the Catholic Church pointed out was with regard to freedom of expression and association and it noted that: Human persons are honoured - and this honour is due to them - whenever they are allowed to search freely for the truth, to voice their opinions and be heard, to engage in creative service of the community in all liberty within the associations of their own choice. Nobody should ever have to suffer reprisals for honestly expressing and living up to their convictions: intellectual, religious or political. We can only regret that this is not always the case in our country. We can be grateful that freedom of worship is respected; the same freedom does not exist when it comes to translating faith into daily life (Afcast, 1992).

The language of the pastoral letter was rooted in a longstanding Catholic tradition of citing both canonical precedent and examples from the teachings of Christ and his disciples to justify Church involvement in temporal affairs (Mitchell, 2002:7). Mitchell contends that true to this tradition, 20th-century liberation theology legitimizes itself through the New Testament, with Christ the revolutionary as a central pillar of support. The power of the Catholic Church as a key player in the political arena was buoyed by the growth in its membership over time to 3 million out of the
country’s population of 13 million (Dulani, 2009:154), making it the country’s single largest Christian denomination.

As Dulani (2009:151) puts it, the events of 1992 placed religion as one of the few platforms from which criticism of the one-party regime could be made without being silenced. Newell (1995:251) argues that with the pastoral letter, the bishops “struck a chord in the nation’s psyche” which was evidenced with clapping and ululation when it was read out to the majority of the Catholic faithful across the country. The significance of the letter was so enormous that it was followed up by protests for political change from University of Malawi students and leading Protestant churches such as the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (C.C.A.P) who weighed in with support for the Catholic clergy (Dulani, 2009:145). In Malawi, the C.C.A.P church is the second largest Christian denomination after the Catholics (Newell, 1995:256).

To further pile up the pressure on President Kamuzu Banda and his dictatorial regime, the Catholic and Presbyterian clergy were joined in by those of the Anglican Church and Muslim community, and collectively formed Malawi’s first political pressure group since independence called the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) in October 1992 (Newell, 1997:258). This pressure group, which still exists today with the full support and representation of all major denominations, was formed as a vehicle through which meaningful dialogue could be conducted with the government in the interests of the nation, Newell further notes:

Following the formation of PAC, underground political parties emerged and President Kamuzu succumbed to intense pressure that led to a referendum on democracy in June 1993 and the first democratic elections in May 1994, which was won by President Bakili Muluzi of the UDF party (Dulani, 2007:146).

As Newell (1997:260) points out, while President Kamuzu Banda attempted to establish a social uniformity in Malawi’s multi-ethnic landscape with his regular speeches on nation-building, religion which is deeply entrenched in the country’s national identity, led to his downfall and that of the 30 year-repressive regime. The reverence to religion and religious leaders continues to be evident among Malawian politicians twenty years into democracy. Matemba (2011:331) observes that during national elections,
politicians who ignore the Church by not making appearances at services or by not giving churches gifts of money, say for church refurbishment, certainly risk losing the votes of the Christian voting bloc. For instance, in 2008, a year before Malawi went to the polls, the then Minister of Agriculture, Frank Mwenefumbo, donated subsidised fertiliser vouchers which were meant for poor rural households but the politician instead offered them to leaders of the largest Protestant church – the C.C.A.P – as a “political ploy to garner votes from congregants” (Weekend Nation, Comment, 2008:2). Similarly, a month ahead of the May 2014 elections, both President Joyce Banda and the leader of one of the major contesting political parties – Lazarus Chakwera of the MCP – participated in the long Good Friday walk called The Way of the Cross in the streets of the capital city – Lilongwe – organised by a Roman Catholic Church in reminiscence of the path that Jesus Christ took on his way to Calvary as described in the Bible (Malawi News Agency, 2014). Interestingly, both Banda and Chakwera are not Catholics but members of the Protestant and Presbyterian and Assemblies of God churches respectively.

Christianity is so intertwined with the social-cultural norms that hardly any public function starts without an opening prayer (Matemba, 2011:331), and this is all rooted in the history of Christianity dating back to the 19th century which has been immense in shaping the country’s national identity. The preceding discussion illustrates that historically religion, more specifically Christianity, plays an important role in the socio-political arena of the Malawian public. As Matemba (2011:331) argues, religion is the main matrix of Malawi’s national identity.

**Religion, Gender and Identity**

The impact of religion on Malawi’s cultural identity is of profound importance with respect to issues of gender. Ursula King (1995:1) argues that gender issues are significant in contemporary society and culture because throughout human history, there has existed an asymmetry in the relations of power, representation, knowledge and scholarship between men and women. For King, many current issues and debates about women, their experience, and self-understanding, status and role are still influenced by or indirectly related to religious teachings and world views about women and their experiences. In view of the historical-cultural embodiments and institutional structures in religion, it requires an investigation of gender-specific issues in very particular ways.
Religion has not only been a matrix of cultures but it structures reality – “all reality including that of gender” (King, 1995:4). This is in line with Joy’s argument (1995:122) who contends that God-talk itself has remained a captive of the human predilection to conceive of the absolute in masculine imagery and terminology. O’Connor (1995:55) holds the view that much of what is known about religion is based on what has been written, told and taught by western educated males in the western religious and philosophical traditions. O’Connor postulates that:

Much of what we see, we see because we have been trained, educated and socialised to see in certain ways. This means there are also things we do not see, questions and insights to which we are blind, paths not taken, whole areas that are concealed to us as others are revealed (1995:47).

According to Johnson (2005:759) “our relation to societies and how to participate in them can have magical effects on how we see things”. Cultures, such as those that are religious, consist of words and ideas that are used to define and interpret humankind experiences, Johnson further notes. Such cultures are patriarchal in that “they promote male privilege by being male dominated, male identified, and male centred” and are also obsessed with the control of women (Johnson, 2005:5). Johnson notes that when a woman finds her way to the top of the hierarchy in a patriarchal society “people tend to be struck by the exception to the rule and wonder how she would measure up against a man in the same position”. In the case of Malawi, such social hierarchical structures have become internalised since the advent of Christianity in the 19th century and continue to be reflected in everyday life.

Societal cultural attributes like religion have a huge bearing in the construction of identity which Castells (1997:6) defines as the people’s source of meaning and experience. Castells argues that meanings are constructed through the identification of symbols for the purpose of a particular action. Nevertheless, identities can originate from dominant institutions and “they become dominant when and if social actors internalise them, and construct meaning around this internalisation” (Castells, 1997:7). In this respect, the dominant institutions that have contributed
to the construction of Malawi’s identity are the Church and to a certain extent, Islam. In the case of Malawi’s 2014 elections, a woman presidential aspirant – specifically Joyce Banda – was associated with attempting to break away from a well-woven religious family structure, where patriarchy is a societal norm.

Religion provides a distinct setting for identity exploration and commitment through offering ideological, social, and spiritual contexts (King, 2003:197). King further contends that religion in an ideological context, intentionally offers beliefs, moral codes, and values from which one can build a personal belief system from an early age. Consequently, the beliefs, worldview, and values of religious traditions, King argues, provide an ideological context in which a person can generate a sense of meaning, order, and place in the world that is crucial to identity formation. Integrating one’s personal ideology to religious beliefs is integral in identity formation (King, 2003:203).

Looking through the political campaigns ahead of Malawi’s 2014 elections, there was clear evidence of gendered ideology, more particularly by the DPP against the femininity of former President [Joyce] Banda. For example, in most political gatherings organised by the DPP, especially in the rural areas, the party cadres relentlessly evoked the rhetorical question of whether women could lead in churches or mosques.

For Schlesinger (1991:146), the notion of collective cultural identity is problematic in society because it serves as “a screen to reality”. By collective identity Schlesinger (1991:153) refers to a national identity in retrospect, such as Christianity in the case of Malawi. Cultural identity easily slips into a nationalist affirmation of the superiority of one group over others (Mattelart et al., in Schlesinger, 1991:146). Understanding the impact of global religious beliefs is imperative in the context of gender relations in that global processes simplistically impose gender values (Ghaill & Haywood, 2007:220). Although the church can play a role in social change, it invests its energies in preserving the status quo (Richardson, 1981:99). For Richardson, because the status quo favours the interests of the more powerful, religion helps perpetuate social inequality.

The justification of perpetuating unequal power relations between men and women in patriarchal society with predominant Christian beliefs is rooted in multiple Biblical texts from the Old Testament to the New Testament (Richardson, 1981:103). From the onset, the Old Testament
accounts of Creation in Genesis, where the story is that God created man first then woman (The Holy Bible, Genesis 2:7; 18; Richardson, 1981:103). In Exodus, the commandment is given not to "covet your neighbour’s house" and in this case, a wife is listed among the possessions along with servants, oxen and other domestic animals (The Holy Bible, Exodus 20:17; Richardson, 1981:103). Myriad Biblical texts including Leviticus 12:1-5,

Deuteronomy 22:18-21 and Job 14:1-4 reflect and perpetuate a patriarchal order (The Holy Bible; Richardson, 1981:103). The New Testament is often used to justify male superiority over the female in multiple texts such as 1 Corinthians 11:3 but it is in Ephesians where the Holy Bible points out that:

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything (The Holy Bible, Ephesians 5:22-24).

Nevertheless, some Biblical texts clearly spell out the promotion of gender justice. For example, the Holy Bible (Galatians 3:28) notes that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus". In Judges 4:4, the Holy Bible states that Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, was a prophetess, judge and leader of Israel at the time which implies that a woman had a crucial position of governance.

That notwithstanding, interpretations of Biblical texts, which often vary, have consequences in the social organisational structure of religious institutions and this is ultimately reflected in the performances of the males and females within them. It has been noted over the years; for instance, that the issue of leadership roles in predominantly Christian faiths such as the ordination of priests in the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches is a heavily contested issue (cf. Ecklund, 2006:82; Fabio and Reicher, 2000:95; Chaves, 1996:840). The father figure, a prominent feature of Christianity, is a predominant ingredient in the image of the clergy (Bock, 1967:531). In the Catholic faith for instance, the priest is commonly referred to as ‘Father’ by the Church’s followers which is significant in structuring the hierarchical and gendered power relations and such religious ideologies filter through the society’s everyday life.
It is worth noting that the patriarchal stance embedded in Christianity is similarly reflected in Islam. Islam in Arabic means state of submission and a Muslim is one who has submitted to Allah (Castells, 1997:14). As Castells further postulates, state institutions in the Islamic sense, must be organised around uncontested religious principles formulated in the Qur’an – the Islamic holy book. Just like Christianity, Islam demands that women must “submit to their guardian men as they are encouraged to fulfil themselves primarily in the framework of the family” (Castells, 1997:15). A text from the Qur’an (Surah 4:34) notes:

> Men are in charge of women by right of what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend for maintenance from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in the husband’s absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives], from whom you fear arrogance, first advise them, and then if they persist, forsake them in bed; and finally, strike them. But if they obey you once more, seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever exalted and grand.

However, in the Qur’an (Surah 3:195) it is pointed out that the Lord will reward the good deeds of both males and females because they are “of one another”. But as in Christianity, the Qur’an, texts are also subject to varied interpretations and in the Malawian 2014 elections case, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) manipulated such variances to befit their gendered discourse.

The foregoing debate reinforces the argument advanced by Ecklund (2006:81) that many religions have patriarchal rules and institutional policies that formally limit leadership for women. While religious cultures oftentimes stand for what Firth (1981:588) describes as a “moral and spiritual values”, critical questions in light of gender equality and empowerment of women as enshrined in the third Millennium Development Goal are exposed. This forms the basis of the analytical look which is tackled next.

**Sesa Joyce Sesa: Analysis**

Given the role played by religion in shaping Malawi’s cultural identity, it comes as little surprise
that the religious-gender implications were a factor in the 2014 Malawi elections. Malawi, as noted by Moto (2004:346) is a patriarchal society and this is reinforced from an early age. The Sesa Joyce Sesa campaign slogan created by the DPP, resonated with this historical make-up of Malawi’s identity – religion – and more particularly with the rural and less literate electorate.

Close to 85 per cent of Malawi’s population reside in rural areas (Government of Malawi, 2008b). This landscape is even worsened by the fact that most young females of the rural dwellers, drop out of school and engage in early marriages (Government of Malawi, 2012b:16), which shapes up as a culture that is heavily depended on males (husbands). Against this backdrop, the terrain was vulnerable to manipulation by the DPP with their religious sexist campaign slogan.

The title of the slogan in itself: Sesa Joyce Sesa (Sweep Joyce away) was demeaning as it likened Joyce Banda to “garbage” or “trash” that had to be swept away. This analogy had both cultural and religious connotations. In a cultural context, it is common for rural societies to cast off women deemed to have engaged in immoral malpractices not in tandem with the traditional beliefs. For example, refusing to cook for her husband, even when pregnant, is a taboo. Such women are taken to traditional courts and may be cast off the society; in other words, they befit to be “Swept away”, and for the DPP, President Joyce Banda deserved such treatment.

