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a case study of *The Post*, March 2009

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ABSTRACT

The media, specifically tabloids, have the potential to portray poverty-related issues in a manner that informs the public and government about the experiences of people living in poverty so that it can be tackled with urgency. Poverty has blighted the lives of many, especially women, children and widows in Cameroon. The role of the media in reporting the plight and suffering of the ‘masses’ potentially shapes the way in which these issues are handled by those in authority. The study notes that the tabloid press has the potential to expose certain experiences of ordinary people thereby constituting that alternative sphere for the disadvantaged. The study investigates the manner women are represented in *The Post* which is an English tabloid published in Cameroon. The representation of women in this study looks at the institutional policies which drive the representation of women in news constructs, analyses the news values which shape news production, and uses Thompson’s modes of ideology to unravel the underlying meanings in the reported stories. The study is inspired by the claims that since women make up the majority of the world’s poor, so too would media representations depict them as such. It utilises thematic analysis to understand the manner in which women are represented in *The Post*. It also uses interviews with the regional bureau editor of the North West region to probe what news values and institutional policies drive the stories on women’s poverty. Document analysis is used to better comprehend the institutional guidelines which govern the representation of women during the month of March 2009.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study. It highlights its inspiration and provides a background to the newspaper under study. The chapter also looks at the study's objectives and its significance. Finally, the chapter provides an outline of the entire thesis structure.

An analysis of women as represented in *The Post* during the month of March 2009 employs qualitative research methods to obtain and analyse data on stories that talk about women in order to find out whether their representations are reflective of their poor status. Having read some copies of *The Post* newspaper, I observed that stories on women were under-represented. During my Master's coursework, I read that tabloids provide a subaltern space for stories neglected by mainstream media. I was further triggered to find out how women who constitute part of the "subaltern public" were represented in *The Post*, a prominent tabloid newspaper published in English in Cameroon. Therefore, I obtained the archived January and February 2009 editions of *The Post* and noted a couple of stories on women in sections that were not driven by news criteria. I ignored these months as there was nothing relevant for me to analyse in respect to my topic. In addition, the stories on women were not pushed by news values as they were mainly adverts.

In gathering the data, I made the decision to ignore the first two months of the year as there were no stories to be analysed. However, I used the March 2009 edition of *The Post* because they were a number of stories which were sufficient for the analysis of this case study. Furthermore, the issue of representative sampling is not applicable to this study as I acknowledge that the findings cannot be generalised. My purpose was to find stories on women that could be useful to my analysis. The financial constraint of having to purchase subsequent editions of the newspaper further restricted the availability of data, which would have been obtained from more editions of the year 2010. I considered the month of March because more stories in *The Post* during this month were focused on women, since it is the month the United Nations sets aside to celebrate Mother's and Women's Day. This means that many stories focus on the theme for the year's celebrations and stories about activities to mark the day before, during and after abound in newspapers.

In an attempt to find out how women are represented in *The Post*, the study emphasises the manner in which women are constructed when they happen to be visible in tabloids like *The Post*. The target is to find out whether their representations reveal their economic situation in society. According to Cheka (1996:1), the majority of Cameroonian women are struggling with poverty, with many children to feed, no jobs, and are hugely dependent on men for their survival. As a patriarchal society, cultural discourses which help to ensure women remain in subordinate positions abound (Cheka 1996:2), with the media arguably at the forefront of propagating these discourses.

Objectives of the study

The main aim of the study is to understand whether the media portray women as poor was inspired by Butler's online post that as women and ethnic minorities in the US constitute a greater majority of the poor than men, one would expect the media to focus on women in order to 'mirror' this (kate-butler.suite101.com). This study does not investigate Butler's claim using the US media. Instead, it carries the claim to a different space and time, to understand if this could be the case in Cameroon. In the study's attempt to find out how women are represented in *The Post*, I carried out a document review of its editorial policies in order to understand whether media rules have a bearing on the manner in which women are represented. The study further explores what news values influence the way women are depicted. News values are supposed to be the 'distillation of what an identified audience' (Richardson 2005:91) is keen to read, or 'the ground rules'; that is, the dos and don'ts determining what news is (Richardson 2005:91). It is often said that, if it bleeds, it leads (Richardson 2005:92). Since poverty constitutes the bleeding predicament of many in developing countries, one expects stories on the sufferers (women) to make the headlines.