The Sesa Joyce Sesa (Sweep away Joyce [Banda]) slogan also bore a religious connotation of Biblical heritage. In Jewish law, which is noted in the Holy Bible, Deuteronomy 22:18-21, virginity was of profound importance for women to be defined as “clean” and therefore qualifying for marriage (The Holy Bible, Deuteronomy 22:18-21; Richardson, 1977:102), and “those persons considered clean, were granted the right to participate in religious ceremonies”. In the context of Sesa Joyce Sesa, the DPP’s campaign mantra typically referred to then President Joyce Banda as ‘unclean’, ‘filthy’, like the women described in the Holy Bible Job 14:4 where Job asks: “Who can bring what is pure from the unpure?” (The Holy Bible, Job 14:4; Richardson, 1977:102).

The Sesa Joyce Sesa campaign slogan was well constructed to reverberate with the religious identity of Malawians and mock President Joyce Banda in regards to her capabilities to continue governing the country. This view is informed by Castells (1997:23) who underscores that cultures
embedded with deep religious heritage encourage the oppression of women because submission to men guarantees salvation. Castells further notes: “With salvation guaranteed, as long as a Christian strictly observes the Bible, and with a stable patriarchal family as a solid footing for life, business will be good” (1997:23). Although there are some Biblical texts which promote the equality of men and women; for example, in Genesis and Ecclesiastes (The Holy Bible, Genesis 1:27; Ecclesiastes 9:9), the DPP capitalised on those that seem to devalue women.

The DPP campaign was aimed at manipulating the electorate, mostly the rural religious communities by calling upon them to reflect on the traditional organisational structures within their sense of identity – religion. First, the narrator, Saonda, who delivered keynote speeches during the campaign rallies organised by Peter Mutharika, the then DPP Presidential candidate (incumbent Malawi President), teased the audiences by exemplifying with hierarchical structures within the Roman Catholic Church, which as noted earlier, is the most dominant Christian denomination in Malawi. Then, he would turn to similar analogies in Islam before encasing his rhetoric with a sexist local proverb.

The local proverb blended in by the DPP into their sexist campaign slogan is rooted in traditional cultural belief called Fisi (hyena). In this rhetoric, the main campaign slogan orator, Saonda, would tell the audiences in vernacular that: ngakhale fisi akalowa mnyumba sindiye kuti mkaziyo ndi wache (A man hired to sleep with a widow is not expected to be the next head of the family). In an old Malawian tradition, when a husband died in some rural settings, to wind up the mourning period, the village community would organise a ritual ceremony in which a man, in most cases a brother to the deceased, would sleep with the widow which was believed to cast away evil spirits from the family. Such a person was called metaphorically as Fisi (hyena) likening the act to the actual elusive behavioural hunting nature of a hyena during the night.

This was striking because just like the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church blended traditional proverbs and Biblical texts in their 1992 Pastoral letter to criticise the one-party repressive regime of Hastings Kamuzu Banda, it was similarly noted that the DPP fused a traditional patriarchal proverb into religious beliefs that underline the role of women in society as being subservient to men. The Fisi (hyena) proverb symbolised that former President [Joyce] Banda was then just a
caretaker President following the death of Bingu wa Mutharika in 2012 but it did not necessarily mean that she [Joyce Banda] had to be given a full mandate to govern.

It was further observed that the fusion of gendered religious analogies and the cultural beliefs was easily identified by the electorate, particularly in the rural less literate communities. The electorate were vulnerable to the sexist manipulation regarding male/female religious roles because it was entrenched in their minds from history. This is in line with the argument that religious experiences of African women must be seen as embedded in particular historical, social and cultural contexts (Hackett, 1995:258).

Given that the fifth Sustainable Development Goal recognises equal rights and opportunities for women, then the context of the DPP campaign slogan contained rhetoric that was at variance with the SDGs. In fact, the DPP, which defines itself as a ‘progressive’ party, ironically diffused a mantra that was rather ‘retrogressive’ with regard to gender equality, women empowerment and political participation. As Moghadam and Senftova (2005:391) posit, women empowerment is conceptualised in terms of the achievement of basic capabilities; of legal rights; and of participation in key social, economic and ‘political domains’. But in the case of Malawi, the Sesa Joyce Sesa campaign motto was coined to perpetuate social inequalities with respect to gender. As noted in the section on Malawi’s historical overview of religion, politics and gender in Malawi, women were among the marginalised, more particularly with respect to key political leadership positions.

During the 2014 Malawi elections campaigns, the DPP, like the rest of the contesting parties, presented a manifesto to the electorate in a public ceremony, covered in multiple media broadcasts. What was interesting to note was that Chapter 22 of the manifesto underlined issues pointed out in the fifth Sustainable Development Goal in that “the DPP condemn the marginalisation and discrimination of women in the development process” (DPP Manifesto 2014:47). The paradox of this promise entailed in the manifesto was that as the supporters of the party mobilised themselves at the launch of the manifesto, they chanted “Sesa Joyce Sesa!” This then means that to the DPP, now the governing party in Malawi, the agenda of advancing the fifth UN Sustainable Development Goal is just on paper but not in practice. More ironical was the fact that the majority
of those rallying behind the sexist slogan were women. Historically in Malawi politics, women take up the cheerleading roles for the usually male politicians at the top of the hierarchy. In line with an argument advanced by Geisler (1995:546), women’s role in politics in most of Africa is often limited to a particular female space, such as party’s women wing, where its members are given little or no scope to influence policy formulation, not even policies directly relevant to them. This then calls into question as to whether much progress has been made regarding the fifth Sustainable Development Goal in Malawi, especially on the issue of political inclusiveness.

Attributes drawn from religious and cultural beliefs concerning gender roles are social constructs. Religious as well as traditional beliefs in most cultures globally have often been issued to categorise roles which men and women may be perceived capable of undertaking in society. The social importance given to these constructs to describe women’s role in society contribute to inequalities in gender and marginalisation of women in political leadership roles as it was in the case of Malawi’s 2014 elections.

**Conclusion and Policy Implications**

In a quest to wrestle political power away from caretaker President Joyce Banda, the DPP created a campaign slogan that was manipulative of the religious identity of the Malawi citizenry. Although most forms of religion call for love, peace and tolerance, Christianity and Islam are embedded with texts that are patriarchal and sexist and this stifles the very essence of promoting gender equality and women empowerment.

Multiple stakeholders, including the civil society and the news media, expected to safeguard democracy, ignored this role and overlooked the demeaning nature of the DPP campaign mantra – *Sesa Joyce Sesa*. This then meant that they contributed to the reverberation of the gendered discourse of the slogan into the public sphere. This poses a serious problem in light of the fifth UN Sustainable Development Goal. In fact, such patriarchal discourses knock down the positive strides on the Malawi Gender and Development Index (MGDI) launched in 2009 by the Malawi government to measure gender equality and women empowerment in the country as part of the Economic Commission for Africa’s Gender Development Index (Machinjili, 2012:v).
Manipulating religious teachings and traditional cultural beliefs to advance patriarchal agendas in power relations has profound influence on societal attitudes towards women and their potential to take-up critical decision-making positions, especially in developing democracies such as Malawi. It is thus of utmost importance that multiple stakeholders, such as political leaders, the media and the civil society should consider policies that would civically engage the electorate on the awareness of deeply entrenched religious and cultural beliefs that undermine the advancement of women in crucial decision-making positions. It is critical to address such sensational discourses in the public sphere that are rooted in patriarchy. Effectively, this could be progressive with regards to the fifth Sustainable Development Goal and the Beyond 2015 agenda aimed at eliminating global poverty and human deprivation, especially in the poorest of countries across the globe. As Amadiume (1997:181) rightly argues, the struggle to deconstruct and decolonise the effects of masculine imperialism and patriarchy that came along with colonisation must continue.

References


Accessed [2014, September 8].


Sachs, J. 2005. *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium*
Development Goals. UN Millennium Project, New York: Earthscan.
PARENTS’ SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL STATUS AS DETERMINANTS OF CHILD GENDER PREFERENCES: A STUDY OF IGBOS IN LAGOS WEST SENATORIAL DISTRICT, LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

Ubendu, C. Chika and Sulaiman, Lanre Abdul-Rasheed

Abstract

The phenomenon of child gender preference is not new; it has existed for centuries. In fact, in the last few decades, many studies have been conducted on it, particularly in South Asia and North Africa. In Nigeria child gender preference has seldom been examined with keen emphasis on the social and financial factors. Thus, this study examines the social and financial factors underlying child gender preference among the Igbo people in Lagos West Senatorial District. The study uses the survey method to execute the research agenda. Multi-stage random sampling was used to pick respondents for the survey. The symbolic interactionism theory was used to explain the prevalence of gender preference for children in the study location, while chi-square was used to test the two formulated hypotheses that centre on socio-financial factors and child gender preferences. The paper found that there is a significant relationship between education and parental preference for the gender of their children. The higher the education of the parents, the lower the parental preference was for a particular gender. Also, the study finds that income is significantly related to parental preference for the gender of their children. The lower the income and wealth of the household, the higher the parental preference to have a male child. The study concludes that efforts should be made to raise the educational level of people and to ensure that the government tackles poverty aggressively in the society.

Keywords: Gender Preference, Son, Daughter, Igbo, Wealth and Education

Introduction

One of the most fundamental problems Nigeria is facing is the uncontrolled growth of the population. In spite of the availability of a wide range of contraceptive methods and mass media campaigns, population control remains a distant dream to achieve, especially in the rural areas. This situation can be attributed to the prevalence of parental gender preferences in the country (Milazzo, 2012). Marleau and Saucier (2002) assert that Western societies appear to have experienced a transition from son preference to no gender preference and this has helped greatly in having a controlled population growth rate. Seidl (1995) asserts that when couples have gender
preferences, they seem to have more parities than they would have ordinarily had. This is because couples would continue to give birth to children until the desired sex compositions are satisfied, which is mostly after the delivery of at least one male child.

It is believed that daughters are associated with a loss. The girl child leaves her parents’ home upon her marriage and the benefits from investments made in her upbringing accrue to her new family, thus constituting a loss for the natal family. Sons, on the other hand, are considered assets worthy of short and long-term investment (Bumiller, 1991). Sons can continue the family trade, carry the family name, and are expected to provide financial resources for their parents in old age. Sons, therefore, are indispensable in societies as they provide welfare support for frail older people (Sen, 1992; 1999; Qadir, Khan, Medhin & Prince, 2011).

The close relationship between daughters and their fathers and between mothers and their sons among the Igbos is too strong to be overlooked. A father can do anything to protect his daughter and spend a lot of money to celebrate his daughter’s marriage. However, the girl-child appears to lose value as she transits from daughter to wife and begins to live life as an appendage to the husband.

**Statement of the Problem**

Child gender preference largely reflects the underlying socio-economic and cultural patterns of the society. The Igbo society is basically a patriarchal and patrilineal society, one characterized by the dominance of men in virtually all spheres of life. Igbo women were expected to be subservient to their husbands. Women in Igbo society and Nigeria as a whole are disadvantaged as compared to men in terms of both education and earnings, factors that greatly influence the economic status of women and child gender preference (National Population Commission & ICF, 2014). This, therefore, conditions couples to desire to have and nurture a child who has the socially and culturally accepted status and economic potential. This preference influences the parents' behaviour and may result into gender biases and stereotypes that negatively affect the health, welfare, and survival of girls and women (El-Gilany & Shady, 2007).
Various studies (for example, Ushie, Agba, Olumodeji & Attah, 2011; Oyefara, 2010) had explored factors affecting fertility in Nigeria. However, the impact of social and economic factors on child gender preference for children has not been well documented in the region. This gap is what this paper was expected to fill.

**Aim and Objectives of the Study**

1. The study aims at examining the impact of socio-economic factors on gender preferences for children among Igbos in Lagos -West Senatorial District.
   
   Specifically, the study intends to: Find out the effect of the parents’ level of education on child gender preference among the Igbos in Lagos West Senatorial District.

2. Investigate the influence of the parents’ income on child gender preferences among the Igbos in Lagos West Senatorial District

**Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between the parents’ level of education and child gender preference.

2. There is no significant relationship between the income of the parents and their preference for the gender of their children.

**Definition of Concepts**

Gender preference can be described as the parents’ preference to have a child of a particular gender. In other words, it is the quest for having a particular gender (male or female) as offspring(s).

**Literature Review**

The prevalence of child gender preferences has been well documented mostly in South Asian countries (Rossi & Rouanet, 2014; Haldar, Dasgupta, Sen & Laskar, 2011; Das-Gupta, Zhenghua, Zhenming & Hwa-Ok, 2003). However, the phenomenon of child gender preference is not peculiar to the South Asian countries alone; a considerable level of preference for a male child has also been reported in Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa (Ndu & Uzochukwu, 2011; Adeleye & Okonkwo, 2010; Kana, 2010).

A number of broad social, cultural and economic factors have been identified as the causes of child
gender preferences. A study by Bhattacharjya, Das and Mog (2014) on the factors affecting child
gender preferences among mothers attending an antenatal clinic at the Agartala Government
Medical College, Agartala, India shows that 40.8% of the respondents preferred a son, 29.7%
preferred a daughter, while only 29.5% had no gender preference. The reasons given for the son
preference were that sons provide better security in old age, status symbol, and generation
continuation. Furthermore, the study also shows that there is a significant relationship between the
socio-economic condition of the respondents and their child gender preference as a higher male
child preference was observed among the rural, poor and illiterate women. Hence, the poorer the
socio-economic condition of the women, the higher the preference for a son.
Fuse (2008) carried out a multi-country study of gender preference for children. He reported that
a son preference is more prominent in Senegal and Burkina Faso where over 30% of women
preferred a male child. This phenomenon also exists in West and South Asia as well as in North
Africa. He used the multinomial regression to examine the link between socio-economic variables
and son preference. The result shows that education, wealth and place of residence are significantly
related to a son preference. Specifically, he found that the lower the household wealth is, the higher
the odds of having a son preference are. This shows that women in households with lower income
are more likely to have a male child preference. This finding is not uncommon as it is consistent
with the popular belief mostly by the poor people that male children have a higher potential to
support the family economically than the girls (Fuse, 2008).

A study by Reeve, Desai and Vikram (2012) also confirmed that there is a significant relationship
between gender preference and the socio-economic factors. The researchers found that women
who say they want more sons than daughters are less likely to be employed; they are more
disempowered; more likely to be in an exogamous marriage where they met their husband on the
wedding day; and less likely to share meals or outings with their husbands.

A study by Gaudin (2011) on the influence of wealth on a son preference in Indian families also
shows that higher standards of living at the macroeconomic and households levels are associated
with lower son preference. More specifically, Gaudin reported that “higher absolute wealth is
strongly associated with lower son preference, and the effect is 20% - 40% stronger when the
household’s community-specific wealth score is included in the regression. Coefficients on relative wealth are positive and significant, although lower in magnitude”. This implies that economic development reduces the preference for a male child.

However, a study by Pande and Malhotra (2006) on a son preference in India shows there is no significant relationship between wealth and a son preference. The study reported that village-level economic development does not have a significant relationship with a son preference. Also, ownership of assets does not have any relationship with a son preference, suggesting that economic development does not increase a son preference.

It is crucial to observe that the relationship between the place of residence and child gender preference has been examined by some studies. For example, Fuse (2008) examined the effect of place of residence on child gender preference. He discovered that rural dwellers were more likely to have gender preference for a son when compared to the urban dwellers. The reason for this might be that rural residents may not be well exposed to modern ideas and new opportunities. Also, rural dwellers are more likely to own land; hence there would be a need for sons to inherit it (Fuse, 2008).

It is believed that education shapes people’s attitudes and values. It is not unexpected to see well educated people not to have child gender preference. A study by EL-Gilany and Shady (2007) on the causes and determinants of male child preference among women in Mansoura, Egypt, shows that education is one of the fundamental determinants of child gender preference. The higher the educational qualification of people is, the lower the gender preference becomes. Specifically, the study found that mothers with illiterate husbands were 10 times more likely to prefer a male child than those married to educated husbands.

Fuse (2008) shows that education is a key predictor regarding child gender preference. The researcher unveiled that attaining primary school education reduces the odds of having a preference for a male child by 20%, while above secondary level education reduces the odds for male child preference by 32%. In the same vein, Pande and Malhotra (2006) show that education is the most significant factor that can reduce a son preference. They found that uneducated women
are more likely to have a son preference compared to educated women. Specifically, they reported that attaining at least a primary school level of education reduces parental preference for having a son, while exposure to secondary or higher level of education is even more significant.

In addition to the educational level of the parents, it is expected that their access to information will further reduce male child preference. Pande and Malhotra (2006) established a relationship between access to information and a son preference. They revealed that exposure to various sources of media (print and electronic) is significantly associated with weaker male child preference. This is so because access to the mass media exposes people to information on the modern way of lifestyle and contributes to making people’s preferences more egalitarian.

A study by Fuse (2008), however, discovered no relationship between mass media and a son preference. The contradiction between Fuse (2008) and Pande and Malhotra’s (2006) research on the effect of media on a son preference could be partly as a result of different methodologies used. While Fuse (2008) examined the effect at the macro level, Pande and Malhotra (2006) examined the effect at the micro level.

**Theoretical Framework**
The study is anchored on the social action theory. Social action is central to the Weberian school of thought. Weber conceived Sociology as a science of social action (Cuff, Sharock & Francis, 2005). Weber (1949) opines that one of the fundamental objectives of sociological analyses should involve the understanding and analysis of action in terms of its subjective meaning. Social action, according to Weber, can be defined as the actions of an actor done in a social context. Social action is an actor’s behaviour that is intended to influence and is influenced by the actions of others in the society (Cuff, Sharock & Francis, 2005). For social action to occur there must be meaning attached to it by the actors. It is this meaning that will give rise to social action. Hence, there is an intimate link between action and the subjective meaning given to it by the actor. These subjective meanings are usually influenced by the socio-cultural factors (Ritzer, 2008; Turner, 1993).

The Social Action Theory believes a different background and attachments will result in different
behaviour. That is, there is a nexus between the actor’s behaviour and his or her peculiar socio-cultural situation. For instance, dancing and drinking at a party is acceptable, however, the same behaviour is not acceptable at a funeral. The Social Action Theory does not completely neglect the impact of social structure on the action of an individual. It posits that the individual behaviour shapes the social structure; in the same vein the social structure also influences the individual behaviour.

Child gender preference is based on a set of values and norms that are produced and reproduced in a complex interaction between people. Couples, parents (and grandparents) have an essentialist understanding of what sons and daughters can be or do, and this understanding is socially constructed. Therefore, daughters and sons are ascribed different symbolic values related to the perceived economic and social contributions they make to their families. The custom in Igbo society is that male children are valued for their role in retaining or perpetuating the family name to remain in the family so as to keep the lineage of the family growth, while women will be married out. In addition, male children also serve as a provision to old-age security and a source of defence and social prestige to the parents. Croll (2000) notes that daughters may contribute much in terms of performing household chores and caring for family members, but that this work is not valued as highly as sons’ labour, which typically takes place outside the household and generates income thus enhancing the economic status of the family. These symbolic values are derived from interaction and modified through an interpretative process.

**Methodology**

The study was conducted in Lagos West Senatorial District, Lagos, Nigeria. Lagos West district is one of the three senatorial districts that make up Lagos State. The district has 10 local government areas. These are: Agege, Ifako-Ijaiye, Alimosho, Badagry, Ojo, Ajeromi/Ifeodun, Amuwo-Odofin, Oshodi/Isolo, Ikeja and Mushin. The district occupies an area of 1077 km² and has a population of 5,574,680 people (National Population Commission, 2010).

The research design used for the study was survey. The adoption of this research design helped greatly in the generation of quantitative data for the study. The study population was male and female Igbo residents of Lagos West district.
A multi-stage random sampling was used to select the eligible respondents in which the sampling went through five stages. The first stage involved dividing the district into local government areas. All the ten local government areas within the district were selected at this stage. The second stage involved dividing the local government areas into wards out of which two wards were randomly selected from each local government area. Thus, 20 geo-political wards were selected. The third stage involved a random selection of one street in each geo-political ward. Thus, a total of 20 streets were selected. The fourth stage involved using purposive sampling to select 12 Igbo households from each street. Thus, a total of 240 households were selected. The final stage involved a random selection of an eligible respondent in each sampled household. An eligible respondent is either a male or female Igbo between 16 and 75 years old.

The questionnaire schedule was used to obtain data from the respondents, while SPSS was used to analyse the quantitative data. The percentages, mode and chi-square were the statistical methods used for the analysis.

**Sample Characteristics**

Table 1 shows that 50.8% (99) of the respondents were female, while 49.2% (96) were male. As for the age of the respondents, 35.4% (69) were in the age group 36 - 45 years; 28.7% (56) were in the age group 26 - 35; 26.2% (51) were in the age group 46 - 55 years; 6.2% (12) were in the age group 16 - 25 years; 2.1% (4) were in the age group 66 and above, while 1.5% (3) were in the age group 56 - 65 years. The majority of the respondents - 73.3% (143) - were married; 8.2% (16) were single; 8.2% (16) were separated; 6.2% (12) were divorced, while 4.1% (8) were widowed. Furthermore, the table shows that 61% (119) had 1 - 4 children; 23% (45) had 5 - 8 children; 12.3% (24) had no child, while 3.6% (7) had 9 - 12 children. At 89.7% (175) Christians were a huge majority; 5.6% (11) were Muslims, while 4.6% (9) were traditional worshippers.

**Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by their Socio-Economic Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-Economic Characteristics</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-65</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66 and Above</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Marital Status           |      |        |       |
| Single                   | 16   | 16     | 32    |
| Married                  | 143  | 99     | 242   |
| Separated                | 16   | 16     | 32    |
| Divorced                 | 12   | 5      | 17    |
| Widowed                  | 8    | 4      | 12    |
| Total                    | 195  | 100    |       |

| No of children           |      |        |       |
| 0                        | 24   | 24     | 48    |
| 1-4                      | 119  | 119    | 238   |
| 5-8                      | 45   | 45     | 90    |
| 9-12                     | 7    | 7      | 14    |
| Total                    | 195  | 100    |       |

| Religion                 |      |        |       |
| Christianity             | 175  | 89.7   |       |
| Islam                    | 11   | 5.6    |       |
| Traditional              | 9    | 4.6    |       |
| Total                    | 195  | 100    |       |

| Education Qualification  |      |        |       |
| No formal Education      | 27   | 13.8   |       |
| Primary Education        | 71   | 36.4   |       |
| Secondary                | 52   | 26.7   |       |
| Higher                   | 45   | 23     |       |
| Total                    | 195  | 100    |       |

| Occupation               |      |        |       |
| Trading                  | 47   | 47     | 94    |
| Artisan                  | 28   | 28     | 56    |
| Farming                  | 4    | 4      | 8     |
| Private Sector employee  | 23   | 23     | 46    |
| Civil/Public Servant     | 44   | 44     | 88    |
| Professional             | 19   | 19     | 38    |
| Student                  | 4    | 4      | 8     |
| Total                    | 195  | 100    |       |
Furthermore, regarding the respondents’ education Table 1 shows that 36.4% (71) had primary education; 26.7% (52) had secondary education; 23% (45) had higher education, while 13.8% (27) were illiterates. By occupation, 24% (47) of the respondents were traders; 22.6% (44) were civil servants; 14.4% (28) were artisans; 11.8% (23) were private sector employees; 11.8% (23) were full housewives; 9.7% (19) were professionals; 2.1% (4) were farmers; 2.1% (4) were students, while 1.5% (3) were retirees. As for the economic status of the respondents, 43.1% (84) were medium income earners; 42.1% (82) were low income earners, while only 14.9% (29) were high income earners. When asked how often they interact with their male children, 55.4% (108) of the respondents answered that they interact very often; 20.5% (40) often interact with their male children; 14.4%
(28) declined the question, while 9.8% (19) said “not quite often”. On the other hand, 54.9% (107) of the respondents very often interact with their female children; 26.7% (52) often interact with their female children; 10.3% (20) declined the question, while 8.2% (16) said not quite often. The answers to the question on the relationship of the respondents with their male children indicate that 65.1% (127) had warm and friendly relationship with their male children; 20.5% (40) said their relationship with their male children was not so friendly; 8.2% (16) declined the question, while 6.2% (12) had a cold relationship. A similar question on the respondents’ relationship with their female children shows that 63% (123) had warm and friendly relationship with their female children; 18.5% (36) relationships with their female children were not so friendly; 14.4% (28) declined the question, while 4% (8) had a cold relationship.

It is important to note that 66.2% (129) of the respondents preferred to have a male child rather than a female child; 24.6% (48) had no preference, while only 9.2% (21) preferred a female child. Most respondents, that is, 71.3% (139) believed that boys are more important than girls; 24.6% (48) discarded the assertion that boys are more important than girls, while 4% (8) declined the question. On why the male child is more important than the female child, 40% (78) believed that the male child would provide more economic support to them when they are old than the female child; 32.8% (64) said it was because the male child has more inheritance rights than the female child; 15.4% (30) believed it is only the male child who can carry on the family tree, while 11.8% (23) believed more values are accorded to the male child than the female child in the society.

**Findings**

Table 2 depicts the co-relationship between the sex of the respondents and child gender preference. Among the male respondents, 59.4% had preference for the male child; 29.2% had preference for any gender, while 11.5% had preference for the female child. As for the female respondents, 72.7% had preference for the male child; 20.2% had preference for any gender, while 7.1% had preference for the female child.
Table 2: Sex and Child Gender Preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>anyone</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male respondents</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female respondents</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher's Survey (2016)

Table 3 illustrates the co-relationship between the number of children and age of the respondents.