Inspiration for the study

I come from a society where women are unable to meet their daily needs as a result of poverty. As a woman and media student, I am interested in exploring how women are represented in news stories and to investigate whether news values and editorial guidelines play a role in the representation of news on women's poverty. Moreover, having studied some of the media issues concerning women and the media, I am keen to investigate, from a case study perspective, Butler's claim that "although women, along with ethnic minorities, have a

higher incidence of living below the poverty line than are men, the media take this reality to mean that portrayals of poverty ought to focus exclusively on these groups of people” (kate-butler.suite101.com). Institutionally, it is my interest to understand why “the media cannot be bothered by stories on poverty or about people suffering from poverty” (Berger 2008:87).

The reason for establishing whether women are represented as poor is propelled by debates raised by feminists that, as we are all born equal, we should all be treated as equals (Hughes 2002:33). This is not the case in Cameroon, a patriarchal society in which parents try to forestall the education of their female children under the pretext that educated girls do not easily get married, may get pregnant while at school, and remain dependent on their parents (Cheka 1996:41). The result is that girls remain uneducated, which contributes to their lack of financial independence and thus their poverty (Cheka 1996:42). The notion of men and women being treated as equals has itself raised several arguments. Equality is a concept that can only be applied to two entities – ‘A’ and ‘B’. Yet, we all know that A and B are never going to be equal unless the facet (arena) of equality is specified (Thornton 1986:77) (cited in Hughes 2002). Equality means open and uniform access to opportunities irrespective of sex (Thornton 1986).

Inequality between men and women has led to a gender bias which is perceived as the main cause for the continuation of poverty and, unless it is confronted, the fight against poverty may as well be considered futile (Thin 1995:43). The United Nations Commission on the Status of Women during its 40th session in 1996 included the mainstreaming of a gendered perspective in all its poverty eradication processes (www.undp.org). Despite this call, Cameroon has not considered including the application and implementation of gender in any of its poverty eradication programme (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2003:7). The enhancement of women’s rights and gender equality is a necessary step towards alleviating poverty at the rural and national levels, as gender equality does not solely benefit women but the households they inhabit (Sweetman 2002:5). Poverty from a gender perspective is equally important because it constitutes a risk factor as regards the occurrence of physical violence in many households (Women & Development Unite 2004:14).

Background to the study

During the 1990s, the press in Cameroon witnessed a proliferation of newspapers following the wake of multi-party politics and the introduction of democracy (Nyamnjoh 2005:198). *The Cameroon Post* was amongst several newspapers which sprung up during this period but, because of the poor treatment received by journalists by its owner, some journalists drifted away, thus creating *The Weekly Post* (Nyamnjoh 2005:200). Unfortunately, the paper had limited readership in the North West Province, where it was created because it had drifted from its editorial line to being an open instrument for hate propaganda against the North West Province; obliging some of the journalists to quit and join the *Cameroon Post* (Nyamnjoh 2005:200). Meanwhile, other journalists left the *Cameroon Post* because of differences with its new proprietor, an SDF baron, and created another paper called *The Post* (Nyamnjoh 2005:200). *The Post* is a private bi-weekly English newspaper (Ndangam 2006:1) and publishes special weekend issues, depending on national and international ceremonial events. For example, during the month of March 2009, *The Post* had two special editions because of the Pope's visit to Cameroon. March is usually the month the world celebrates Tuberculosis Day. It is also during March that Women's Day is celebrated. Journalists are, therefore, expected to cover stories which cover these topics. On days like Women's Day, the North West bureau chief believes sales are higher (Mbunwe 2011).