Of those who had 9 - 12 children, 42.9% were in the age group 46-55 years and another 42.9% were above 65 years old, while 14.3% were 56 - 65 years. As for those who had 5 - 8 children, 86.7% were 46 - 55 years; 4.4% were 36 - 45 years old; 4.4% were 56 - 65 years old; 2.2% were 26 - 35 years, while 2.2% were above 65 years old. Of those who had 1 - 4 children, 56.3% were 36 - 45 years old; 33.6% were 26 - 35 years old; 7.6% were 46 - 55 years old, while 2.5% were 16 - 25 years old. Lastly, 62.5% of those who had no children, where 26 - 35 years, while 37.5% were 16-25 years old.

Table 3: No of Children and Age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of Children</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-25</td>
<td>26-35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 shows the co-relationship between the number of children in the household and their sex. It shows that all respondents who had 9-12 children had only female children. Among those who had 5-8 children, 71.1% had only female children, while 28.9% had only male children. For those who had 1-4 children, 60.5% had both male and female children, while 39.5% had only male children.

Table 4: No of Children and Sex of Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of Children</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No child</td>
<td>Both male and female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher’s Survey (2016)
Table 5 shows the co-relationship between the number of children and income of the respondents. All the respondents who had 9 - 12 children were high income earners. Out of those who had 5 - 8 children, 51.1% were medium income earners, while 48.9% were high income earners. Of those who had 1- 4 children, 51.3% were medium income earners, while 48.7% were low income earners. Lastly, all the respondents who had no child were low income earners.

Table 5: No of Children and Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of Children</th>
<th>income</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>low</td>
<td>medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>48.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher’s Survey (2016)
Table 6 shows the co-relationship between the respondents’ number of children and educational qualification. All respondents who had 9 - 12 children had attained higher education. Of those who had 5 - 8 children, 84.4% had attained higher education, while 15.6% had attained secondary education. Out of those who had 1 - 4 children, 59.7% had attained primary education; 37.8% had attained secondary education, while 2.5% had no formal education. Lastly, all respondents who had no children were illiterates.

Table 6: No of children and Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of Children</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>no formal</td>
<td>primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher’s Survey (2016)

Table 7 shows the co-relationship between the respondents’ number of children and their gender.
preference. The table unveils that among those who had 9 - 12 children, 71.4% had preference for any gender, while 28.6% had preference for the male child. Of those who had 5 - 8 children, 73.3% preferred any gender, 17.8% had preference for female child, while 8.9% had preference for a male child. As for those who had 1 - 4 children, 83.2% had preference for a male child, 8.4% had preference for a female child, while another 8.4% had preference for any gender.

Table 7: No. of Children and Child Gender Preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of Children</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>male</td>
<td>female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>83.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>66.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Researcher’s Survey (2016)

Table 8 shows the output of the cross-tabulation of the two variables (education and gender preference). The chi-square value of the relationship is 105.945, the degree of freedom is 6, while the P = 0.000. The contingency coefficient is 0.593. $X^2 = 105.945$, d.f. =6, P = 0.000, C=

78
Table 8: Education and Child Gender Preference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Gender Preference</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Any one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No formal education</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 shows the output of the cross-tabulation of the two variables (income and gender preference). The chi-square value of the relationship is $69.600^a$, the degree of freedom is 4, while the $P = 0.000$. The contingency coefficient is 0.513.

Table 9: Income and Child Gender Preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Gender Preference</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Anyone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium income</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High income</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 69.600^a$
Discussion of Findings

This study seems to reveal that the sex of the respondents affects their child gender preference. For instance, 72.7% of the female respondents, as against 59.4% of the male, had preference for a male child. Also, it seems that the sex of the child affects the number of children the respondents had. For instance, all the respondents with 9 - 12 children had only female children. This finding is in line with what was discovered by Agbor (2011). He found that in Calabar, Nigeria having more female than male children leads to an increase in the family size as people kept giving birth hoping that they would eventually have a male child to satisfy their desire to have sons rather than daughters.

This study seems to indicate that a higher number of high income earners were more likely to prefer a larger family size of five children and above than the low income earners. This is contrary to what was discovered by Agbor (2013). He reported that respondents with lower income were more likely to have large family size compared to their counterparts with higher income. Also, we were taken aback by the finding on education and family size. We found that those with higher educational qualification were more likely to have large family size. This is contrary to the findings of most studies on education and family size. For example, Agbor (2013) discovered that the level of educational attainment was found to have an inverse relationship with large family size as respondents with higher educational attainment were more likely to have smaller family size as compared to respondents with no formal and primary education.

Furthermore, the relationship between level of education and gender preference for children was examined. The data reveal that the higher the educational qualification of the respondents, the lower the gender preference for the male child. For example, 96.3% of the respondents who had no formal education preferred a male child. This relationship is statistically significant at P < 0.05. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between education and gender preference for children was rejected. Therefore, the study accepted the hypothesis that there
is a significant relationship between education and gender preference. This finding is contrary to the work of Igwenagu (2013) who found no significant relationship between parental education and gender preferences for children.

Lastly, we examined the relationship between income and gender preference for children. The data reveal that respondents who had low income were more likely to have preference for a male child when compared to respondents who were medium and high income earners. For example, 89% of respondents who were low income earners preferred to have a male child. This proportion was higher than that of those who were medium and high income earners; hence, the higher the income of the respondents, the lower the gender preference for sons. This relationship is statistically significant at P < 0.05. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between income and gender preference for children was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between income and gender preference for children. This finding corroborates the work of Agbor (2011) who discovered that gender preference for children is a function of parental income.

From our findings, it is established that education and income contribute significantly to the gender preferences for their children among the Igbos in Lagos West district of Lagos State, Nigeria.

**Recommendations**

With reference to our findings, and in order to eradicate the phenomenon of gender preference in our society we recommend that the Government of Nigeria at all levels should pursue with vigour poverty reduction and eradication programmes. Furthermore, the Government should focus on creating sustainable jobs for both the unemployed men and women in the country so that they can as well become responsible parents who will cater and cherish both their sons and daughters. There must be concerted efforts in ensuring that the standard of living of the citizenry is raised.

The government should intensify efforts on revalidating the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in a manner that will enable children of low income parents to have access to formal education at a critical formative stage of education delivery. This should be tuition-free at the primary, secondary
and higher school levels.

References


Abstract
The study investigated the persistent gender inequity in academic employment to specifically establish, on one hand, what explains and maintains gender inequity and, on the other hand, what can be done to close the gender inequity gap at Makerere University. Secondary and primary data were used. The results were presented descriptively and analytically, supported by tables and simple statistics. Findings indicated that gender inequity in academic employment was not a gendered agenda but rather, it was influenced by the individual’s social background; the trend and numbers of females and males who graduate; the institutional structures and environment; the mental models and stereotypes staff formulate about themselves and about the profession/titles; and the commitment of the institution to addressing gender inequity in academic employment. It was recommended that individuals, especially women need to prioritize their time for academic advancement by utilizing the existing opportunities at the University and participating in the work of University committees that address gender inequity. The University should regularly monitor and evaluate their committees’ mandates, structures and policies with a view of improving their efficacy. The Uganda Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) should monitor institutions with a view to address the gender inequities that exist and persist in employment. The Ministry of Education and Sports should address the gender stereotypes early enough in the education cycle.

Key words: Gender and academic tenure-ship; Family formation and academic employment gap; Gender inequity in academic employment

Background and Statement of the Problem
The Uganda Government is committed to gender equality and gender equity in all aspects of life. The Government has progressively enacted policies, programmes and interventions towards gender equality and gender equity. These policies and programmes are within the broader context and discussions of the international social development goals on gender
equality. The Uganda Constitution of 1995, as amended, mandates the government to realize
gender equality and equal access of all people to opportunities in the political, economic and
social sectors of society. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is the line
ministry charged with the responsibility of operationalizing the Uganda Gender Policy (UGP).
The Uganda Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) carries out the State’s constitutional
mandate to eliminate discrimination and inequalities against any individual or group persons on
the grounds of sex, age, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion, health status,
social or economic standing, political opinion or disability, and to take affirmative action in
favour of groups marginalized on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created
by history, tradition or custom for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against
them; and to provide for other related matters (The Equal Opportunities Commission Act,
2007). To operationalize this function, all line ministries have gender desks to oversee the
mainstreaming of gender in all policies and programmes in line with their mandate. In a situation
characterized by resource inadequacies in the implementation of gender equality and equity,
gender budgeting has been an integral part in the national budgeting processing. Sector budgets
are approved by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development on presentation
of a certificate of gender compliance from the EOC. The Uganda Employment Act (2006)
provides provisions for employment of some specific categories of persons, in particular,
women, people with disability and children. Section 39 of the Employment Act (2006) provides
for maternity leave, sick leave and paternity leave. In the education sector, programmes such as
the Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Secondary Education (USE) and affirmative
action at admission to public institutions, including universities, are some of the special
initiatives towards gender equality and gender equity. All these initiatives were intended to
reduce the gender gap in access to education, a prerequisite for academic employment. At
national level affirmative initiatives include enhancement of political representation of women
in the Uganda Parliament, with a provision that 1/3 of the members have to be women, even
though women constitute 52 per cent of the population (UBOS, 2014).

Makerere University was the first public institution in Uganda to embrace the affirmative action
initiative in 1991, with the award of 1.5 points to high school girls with a view of making them
more eligible for entry to various academic programmes of study at the Makerere University. The aim was to make Makerere University a gender responsive institution in both the academic and administration sections. This initiative was enhanced by the establishment of the School of Women and Gender Studies in 1991 and the Gender Mainstreaming Department in 2001. The aim was to ensure that gender issues were an integral part in teaching, learning, research and outreach as well as in influencing public policy and administration. It is now over two decades since the gender agenda was fast tracked. In 2016 Makerere University graduated a total of 14,193 students, 64 of whom were doctoral students. Female enrolment hit the 44 per cent mark in the same year (Makerere University Fact Book, 2015). The numbers of women graduating with PhDs, including the tenured and non-tenure track in higher education, have been steadily rising. The above notwithstanding, gender inequities in academic employment still persist, with women still underrepresented in many departments and colleges (Makerere University, Fact book, 2015). There doesn’t seem to be any sign that the gender inequity gap in employment and, especially in academia, is about to close in the near future. Therefore, the state and perceptions of staff towards gender inequity in academic employment; what explains gender inequity; and what maintains the gender inequity gap need to be investigated so as to provide evidence-based knowledge to address gender inequity.

**Literature Review on Gender Inequity in Academic Employment**

Traditionally the work of faculty members of universities consists of teaching, research and scholarship, and various forms of community service (UBOS, 2014; Makerere University Fact Book, 2015; Knapp, et al., 2011). Note that women make up the majority of students in American colleges and universities. The increase in the proportion of degrees earned by women has been especially dramatic, from only 3 per cent in 1960-61 to a projected 51 per cent in 2011 (Misra et. al., 2011). The shift to a predominantly female student body has been dramatic and yet by and large, the progress for women into the most prestigious and well-paid positions in academia has lagged far behind the advances experienced by their male counterparts.
Misra et. al. (2011) further observed the disproportionate time the male and female academic staff spent in teaching and service and noted that this was a significant obstacle for women associate professors to attain full professorial rank. It was observed that although associate professors of both sexes taught lectures for a similar amount of time (four to six hours a week), the distribution of work tasks varied considerably. Men spent seven and a half hours more a week on their research than women did. Curtis (2010) points out that faculty members employed full time already represented a somewhat privileged category with a significant gap between women and men being observed in favour of men. The same trend was observed for faculty members employed part time. Although the proportion of full-time faculty members with non-tenure-track appointments had steadily increased, the proportion of women in that contingent situation remained larger and the gap was not closing. As more faculty members were appointed to non-tenure-track positions, the proportion of tenured women faculty was smaller. The Modern Language Association (2009) and Misra, et al., (2011) confirmed that women were less likely to be promoted than men, and when they were promoted, the process took much longer time. Progression to the level of full professor remained an elusive goal for women. Women faculty members spent a greater proportion of their time on teaching at undergraduate level and student mentoring than men did. They spent more time on service, either as members of departmental or institutional committees or with outside organizations (Porter, 2007; Bradburn and Sikora, 2002; Toutkoushian and Bellas, 1999; Park, 1996; Blackburn, et al., 1991).

Mason and Marc (2004) analysed the life trajectories of PhD recipients, including their decisions about marriage and fertility. It was found that the life trajectories of tenured women differed from those of tenured men. Only one in three women who took a fast-track university job before having a child ever became a mother. Women who achieved tenure were more than twice as likely as their male counterparts to be single twelve years after earning their PhD. Women who were married when they began their faculty careers were much more likely than men in the same position to become divorced or separated from their spouses. It was noted that women could not simply have it all: both tenure and a family.