Significance of the study

The Post as a case study choice is significant in that it has a diverse audience amongst English-speaking Cameroonians serving both Cameroonians and the Cameroonian diaspora community, which relies on its online edited version for news back home. It is also convenient for me because it publishes all content in English as opposed to some bilingual and French-speaking publications; this would have required translation, which would have been an additional financial burden. The importance of this study rests on the lack of research being carried out in Cameroon on the representation of poor women in tabloids. A cursory look at the representation of women in news constructs reveals very little information on the subject; it even raises the question as to whether there exists any research on the manner in which the media represent women in Cameroon.

One of the main focuses of this research is to probe whether the daily experiences of women are reflected in tabloids, which have the potential to offer an alternative forum for women who make up majority of the poor in patriarchal societies. This is in line with what authors such as Fraser (1992:123) argue that tabloids have the potential to provide a platform for alternative voices, such as poor people and women who are often not present in mainstream newspapers. Highlighting the role of the traditional public sphere, the media has the potential to represent stories in ways that do not subordinate women's positions in capitalist and patriarchal societies (Cranny-Francis et al. 2003:1). Tabloids like *The Post* are a potential 'rescue' platform for those who are under-represented in the media and, as such, contribute to rendering the voices of the underprivileged groups heard (Fraser 1992:123). The reasoning is supported by Berger (2007:90) who argues that by representing the plight of the poor in news constructs, the media helps as informant to policy makers to take the issue seriously. It is therefore important to understand whether *The Post* is fulfilling its potential role as an alternative platform for the "subaltern groups" comprising women, children and the marginalised (Fraser 123:124). The significant connection lies in the study's aim to comprehend the way *The Post* represents women.

The study is important in that it deals with contested issues such as women and their economic status in news. Cameroon is classified as one of the sub-Saharan countries in which the majority of people live on less than one dollar a day and in which women and children are most significantly affected by poverty (Human Development Report 2002). Hence, studies like this one could contribute to future research.

Thesis outline

The thesis is divided into six chapters. The present chapter provides the general introduction and background to the study, explaining what the research seeks to find, and outlines its aims and objectives, as well as its significance.

Chapter 2 elaborates the broad notions of poverty and gender, specifically looking at what it means to be a woman. It defines the various concepts used in the study, as well as providing a review of previous work on the representation of both poverty and women in the media. It

also cross-examines the various reasons for women's continuous poverty within societies, while the emphasis is on the feminist approach to poverty.

Chapter 3 presents the theoretical framework that informs the study; it explains the concept of representation and how it works. It discusses how discourses operate through representation and the power representation has in shaping people's beliefs and way of life. It further elucidates the constructivist approach to discourse by mainly looking at the production of knowledge, power and truth, and the various factors which influence the production of texts. This chapter also discusses tabloids as a public sphere and as a subaltern space for the underprivileged.

Chapter 4 focuses on the research methods employed in the study, foregrounding its use of thematic analysis, document review, and electronic-mail interview. The procedures in carrying out thematic analysis and document review are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5 presents the study's findings commencing with a thematic analysis of stories about women, while concurrently discussing the various news values and editorial policies which shape representation in *The Post* newspaper.

Chapter Six concludes the study. It reveals findings of the study, summarises the thesis and suggests other possible avenues for further research on the tabloid press and its potential role as it strives to represent poor women.

CHAPTER 2

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION, PERSPECTIVES ON POVERTY AND REASONS FOR WOMEN'S POOR EXPERIENCES: POVERTY WEARS THE GARMENT OF A WOMAN



Photo courtesy of *The Post Online* by Pegue Manga (UB student on internship) Picture 1

“Women do two-thirds of the world’s work...yet they earn only one tenth of the world’s income and own less than one per cent of the world’s property. They are among the poorest of the world’s poor”. (Conable 1986:1 qtd in Thibos et al. 2007:2).

Introduction

This chapter begins with a review of previous work carried out on the representation of women and the representation of poverty, highlighting the differences between this study and those carried out previously. Further, it focuses on the disparate ways in which men and women experience poverty in Cameroon, giving perspectives on the persistence of women’s poverty in Cameroon. The chapter concludes by highlighting the different factors which contribute to women's poor status in society.