Cobb-Clark, (1999) observed that the gender gap was insignificant among younger workers of ages 18 – 25 years. The gender differences in experience were most prominent among men and
women aged 26 – 39 years, suggesting that these differences arose mainly during the child bearing years. Mason and Goulden (2004) referred to this as the baby gap. Women aged between thirty and fifty who have children clock over a hundred hours each week on care giving, housework, and professional responsibilities as compared to a little more than eighty-five hours for men with children. It was further noted that women changed their family formation patterns to pursue the elusive goal of equality in the workplace. Women aiming for high positions in the professional, corporate, and academic worlds did not get married nor did they have children in their early twenties the way their mothers, who had no similar ambitions, did. It was noted that the culture had shifted to a delay mode, where a good climb up the career ladder was considered the prudent preface to starting families. While focusing only on professional outcomes as the measure of gender equality, we fail to recognize the widening gap between men and women in forming their families as measured by marriage and children. Gender equity measures should consider not only how many women were professors and deans relative to their male counterparts; but to ask how many women with children were in high places compared to men with children. This kind of evidence could reveal that women have much further to go than men do.

Gappa, Austin, & Trice (2007), argued that while many men provide care to family members, women often handle the larger part of family responsibilities, implying that policies which offer flexible work arrangements are important for attracting and supporting female faculty (https://www.aaup.org/issues/balancing-family-academic-work). It was noted that many faculty members sacrifice time with family to demonstrate that they are committed to their work. A number of female graduate students affirmed that they would not become faculty members because they did not see how they could combine work and family in a way that was reasonable for them and their families. It was pointed out that achieving gender equity in terms of careers and families in the academy requires re-structuring of the workplace. Structural changes ought to be put in place to tackle some of the greatest obstacles to success for women, preferably during the probationary period. These changes include but are not limited to stopping the tenure clock for childbirth. Childbirth needs generously modified duties and on-the-site child care. It was observed that passive and active resistance on the part of men and women pose a serious roadblock to cultural change. It was noted that the average age of obtaining a
PhD degree is 33 years, placing the tenure year at age 40. Women were more likely to receive the PhD at a slightly older median age, that is, at 34.1 years as compared to 32.8 years for men. This period of intensive work to establish academic career coincided with prime child-rearing years. Because women were more likely to carry the burden of child-rearing duties, they were often forced to make a choice between an all – time consuming professional career or having children - a choice men were unlikely to be forced to have to make.

The Mapping Project Survey conducted by Professor Robert Drago and colleagues at Penn State University emphasized that work/family problems among faculty arise partly from "bias avoidance" behaviour on the part of faculty members that leads them to avoid family commitments they would otherwise make, fail to fulfil family commitments, or spend time on strategies to hide parenthood and care-giving from others at work. This was more likely to be common in men as compared to women (https://www.aaup.org/issues/balancing-family-academic-work). From the literature cited, it appears that the most significant predators of gender inequity are time, family formation, the individual her/himself, the institution gender equality stance and the ‘gap’.

**Theoretical Framework**

Gregory Mankiw (2007) explains the concept of scarcity as the state when there are not enough resources available to satisfy everyone’s wants in terms of income, time, and leisure among other resources. In terms of academic growth, these resources are essential for aspiring academics to make a break through to tenure-ship. It is argued that one can never have it all, hence the concept of opportunity cost – the alternative foregone because of that resource being deployed elsewhere, meaning that resources that are deployed for one activity are simply not available for other activities. Williams (2010) and Milton Friedman, who won the Nobel Prize for Economics, put it blatantly that there is nothing such as free lunch, pointing to the issues of sacrifice.

The application of the opportunity cost to this study is that time is a critical resource with many competing demands on it such as the academic development and family formation, where
gender roles, more particularly, reproductive, community and productive are different for men and women. One has to weigh the costs and benefits of allocating time to the various productive and reproductive alternatives and take on the “best alternative”. One has to make rational choices to make the best use of resources between competing needs by allocating them where they bring maximum benefits. Williams (2010) notes in one study that women who took one year off work sacrificed 20% of their lifetime earnings, while women who took two or three years off sacrificed 30%. Friedman, Rimsky and Johnson, (1996) point out that an organization may wish to respond to the gender inequities, but this is subject to the demand to maximize organizational efficiency that may be at odds with gender equity initiatives. While this could be possible in public institutions where efficiency is not the main goal, it is highly unlikely in a private institution. Institutions are bound by their visions and missions to engage staff who were less encumbered by their family issues. Williams (2010) discusses the masculine culture in both blue-collar and white-collar jobs and observes basic patterns of gender bias. First, the “maternal wall”— a bias that prevents women from getting jobs as well as keeping jobs once they got a child. Second, the “prove it again!” problem — women finding that they have to work twice as hard to prove that they are as competent as their male co-workers. Women are expected to act with traditional masculine characteristics to gain respect but at the same time to maintain feminine characteristics so as not to be perceived as too macho.

In light of the above, the theoretical framework has been guided by the concepts of scarcity, rationality, choice theory and opportunity cost as regards individuals and the theory of efficiency with regard to institutions and institutional structures. These seem to work in favour of masculine structures with organizational rules and regulations that emphasize productivity, efficiency and achievement with less regard to individual difference and how these differences are catered for within the organizational environment.

**Methodology**

This was a case study of Makerere University. Both primary and time series secondary data on academic staff were used. Secondary data was obtained from the Makerere University Fact Books. The secondary data set runs from 2008 when data about the University academic staff became available in a gender disaggregated form on key performance indicators in line with the
mandate of the University, that is, teaching, learning, research and outreach.

Primary data was sought from male and female academic staff through interviews and a structured questionnaire. Respondents were from different colleges of the University, including the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHUSS), the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES), the College of Comprising and Information Sciences (COCIS), the University Library, the College of Health Sciences (CHS), the College of Education and External Studies, and the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Bio-Security (COVAB). The questionnaire was completed by willing respondents, both female and male academic staff. Accordingly, data was analysed by objectives using MS Excel software, estimating simple line graphs and simple statistics. The descriptive approach added a deeper understanding of the results.

Sixty four (64) academic staff completed the questionnaire, including 35 male and 29 female staff. Of those, 49 both male and female were married and only one reported to be single while the rest did not respond to this question. The minimum qualification for first recruitment in academic tenure ship was a master’s degree and the entry point in that academic structure was assistant lecturer. The sample included staffs that held at least a master’s degree or PhD. Academic staffs that matched these criteria were randomly selected depending on their willingness to participate.

**Findings**

**Social Background and its Effect on Academic Tenure-ship**

The social background of the academic staff revealed that the male respondent’s age ranged from 29 to 66 years, while that of female respondents ranged from 32 to 61 years of age. Fifty one (51) respondents were married and ten (10) were single. Thirteen out of 29 female academic staff got their first children before they graduated, implying that they were already encumbered with family issues before they were graduated and tenured. The age difference between the time when the female staffs got their first born children and when they got their first highest qualification was (-28 years).

Only eight out of 29 of the female staff had their first born children when they were already
tenured. The lowest number of dependants in female staff households was 2 people. This was observed in two out of the 29 households. For the male academic staff, the age difference between when they got their first born children and when they got their first highest qualification was (~25 years). Eleven out of 35 male academic staff got their first children before they gained their highest qualifications, a smaller percentage compared to the female academic staff. It was observed that less male than female staff got encumbered with family issues way before they were tenured than their female counter part.

The biggest household size for both male and female academic staff was 10 people including the biological and other dependants. The smallest household size was one individual and it was observed in three out of 35 male households. The results implied female households carried a higher number of dependants than their male counterparts and therefore female staff had a heavier burden in terms of support. It also indicated that the female staffs indulge in family issues earlier than the male. Figure 1 shows the trend of students who graduate with PhD and Master’s programmes at Makerere University by year from 2008 to 2016.

![Figure 1 Trend of Students Graduated by Level and Year of Graduation.](image)

The graduate trend for master’s level graduates steadily rose from 442 in 2008 to 1265 in 2011 before it dipped to 900 in 2012 and peaked off at 1392 in 2013 when it took a downward trend. The PhD gradation figures over the period show a low growth trend, rising from 6 PhDs in 2008 to 64 PhDs in 2016. One must have a PhD qualification to qualify for tenure-ship as a lecturer. It was observed that Makerere University graduated more master’s students than doctoral student.

**Trends and Number of Male and Female Full-time Academic Staff by Year at Makerere University**

Figure 2 shows that the trends of male and female fulltime academic staff by numbers and year. In general, the male statistics increased from 993 in 2008 to 1044 in 2016, representing an increase of male staff by 51. The female trend remained almost static from 369 in 2008 falling to 312 in 2009 and picking up in 2010 at 342 until 2015 when it peaked at 400 before it dropped to 388 the following year. This is an increase of 19 staff for the females during the same period.

![Figure 2 Trend of Full time Academic Staff by Gender and Year Source: Makerere University Fact Book 2015/2016. Special Edition, 2016](image)

**Trend of Graduation of Staff by Sex and Percentage of Female and Senior Academic Staff**

Figure 3 shows total male and female academic staff, percentage of female and senior academic staff by year at Makerere University.
The percentage of female academic staff to total academic staff ranged between 27 and 29 percent during the period 2008-2016. This was less than 1/3 of the academe at the University. The percentage of senior female academic staff to senior academic staff showed a similar trend. Senior academic staff at Makerere University constituted the professors, associate professors, senior lecturers and lecturers. This was a dismal performance on the part of female academic staff.

**Working Environmental Factors that Explain Gender Inequity in Academic Employment at Makerere University**

Table 1 shows the results of the academic staff perceptions of the working environmental factors that explain gender inequity in academic employment by attribute, degree of agreement, and sex by level of significance. From this table the following attributes significantly point out to gender inequity in academic employment: the existence of more qualifying men for academic tenure-ship than women; the age at which staff gain access to funds to pursue PhD Programmes of study; the teaching load for both male and female staff; the existence of more male role models than female role models; a lower number of females seeking academic tenure ship. The results further indicate the family formation by academics before being tenured in academic service; the nurturing nature of women compared to men; the independence, competitiveness, and ambitious nature of men compared to women; gender inequity in academic employment as a female choice were insignificant pointers to gender inequity in academic employment.
Table 1: Environmental factors that explain gender inequity in academic employment at Makerere university

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes Tested</th>
<th>No. of Res.</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existence of more qualifying men for academic tenure-ship than females</td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The age staff access to funds to pursue PhD Programmes of study is the same for male and female staff.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching load for both male and female staff is the same.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are more male role models than female role models.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are fewer females seeking academic tenure ship.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are enough female role models in academic tenure ship.</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female engagement in family formation by academic before being tenured in academic service.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nurturing nature of women compared to men.</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The independence, competitiveness, and ambitious nature of men.</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender inequity in academic employment as a female choice.</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender inequity in academic employment as a male agenda</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the fact that there were fewer women seeking academic employment and gender inequity in academic employment being a male agenda were indeterminate. This implied that individual based factors disadvantage women compared to men some of them very difficult to explain without considering the family in the background.

Factors that Maintain Gender Inequity in Academic Employment from an Institutional Viewpoint
Table 2 shows the result of the academic staff perceptions of the factors that maintain gender inequity in academic employment by attribute, degree of agreement, sex and level of significance from the institutional point of view.

Table 2: Factors that maintain gender inequity in academic employment from an Institutional Viewpoint

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes Tested</th>
<th>No. of Resp.</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Universities preference to employ male to female academic staff.</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of Employing Female compared to male academic staff was high.</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of employing male compared to female academic staff is not different.</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of deliberate Gender efforts at the Makerere University.</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existence of deliberate Gender Equity measures and guideline at the Makerere University.</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of Gender Equity Regulations</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female representation at university top management is observed.</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absence of female representation on staff development, appointments and promotion board / committees.</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment of University Management towards Gender Responsive Recruitment.</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for more affirmative action towards gender inequity.</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of affirmative action in academic employment.</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The institutionally based perceptions that significantly maintain gender inequity in academic employment included: high cost of employing female staff; existence of deliberate gender equity measures and guideline; female representation at top management; absence of female representation on staff development, appointments and promotion board/committees; inadequate commitment of University management towards gender responsive recruitment; lack of more affirmative action towards gender inequity; absence of a female friendly environment at the University; support for a policy of optional delayed retirement for women.

One could deduce that institutionally based factors were significant pointers to gender inequity, highlighting the lukewarm nature of the institution towards gender mainstream or policy evaporation. On the other hand, the university preference to employing male compared to female academic staff; existence of deliberate gender efforts at the Makerere University; implementation of gender equity regulations were indeterminate in explaining the persistent gender inequity. This could be interpreted as a lukewarm attitude/reception of the institution towards implementing the gender agenda, and that gender inequity in academic employment was a structural challenge at Makerere University.

**Individually Based Perceptions that Explain Gender Inequity in Academic Employment at Makerere University**

Table 3 shows the individually based perceptions of the factors that explain gender inequity in academic employment at Makerere University from an institutional point of view, by attribute, sex and level of significance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes Tested</th>
<th>No of Respondents</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Indifferent</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women prefer to have children first before they embark on academic career</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men prefer to have children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From Table 3 the following individual perceptions were significant in explaining gender inequity at Makerere University: women’s preference to have children first before they embarked on an academic career; men’s avoidance of family issues before they were tenured in employment. It was prudent for women to embark on an academic career before they got families. Family commitments hinder a woman’s ability to do research as an important factor in academic engagement and the individual perception that the title “Professor” was more represented by men than women models. On the other hand, individual based perception including men’s preference to have children first before they embark on academic career; women avoidance of family issues before they were tenured in employment; conflict amongst women; the perception that women were irrational in decision making and men were more
rational decisions than women; and the perception that it was all about one’s choice were insignificant. This meant the family related factors, mental models of one’s self and of the job titles explained gender inequity in academic employment but these factors.

**Discussion of Results**

This study investigated the gender inequity in academic employment at Makerere University, Uganda. It aimed to establish if gender inequity in academic employment was a gendered agenda. It investigated the effect of individual, working environment and institutional based perceptions and how they impacted on gender inequity in academic employment at Makerere University. The general result indicated that individual based factors disadvantage women more compared to men. Some of these factors are very difficult to explain without knowing the family background. There was a lukewarm attitude/reception towards implementing the gender agenda and gender inequity in academic employment was a structural challenge at Makerere University.

Household characteristics revealed that on average, female households have a higher number of dependants than their male counterparts. This puts more stress on female as compared to male staff. Female staffs have to handle family formation issues earlier than their male counterparts. Women graduate at the age of between 23 - 27 years which is the female prime reproductive age. This could explain their late entry into academic tenure-ship. This result concurred with what Mason and Goulden (2004) called the baby gap, and Cobb-Clark’s (1999) observation that the gender gap was insignificant among younger workers aged 18–25 years. Cobb-Clark contends that the baby gap predisposes women to family responsibility before they were tenured in any employment, robbing them of time for academic development. Misra et. al. (2011) posit that family responsibility and academic career growth compete for time that would otherwise be for academic development and hence tenure-ship. This could explain the gender inequity in academic employment.

The results further showed that the teaching load for female and male academic staff was not different but women spend more time on other services at the university while men spend more time on research. This finding concurs with the argument of Misra et. al. (2011) that the disproportionate time male and female staff spent in teaching and service was a significant
obstacle for women associate professors and therefore a predator to tenure-ship of female staff. Mason and Marc (2004) acknowledge this in a related argument that the life trajectories of tenured women differed from those of tenured men. This implies that Makerere University did not recognize the gender differential responsibilities of staff when allotting the teaching load. The opportunity cost of this was a slow academic growth of women and their tenure-ship, a result that was similar to the findings of other scholars including Bradburn and Sikora, (2002); Toutkoushian and Bellas, (1999); Park, (1996); Blackburn, et al., (1991). These scholars underscored the significance of the family and balancing of time among the three basic components of faculty tasks: teaching, research and services to community and family as predators to academic tenure-ship.

Evidence showed that there are fewer female senior academic staff as compared to the male staff at Makerere University. In addition, although there is a very slow growth of PhD graduates from Makerere University, the female rate of growth was far lower than that of the male academe. The slow growth rate of PhD graduates and the small number of females compared to the male academic staff was likely to be a recipe for gender inequity in academic employment as this provided small space for recruitment. These results concur with the observation by Knapp, et al., (2011) that although by 2011 women were in the majority of students in American colleges and universities, the progress for women into the most prestigious and well-paid positions in academia has lagged far behind the advances experienced by their male counterparts.

At Makerere University this is reinforced by fewer women seeking academic employment, a factor that could explain gender inequity against females. These fewer numbers of females seeking academic tenure-ship was likely to translate into less female representation on strategic committees. These small numbers of females on the strategic committees is likely to lead to an inability of the female staff to push the gender inequity agenda, for instance to ensure that women will receive the 40% proportion of opportunities for women’s slots when awarding grants for academic development and/or advocate for an even higher proportion. This is in agreement with what The Modern Language Association (2009) and Misra, et al., (2011) posited, that is, that women are less likely to be promoted than men, and when they are promoted, the process takes longer, probably due to their age when they qualify. By that age
they are likely to be competing with young and energetic men and hence less likely to get tenure-ship. Besides, the big numbers of junior male academic staff employed on contract as mentees, which is unlikely for female academic staff, puts them in a position to take advantage of any opportunity before the opportunities are advertised.

The cost of employing female staff was perceived to be higher than that of male staff. This could be attributed to the intermittent breaks women may from time to time demand such as maternity leave, caring for their families and any other social roles they may need to perform which will force the institution to incur extra costs for temporary staff when female academics are away.

This appears to rhyme with Rimsky and Johnson’s (1996) position that organizations may wish to respond to the gender inequities, but this may not be possible since the organization needs to maximize its organizational efficiency and functions that may be at odds with gender equity initiatives. It is observed that this could only be possible in public institutions where efficiency is not the main goal, unlike in private institutions. Institutions are bound by their visions and missions to engage staffs who are less encumbered by their family issues.

Staff observed that the existence of deliberate gender equity measures and guidelines at the Makerere University was in itself a pointer for gender inequity in academic employment. A case in point was the practice that when the female staff constituency failed to raise the required number of candidates to take up the 40% proportion of funds for academic development, the female slot was given away to the male candidate, but the reverse was not true when there were more females vying for other positions, they were not compensated. However, the result that gender inequity was a male agenda was indeterminate. The male academic staff took advantage of their numbers on strategic committees of the University. Men were better represented on most committees of the University, except for the Gender Mainstreaming Committee. Men use their numbers to participate in policy development and implementation, and award themselves grants for research for PhD training, flouting policy and regulations in their favour. Through policies and regulations, male staff was likely to push their masculine agenda in academic employment although not directly. This was contrary to the argument held by Gappa, Austin, & Trice (2007) that the rationale for policies pertaining to work arrangements was that recruitment, retention, and succession of women was enhanced when formal policies accommodate both personal and professional responsibilities.
Results showed no significant difference between male and female staff in terms of competitiveness, ambition and independence of mind when it comes to academic ability. This suggests that gender inequity in academic employment lies in other factors. Nurturing was neither a significant predator of gender inequity suggesting that both men and women could play the nurturing role. Besides, there was no conclusive evidence that implementation of the gender equity measure was a predator to gender inequity in academic employment; rather it was observed that the gender mainstreaming committee’s activities were lukewarm about implementing the gender policies and guidelines for gender equity. Establishing the status of gender policies and guidelines and their effectiveness in both academic and administrative functions was rarely done and when it was, rarely was any feedback given. Female academic staffs are not fairly represented at top management committees, suggesting the lack of commitment and moral will of University management to guide the process towards gender equity.

Results further showed that the Makerere University academic environment was not friendly to female academic employees as it prioritized academic excellence without providing a platform for an equally conducive social environment for academic excellence to thrive for both gender. This was reinforced by the evidence of mental models that individuals built and the perception towards certain positions – the title “professor”, for example, is seen as a male image, highlighting the issues of stereotyping of positions in the employment structure. There was no evidence that conflict among women was a predator to gender inequity, neither was there evidence that men were more rational or competitive in decision making than women nor was there evidence that women were irrational in decision making. Lastly, and most importantly, there was evidence that both male and female academic staffs were supportive of a policy for delayed retirement of female academic staff. This could be a reflection that the University community is realising the benefit of gender equity within employment in general and academic employment in particular.

Conclusions and Recommendations
The study investigated the persistent gender inequity in academic employment to specifically
establish what explains and maintains gender inequity and what can be done to close the gender inequity gap at Makerere University in Uganda. Secondary and primary data were used. Analysis was descriptive and analytical with support of tables and simple statistics. The general finding was that the individual’s social background; the number of females who graduate with PhD degrees; institutional structures; and individual factors such as mental models and stereotypes that the staff formulate about themselves and about the profession as well as the institutional structures, environment and commitment to addressing gender inequity in academic employment were all pointers to gender inequity.

In light of the above, there is need for education and training to change the mind-set of individuals about the mental models and stereotypes about professions that are appropriate or inappropriate for women and to recognize that women and men are equal partners and are equally accountable for the gender inequity. Female staff should be proactive to adapt to masculine trends that govern academic tenure-ship by creating time for research, being more assertive and taking on opportunities on strategic committees when such opportunities come. Male staffs should encourage and support their spouses to upgrade themselves academically if the gender inequity gap at the workplace and the academic tenure-ship is to close.

Affirmative action in recruitment policies should only be a temporary measure as more capacity for gender mainstreaming is built at secondary and primary schools. Female staff should create working teams, lobbying groups to put the gender agenda, mentor and support fellow women to apply for available positions and engage the University on the gender equity agenda. From an institutional point of view, deliberate policy on equal 50/50 per cent female/male employment should be pursued, implemented and frequently monitored and reviewed to assess progress. The University should encourage mentorship programmes for both men and women with a view to building the capacity of women to gain confidence and a belief that they are equally capable to take on different roles in both their academic areas and administration and proactively present themselves for career development opportunities as well as engage in policy making processes at the University. The University should create an enabling environment for equality for all, by providing facilities that encourage both men and women in family formation.
stages to progress academically. The University should adhere, implement and monitor the University gender policies and guidelines and listen to their feedback. Lastly, the University should consider reviewing the policy on retirement with a view to allow optional retirement for women, as these provide a critical mass of role models which other women can emulate. Beyond the University, The Uganda Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) should monitor institutions with a view to address the gender inequities that exist in employment. The Ministry of Education and Sports should address the gender stereotypes early enough in the education cycle.

References
http://www.aacu.org/ocww/volume39_1/feature.cfm?section=2 or
http://www.aacu.org/ocww/volume39_1/index.cfm
Laura G., Janice E. Kelly-Reid, and Scott A. Ginder (2011) Enrolment in Postsecondary

Makerere University Fact Book 2015, Planning and Development, Makerere University, 2015.

Mankiw’s, Gregory (2007) Principles of Microeconomics, 2nd edition, Chapter 1 (p. 3-6) and Chapter 13 (p. 270-2) South-Western Cengage Learning 5191 Natorp Boulevard Mason, OH 45040 USA


AN EXPANSIVE REALIZATION PERSPECTIVE:
ACCESS AND USE OF ICTS BY YOUNG WOMEN
OF MATHARE'S INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

Grace Githaiga, Institute for Development Studies and
George Nyabuga, School of Journalism & Mass Communication
University of Nairobi

Abstract
The world has witnessed unprecedented growth in the access and use of ICTs. Simultaneously, the
digital divide has widened, with a few young women in informal settlements enjoying the same
opportunities as men in the access and use of ICTs. It is in this regard that this study sought to
establish the access and use of ICTs by young women of informal settlements in Mathare, Kenya.
The study utilized a thematic analysis of the qualitative data derived from the in-depth interviews
and focus group discussions. The findings validate the Expansive Realization Theory by indicating
how traditional and digital ICTs (mobile phones, the internet) have made it possible for young
women to realize their potential by offering useful information such as job opportunities and how
to boost their businesses. For the few women with ICT skills, the utilization of these skills has made
them realize they could design posters and offer ICT training to those with limited digital literacy.
In that way, access and use of ICTs have facilitated expansive realization among young women of
the Mathare informal settlements.

Keywords: Young Women, Access to ICTS, Use of ICTs, Expansive Realization

Introduction
Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as mobile phones, the internet, television,
radio and print media are essential tools with the potential of emancipating the underserved young
women in informal settlements. The expansive realization perspective proposed by Daniel Miller
& Don Slater offers vital insights into how ICTs can enable young women within informal
settlements to realize their maximum potential. Miller & Slater (2000, p.10) argue that the internet
offers an expanded scale whereby individuals can realize their idealized identities. In line with this
perspective, the focus is on ascertaining if the access and use of ICTs within informal settlements have made it possible for young women to realize their potential.

Globally, few women enjoy the same opportunities as men concerning the access and use of ICTs. For instance, in the context of India, the socio-economic conditions of young women make it difficult for them to access and utilize ICTs fully (Sonne, 2020, p.13). In the majority of the cases related to women and ICTs, the focus is on addressing physical access barriers by ensuring that the right infrastructure is in place to facilitate communication and access to the internet with little or no efforts towards narrowing the intellectual and social divides (van Deursen & van Dijk, 2011, p.16). Nonetheless, despite having ICT infrastructure, young women in informal settlements are still disadvantaged due to their limited literacy levels and disadvantaged position within the society.

Besides, women have limited access to such ICTs as mobile phones that are predominantly used by men in traditional societies (Blumenstock & Eagle, 2012, p.6). Further, despite ICTs being interwoven into the different dimensions of life, factors such as low literacy, limited digital skills and affordability of ICTs are barriers to women's digital participation (Pokpas, 2019, p.285). It appears, therefore, that women, especially in the informal settlement, experience barriers in their access and utilization of ICTs. This study investigated access and use of ICTs among young women of Mathare Pioneer Youth group with the view of establishing whether ICTs have brought about an expansive realization among the young women.

**Problem Statement**

Significant divides are evident in the access and use of ICTs across the globe. Statistics from the International Telecommunication (ITU) indicate that there is a 17 percent internet user gap with more male individuals accessing the internet compared to their female counterparts (ITU, 2019, p.4). In developing countries, there has been lower participation of women in the information society because of the entrenched socio-cultural beliefs within the society (Antonio & Tuffley, 2014, p.674). In Kenya, Gustafsson & Nielsen (2017, p.291) found the gender inequalities in access to ICTs to be more significant in rural areas than in urban areas. Within the urban context, there is
limited digital literacy and inadequate ICT infrastructure (Wamuyu, 2017, p.1709). Notably, there is evidence on the access and use of ICTs in rural and urban settlements in Kenya. The scarcity of knowledge on access and use of ICTs among young women of informal settlements justifies the study.

**Literature and Theoretical Review**

This section touches on the theoretical framework and the literature review.

**Expansive Realization Theory**

Daniel Miller & Don Slater (2000, p.10) proposed the Expansive Realization Theory which posits that the adoption of new technologies is driven by historically established desires that are yet to be met due to the inadequacies in earlier technologies. The terms expansive and realization reflect on the internet's ability to resolve on contradictions about an individual's ability by offering an expanded scale whereby they can realize their idealized identities (Miller and Slater, 2000, p.10).

The implication is that the "realization" of this consciousness can be 'expansive' or extensive. Accordingly, the different ICTs utilized are appreciated to the extent of how useful they are, and how they manifest in people's lives.

To demonstrate how this is operationalized, Miller and Slater (2000, p.11) provide an example of Trinidad, where the internet, particularly E-mail, enabled the Trinidadians in the Diaspora to be actively involved in parenting and offering mutual support. In addition, the internet facilitated the flow of information and resources from all over the globe, thereby enabling Trinidadians at home to feel closer to the business practices they assumed they already followed (Miller, 1997, p.12). Trinidadians in the Diaspora felt like they belonged to the larger Trinidadian society as the internet facilitated this feeling (Miller and Slater, 2000).

In that sense, the internet was seen to have brought the potential of being a 'Trini' back to Trinidad. It made this possible for Trinidadians at home and those abroad. Notably, for 'Trinis' at home, they had access to world-class skills, international markets and cultural flows. For those abroad, they were able to connect with their family and friends as well as maintain their national identity. Moreover, the internet had expanded communication, thereby repairing discrepancies that were eminent within the Trinidad society and helped to bring the communities closer to their idealized identities (Miller and Slater, 2000, p.13). The local communities were therefore re-established into
the global society in terms of cultural flows, information and markets.

For the Mathare informal settlement in Nairobi, the Expansive Realization Theory serves as an example of the process of access and utilization of ICTs among the young women. Aspects such as income-generating activities among them, even though not happening fully, are impacting the young women positively through what the internet offers in terms of e-commerce and advertisements. Accordingly, it can be said that the use of ICTs offers some sense of expansive realization among young women.

**Women's Access to ICTs**

In developing nations, internet connectivity is mostly available within the cities while weak ICT infrastructure is predominant in the informal settlements. A study on ICT access and usage conducted in nine African countries indicated that in informal businesses mostly mobile phones were used while the use of internet and computers was negligible (Deen-Swarray et al., 2013, p.64). Though mobile phones and mobile internet have the potential to facilitate the growth of businesses in the informal sector, business owners in informal settlements lack the skills and ambition to make this a reality (Deen-Swarray et al., p.65). However, in Kenya, there is scarce evidence on access to ICTs, specifically for young women doing business in informal settlements. In a similar study in Kibera, it was observed that limited knowledge of existing ICTs, high cost of ICTs, lack of internet access and language barriers made it difficult for Kibera slum dwellers to access and use communication information services (Bandari, 2018). There is a possibility that the realities for slum dwellers of Kibera are similar to those of the young women of Mathare. Similarly, Jebet et al. (2018, p.255) observed that due to limited access to ICTs, informal sources such as friends, were avenues of accessing information among the rural women in Keiyo South. To also draw on Wyche & Olson (2018, p.33), financial and gendered time distribution to do tasks constrained women, and coupled with the misconceptions on social media, restricted women's access to mobile internet.

**Utilization of ICTs by Women**

The availability of ICT infrastructure, their affordability and digital literacy of users determine the scope and magnitude of ICT utilization. Sonner (2020, p.13) established that low-income women
in India lag behind in access and usage of mobile phones. In the majority of cases, some shared a mobile phone while others owned mobile phones with fewer features. Moreover, socially constructed gender norms within Indian society discouraged mobile phone usage by women.

On the South African scene, Onyango and Galvin (2019, p.81) observed that the mobile phone had been appropriated through instrumentalization to serve their needs. Mobile phones were used mainly for making calls and text messaging. To circumvent the costs on calls, the residents utilized the ‘Please call me’ function to those seen as having airtime.

Another example of utilization was by Kabeer (2016, p.11) who concluded that the youth in Kibera utilize mobile phones to network with their peers and build on the relationship among them, thus strengthening the social ties among the youth, and making communication easier. Nevertheless, the networking was only limited to those in similar lower-income strata because of the youths’ class and place of residence. Mobile phones made communication among the youth in the slum easier. However, they lacked a feeling of belonging to the larger Kenyan society.

Wyche et al. (2013, p.2830) delved into the use of the Facebook platform in the informal settlements of Nairobi. The result revealed that Viwandani residents within Nairobi made use of Facebook to search for job opportunities, market their businesses and seek remittances from both family and friends abroad. The social network is used as an avenue for income generation among the urban poor. This study adopts a similar approach though the focus is on young women in the informal settlements of Mathare.

This study looked into such issues as to whether the young women of the Mathare informal settlement have challenges in accessing digital technologies due to language barriers, the high cost of access, limited ICT literacy and whether there are any socially constructed gender norms that limit the utilization of ICTs.

**Methodology**
The research adopted a qualitative approach because it enabled more significant interaction between the researcher and the participants. The approach seeks to understand a phenomenon. The
research design was a case study of Mathare Pioneer Youth group. Focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews were utilized in data collection. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample young women with information about the study problem.

**Study Population and Sample Size**
The population of the study consisted of young women of the Mathare Pioneer Youth group drawn from 13 villages within the Mathare informal settlement. This group was formed to coordinate efforts of taking care of the welfare of vulnerable children and orphans in this informal settlement. Mathare residents lack access to ICTs, such as the internet and smart phones (Wamuyu (2017, p.1557) which limits their participation in the digital world. The young women who are members of the group are in their early 20s and almost all of them have a primary school level of education. Due to the poor socio-economic background only a few have achieved high school level of education. These young women were chosen to give their accounts of access to and use of ICTs. From a population of 33 members who participated in the Focus Group Discussions (FGD), six young women were picked to give In-depth Interviews (ID).

**Data Collection**
The study is qualitative, hence in-depth interviews and FGDs were used to gather information. The FGDs were used because of their ability to generate a rich understanding of the participants' knowledge and convictions about an issue (Woodyatt, Finneran & Stephenson, 2016, p.745). Key informant interviews were also used in data collection to get expert knowledge and perspectives on the thematic areas of access and uses of ICTs. The key informant technique enhanced free flow of information and ideas from the young women.

**Data Analysis**
The qualitative data collected from the in-depth interviews and FGDs included such issues as platforms available for communication and means of communication utilized. The research utilized thematic analysis because it is highly flexible and it provides a rich and detailed account of data (Braun, & Clarke, 2006, p.88). Data was also collected on physical, intellectual and economic factors influencing access to ICTs. Views on the use of traditional ICTs such as radio, television, and digital ones such as cell phones, computers and the internet, were also gathered.
Data from the focus group discussions was transcribed, analysed and interpreted according to themes. In addition, the data derived from the in-depth interviews was analysed under thematic analysis with emphasis on access and use of ICTs. The FGDs showed how the young women of the Mathare Pioneer Youth Group reached a consensus and shared a common voice on aspects of ICT access and use in the informal settlement.

Results and Discussions
The results are discussed along the access and utilization themes.

Access of ICTs by Young Women of Informal Settlements
The study relied on Thompson and Heinström (2015) levels of access to ICTs in interrogating young women's access to ICTs. The first level on physical access delved into how economic and political factors influence access to ICTs. The second level focuses on intellectual access and how it is influenced by the level of education and ICT literacy. Finally, universal access incorporated social and cultural aspects that either facilitate or are a barrier to the access of ICTs.

Access to Mobile Phones
The young women of Mathare Pioneer Youth group, noted that mobile phones are widely accessible within Mathare. During the interviews, they said, "we own a mobile phone because we can easily access the internet where we socialize with our friends on platforms such as Facebook. It has greatly helped us since we do not have to visit cyber cafes which we find costly." (FGD Participants, Mathare Pioneer Youth Group). Mobile phones have facilitated communication and socialization among young women. They can also access electronic newspapers that hold information touching on women's issues. To echo the voice of the young women: "Through the mobile phones, we can access e-papers for as little as Ksh10 daily and acquaint ourselves with information on job opportunities available in different sectors and even matters to do with sexuality." (FGD Participants, Mathare Pioneer Youth Group). Access to mobile phones has facilitated young women's access to newspapers, mainly because newspaper prices are usually relatively high, taking into consideration the young women’s disposable incomes. This is indicative of the fact that technologies do offer immediate benefits to the young women. Also, to facilitate access to the internet, make calls and send text messages, the young women highly utilize

---

1Voices from FGD Participants of Mathare Pioneer Youth Group, July 15, 2011
2Voices from FGD Participants of Mathare Pioneer Youth Group, July 15, 2011
the Okoa Jahazi\textsuperscript{83} option (offered by the Safaricom mobile provider), which offers airtime on loan. This service is clearly expanding access but at a cost, as it attracts a 10 percent service charge fee that is deducted the next time the young women purchase and load airtime on their phones.

Furthermore, young women have multiple sim cards to allow them utilize the offers by the different telecommunication operators. For instance, most of them use their Airtel lines in making calls and accessing the internet since it is relatively cheaper. Despite Telkom and Airtel service providers having a similar option as Okoa Jahazi that have fairer rates, the young women heavily rely on Safaricom’s Okoa Jahazi option. The young women request advanced airtime of as low as Ksh20 which they are charged Ksh2 as a service fee. To them, the service fee makes the service costlier than regular purchasing of airtime. The same notion was shared by Onyango and Galvin (2019) who concluded that the cost of making calls and text messaging was a hindrance to the full utilization of mobile phones among informal settlers of Gauteng, South Africa.

\textit{Access to Radio}

Access to traditional media such as radio was evident among the young women. The uptake of radio is high compared to other forms of media since it is relatively cheaper and does not require advanced knowledge to operate. Undoubtedly, it is instrumental in expanding informal settlers’ access to information compared to computers whose uptake is slow. To quote one of the young women, "I usually request one of my neighbours’ not to switch off his radio so that I can stay informed". Those who do not own a radio use their mobile phones to listen to their stations of choice.

Radio stations such as Ghetto Radio 89.5 FM\textsuperscript{84} has brought about a feeling of belonging among the young women. The station broadcasts in Sheng\textsuperscript{85} which is the lingua franca of the majority of the youth in informal settlements. This station usually plays music that is loved by the youth and incorporates topics that are relevant to them. One of the programs aired by the radio station goes

\textsuperscript{83} Okoa jahazi literary translated would mean ‘save a capsizing ship.’ In the context of being advanced airtime when desperate it means ‘save my day’ and users have to pay an interest once they buy airtime.\textsuperscript{84} http://www.ghettoradio.co.ke/\textsuperscript{85} A Kenyan urban language that is continuously developing out of a mix of English, Kiswahili and mother tongue.
by the name 'Air Goteana' which means ‘greetings’ in Sheng. The program at the time of conducting the focus group discussions was hosted by "DJ Mbusi" and "BonokoDeh" considered favourites among these youth, as they were deemed as coming from similar background, with DJ Mbusi hailing from Korogocho, another informal settlement.

During the FGDs, it was noted that young women enjoy listening to DJ Mbusi and Bonoko Deh, as the two can relate to the struggles in the informal settlements. The young women actively engage with this station, through text messages and their social media handles. The women are able to highlight wrong-doings and wrongdoers within Mathare or in society in a segment popularly known as 'nyahuny' (whip). They are happy that whenever they call, text or even post on the social media handles of Ghetto Radio, their messages are read out, highlighting the wrongdoings that occur in the informal settlements. This way, there is an action on the wrongdoing that takes place in the community through the help of the show. Also, the show applauds good deeds; hence considered a voice for the voiceless (FGD Participants, Mathare Pioneer Youth Group).  

From the preceding it transpires that access to the radio has made it possible for young women to have knowledge of what is happening within and outside their community. In so doing, the radio has facilitated expansive realization among young women. The reason for this is that young women not only provide information through the radio but also interact with the radio hosts. In these interactions, they learn about job opportunities they did not know were available. Also, since reporting crime is usually a challenge in the informal settlements because of the fear of being targeted, the 'Air Goteana' show offers a platform where young women can anonymously report crime without facing any repercussions for their action. Accordingly, despite being a traditional media, the radio is instrumental to the young women of Mathare as the internet through use of cell phones, is refashioning radio by allowing more people to participate.

**Access to Television**

The majority of the young women interviewed enjoy watching television programmes, though only a few of them own a television set. In most of the cases, they watch it either at a friend’s or neighbour’s place. However, an observation of television aerials within Mathare suggests that the

---

86Voices from FGD Participants of Mathare Pioneer Youth Group, July 15, 2011
area is not in short supply of television sets. The television programmes that the young women interact with are musical ones particularly Nigerian music, football and Mexican soap operas. Young women's interest in Mexican soaps was evident. They have an emotional connection with the characters in these soap operas to the extent that some of them have the desire to be swept off their feet by a prince charming "exactly the way it is in the soaps" (ID 1). There was a preference towards watching soap operas as opposed to news and therefore, the young women were not well informed on current affairs. They watched television programmes that offered them entertainment which offers temporary relief to the young women rather than watch programs that might assist them in the long term. One young woman alluded,

The news segment is only relevant to us as women during the electioneering period. Some of the members of Mathare Pioneer Youth Group were victims of the post-election violence in 2007-2008; therefore, we have to remain vigilant. We hardly watch news because it is full of politics which we find male-dominated. There are, however, a few women who watch the news and update the rest of us on current affairs (ID 5).

However, young women make use of other news platforms within Mathare. For example, the Kukuru kakara mtaani magazine, owned by the young women, provide the youth within Mathare with information on the happenings in and outside of the informal settlement. In a sense, the Mathare Pioneer youth group has capitalized on the opportunity to offer alternative news to the residents of Mathare.

Access to Computers

Young women have access to computers mainly in cyber cafes. Since the cost of accessing the computers in cyber cafes is prohibitive to them, only a few of them utilize the computers. Besides, their limited digital literacy is a barrier to access to computers and for example, they find the keyboard complicated. The findings tally with that of Bandari (2018) which established that limited knowledge of the existing ICTs, high costs of ICTs and lack of internet access made it difficult for Kibera slum dwellers to access and use communication information services. Nevertheless, ID4 was among the few women that managed to go for ICT training offered by 'NairobiTrust'87. She was

---

87NairobiTrust is a youth-based organization that uses ICT multimedia creatively to improve the lives of less privileged children and youth from the non-formal settlement. http://www.nairobits.com/
offered training on web design as well as entrepreneurial skills. She noted,

I consider myself privileged to have learnt ICT skills at ‘Nairobi’ and at the same time, utilized the skills. After undertaking the training, I had the opportunity to work as a secretary in one of the youth groups in Mathare. My role was to prepare reports for both members and sponsors. In this task, I would utilize my typing skills using Microsoft office software. Other than just typing the report, I also e-mailed them to different recipients seamlessly. My web design skills came in handy during the World Tuberculosis Day. During this occasion, I was tasked with the design of the posters. Unfortunately, the laptop that I had borrowed to do this work broke down; but I was grateful for the opportunity (ID 4).

It appears that young women have limited access to computers due to their high cost, acquisition of digital literacy skills and the utilization of computers in cyber cafes. However, for the few that had an opportunity to learn these skills, they have utilized them in different endeavours, leading to a sense of expansive realization among a select few young women. ICT training of one of the young women made them realize that they could do more than just typing work, they could also engage in other tasks such as designing of posters. Young women realized that they have innate potential that could be manifested through the acquisition of digital literacy.

**Use of ICTs by Young Women of Informal Settlements**

The ICTs are predominantly used by young women to access information, socialize and meet their economic needs. The mobile phone and computers are mostly utilized to address these needs as follows.

**Utilization of Mobile Phones**

Communication in Mathare has been revolutionized by the use of mobile phones. The young women are able to call and/or chat with their family and friends. Those that are more advanced in their digital literacy can access e-mails and utilize the different social media networks. It can be deduced that the uptake of mobile phones among young women has facilitated the use of the internet. One of the young women had this to say,

The charges of making calls are the same, whether one is calling their kin in the village or communicating with individuals within Nairobi. There is convenience in that when an individual does not answer your call, they will get a notification of a missed call. If your text messages or calls are not responded to, you can deduce that
Moreover, young women have been able to maintain their social relationship with their family members and friends that do not reside in Mathare. In line with the findings, Kibere (2016) elucidated that youth in Kibera use mobile phones to network with their peers and build on the relationship among them. Similarly, young women with internet-enabled phones can access information on the internet more easily by purchasing bundles for as low Ksh10. ID 1 observed, "Being an active Facebook user, my phone has made it easier for me to access the site at any time I want. Am continually engaging with my friends on Facebook and am even an administrator in one of the Facebook groups. The site consumes my leisure time and distracts me from life challenges in Mathare. For my friends and family members that are not on Facebook, we communicate on text messages (ID 1)."

However, the majority of young women use mobile phones that are not internet-enabled. To counter this challenge, they would send a text message to internet service providers to share with them internet settings. Such women comprise those who had not undertaken any ICT training and did not have a high school level of education. For instance, ID5 had no formal training on the use of ICTs. She had been assisted to open an e-mail account, but since she had limited knowledge of its use, it remained dormant most of the time. She was only actively involved in text messaging and making calls.

For ID1 and ID2, they were conversant with the use of the internet. They had gone to the extent of searching for information on how to boost their hair and beauty business. Other than that, they used their phones to call customers, and some had even created a WhatsApp group to facilitate communication with their clients. Besides, social media platforms are not only used for socialization, but also as channels for conveying news updates. The different television and radio stations have social media handles where they update their audiences on the happenings within the country. For young women of Mathare, they mostly get news updates from their friends who share via social media platforms.

Young women utilize their social networks to not only socialize, but also to get news updates, similar to what Jebet et al. (2018) established that informal sources, such as friends were avenues of accessing information among the rural women in Keiyo South. The young women are also in
the category of individuals that earn meagre incomes and would have to save for months for them to operate a bank account. However, mobile money has addressed this challenge and they can now save as low as Ksh50 via mobile money. During one of the FGDs, one member pointed out that since she supports her siblings and had managed to save money via mobile money for a year. She saved enough school fees for the young brother who was set to join Form One. Moreover, the 'chamas' (groups) are operating well since each member can send money to the treasurer who safeguards the money via mobile money. There are records of the amounts of money sent by each member, which makes accounting easier (FGD Participants, Mathare Pioneer Youth Group). It is clear that mobile phones have facilitated mobile money transactions, and therefore, financial inclusion of young women of Mathare that have no bank accounts. They can now transact the same way as those individuals with a bank account. Despite the importance of mobile phones to the lives of young women in Mathare, there are socio-cultural beliefs that are a hindrance to their full utilization of mobile phones. Some of the women stated that they are referred to as “Wajuaji” (know it all) because of the use of mobile phones. Others had the notion that their use of phones would break up their families. As such, their utilization of mobile phones was only limited to text messaging and calling.

The socio-cultural beliefs within Mathare informal settlements are a hindrance to the utilization of ICTs such as mobile phones. However, such beliefs are not only limited to Mathare but are held in such places as India, whereby socially constructed gender norms discourage mobile phone usage by women (Sonne, 2020). Also, there are instances where parents or guardians in Mathare prohibit their girls from owning a mobile phone because of the notion that "the gadget will promote promiscuity." (ID 5). In similar fashion Wyche & Olson (2018), concluded that financial constraints and misconceptions on the use of ICTs limited women's access to mobile internet.

Utilization of Pen Drives

Young women who were ICT literate utilized pen drives to store data and could easily use computers to transfer information to the pen drive. ID3 had the following to say,

After completing my internship, I had to write a report on my experience where I was stationed. The moment I had completed writing the report, I saved in my pen drive that also contained my curriculum vitae. The pen drive is portable, so I usually

---

88 Voices from FGD Participants of Mathare Pioneer Youth Group, July 15, 2011
carry it wherever I go. As such, when I come across any job opportunity that requires me to apply immediately, information such as curriculum vitae can easily be retrieved from the pen drive. In such circumstances, I can plug in the pen drive into the USB port of the computer I come across and e-mail the needed details. Besides, whenever I visit the cybercafé, I can download music and store them on my pen drive. My pen drive is my reliable storage for information (ID3).

**Utilization of Computers**
The young women rarely used computers, despite the fact that well-wishers had donated some. However, some of the computers had broken down and the members found it difficult to repair them. Besides, the costs of accessing cyber cafes were relatively high for young women. For those that visited cybers, their typing speed was a hindrance to their utilization. In that regard, computers were less utilized compared to the other forms of ICTs such as mobile phones.

**Conclusion**
The study draws the following conclusions.

**Access to ICTs by Young Women in Informal Settlements**
The study has established that the young women have access to mobile telephony and the internet, which constitute digital forms of ICTs. Mobile phones are widely accessible and utilized as a means of communication in Mathare. Specifically, young women switch from one internet service provider to the other to capitalize on the offers of different networks. However, the cost of access is relatively high for them. As such, they have to rely on costly ‘okoa jahazi’ (loaned) airtime options to facilitate text messaging, making calls and accessing the internet. Further, in the past, it was difficult for young women to have access to newspapers, but the internet has made it possible to access electronic newspapers for as little as Ksh10.

**Use of ICTs by Young Women in Informal Settlements**
The study reveals how young women of Mathare Pioneer Group are utilizing ICTs. Both traditional and digital ICTs are used to address social and economic needs. Mainly, mobile money has made it possible for young women to save money as well as borrow mobile money loans. Also, the use of search engines to find work-related information has helped to access better business ideas,
ultimately contributing to a better customer base. Besides, they can interact freely through ICTs and make personal use for entertainment, peer interaction, information seeking among many other uses.

**Theoretical Contribution**
The study validated the Expansive Realization Theory in the sense that access and use of ICTs have made it possible for young women of Mathare to realize their potential. Notably, traditional ICTs, specifically the radio, have expanded young women's access to information and made it possible for them to highlight the issues affecting the informal settlements. Moreover, listening to the radio hosts who hail from the informal settlements is an inspiration to them that an improvement in their skills and knowledge can bring more opportunities their way.

Mobile phones have complemented the traditional ICTs since young women can acquire information on job opportunities over the radio and make the applications using their mobile phones or a computer. In this regard, access to the different ICTs has brought about the realization among the young women that they are capable of doing much more than just typing. Some of them have realized such potential in activities such as the design of posters. However, there are socio-cultural barriers that hinder most of the young women from exploring more than just the basic functionalities of their mobile phones. Accordingly, it becomes difficult for young women to attain fully an expansive realization.

**Recommendations**
The research offers insights on access and use of ICTs among young women of Mathare within an expansive realization perspective. There is, therefore, need to focus on the strategies outlined below to address challenges in the access and use of ICTs.

**Access to ICTs by Young Women in Informal Settlements**
Owing to the findings on the access of ICTs by young women, there is need for internet service providers to tailor their internet bundles, text messages bundles and call rates in such a way that their costs are not a hindrance to access. In particular, telecommunication operators could do away with the service fees in their advanced airtime since it will, in the long run, enhance the use of their services. Further, since young women have limited digital literacy, the government could collaborate with development partners and establish training centres to offer ICT training for the
youth in informal settlements. These training centres would need to have internet in order to facilitate young women's access to the digital content. By facilitating women's access to information, knowledge and skills, and the means to communicate and to participate in knowledge generation, many developmental problems may end up being solved.

Use of ICTs By Young Women in Informal Settlements
The technology literacy of young women has negatively impacted on their use of ICTs. The situation is not made any easier by misconceptions surrounding the use of ICTs by women. As such, there is need to avail free ICT centres to sensitize young women from the larger Mathare area on how to use ICTs and their benefits. In these training sessions, it is important to dispel misconceptions that ICTs would break the families of young women. Particular emphasis needs to be laid on establishing and equipping the centres with sufficient ICT infrastructure in terms of computers and the internet.

Moreover, since mobile phones are facilitating access to the internet, telecommunication operators could offer their clients the option of buying internet-enabled phones in instalments. In so doing, young women with no access to a radio or television would own a mobile device that incorporates all these functions. With these measures in place, the utilization of ICTs would be enhanced, bringing about an expansive realization among young women.

References


Kibere, F. N. (2016). The Paradox of Mobility in the Kenyan ICT Ecosystem: An Ethnographic Case of how the Youth in Kibera Slum Use and Appropriately the Mobile Phone and the Mobile Internet. *Information Technology for Development, 22*(sup1), 47-67.