A reiteration of the study's objectives

The main aim of the present study was to investigate whether women are represented as 'poor' in *The Post*. The intention was to discover whether the representations of women touch major aspects of the human development approach to poverty, such as the lack of financial means to support themselves, powerlessness, illiteracy and dependence (Kingsbury *et al.* 2004:36). The study looked at the representation of women during March 2009 to find out whether constructions of women reflect their poverty in Society. The present study also focuses on the editorial policies which govern the representation of news stories in *The Post*, in order to understand the news values and policies which shape its construction of the news.

Review of research on the media's representation of poverty and women's representation

Previous work on the representation of poverty has focused on the way poverty is portrayed in the news with respect to class, gender, race and even ethnic relations (Clawson 2000:16). Specifically, the main thrust of previous studies on the representation of poverty has been to investigate whether the media perpetuate inaccurate and stereotypical images of the poor (Clawson 2000:16; Butler 2007; Unifem 2008; Gilens 1995; Golding and Middleton 1982). These investigations showed the unpopularity of poverty-related stories and gave the reasons why they do not receive much attention from the media (Butler 2007:5, Berger 2008:87). Global institutions that work to alleviate poverty and empower women, such as the World Bank and the United Nations, have investigated the general feminisation of poverty without necessarily relating it to the media (Panos 2007:3). However, it could be argued, equally, that the World Bank's structural adjustment programmes seek to reproduce poverty rather than to alleviate it (Panos 2007:4). Other studies on poverty have focused on the broader perspective of poverty without focusing on the representation of poor women (Panos 2007:4; Clawson 2000:5).

Many studies have explored the frequency of women's representation in news constructs and have shown that women are under-represented in news stories (Rodgers and Thorson 2003; Gibbons 2000; Potter 1985; Rodgers, Thorson and Antecol 2001). Rendón and Nicolas (2012:227) stated that the news media continue to objectify and stereotype groups that have very little means of expressing their experiences. Rendón and Nicolas (2012:227) argued

further that the representation of women has caught the attention of researchers because the portrayal of women typically underrepresents and misrepresents women's experiences. This under-representation has been termed as the symbolic annihilation of women in the media by George Gerbner (Tuchman 1979:520). The symbolic annihilation of women is the absence of women in news constructs, whether deliberate or not. This absence means that issues pertaining to people who are marginalised, disregarded, or ignored by the media are potentially erased from public discourse. Means Coleman and Chivers Yochim (2008:3) argued that 'poor media treatment contributes to social disempowerment, while symbolic absence in the media can erase groups of people from public consciousnesses'.

Some researchers, in probing the question of representation of women in news constructs have used Gramsci's theoretical notion of hegemony to understand how power works to subordinate women (Potter 1985; Rodgers, Thorson and Antecol 2001:9). Gramsci's concept of hegemony describes the manner in which the media aids in sustaining and maintaining male-dominated power (Ross and Byerly 2005:3; Brenner 1991:194). Other studies have used the concept of ideology to show how certain modes of ideology work to sustain unequal relations of power between men and women (Rodgers and Thorson 2003; Gibbons 2000). Unlike previous research, the present study draws on the Foucauldian notion of discourse, as it unravels theoretically the way representation through language operates and how discursive practices shape representation in the media.

Generally, data from many of the research projects reviewed were collected from magazines rather than from newspapers (Thorson 2003; Gibbons 2000; Butler 2007; Gilens 1996). A certain number of magazines were randomly selected and stories relating to poverty identified (Femia 1981:23). The present study, in contrast, focuses on stories relating to the representation of poor women in a tabloid newspaper. The principal research methods used here are thematic analysis, document review and electronic-mail interview. This differs from previous research, which has mainly used content analysis as a method (Clawson 2002; Gibbons 2000; Gilens 1996). The quantitative paradigm has often been employed in the past, to determine what gender, race, class and even tribes or regions are depicted in magazines (Clawson 2002:25).

The findings of various research projects carried out on the representation of poverty conclude that the poor are often 'otherised' (Butler 2007:2). The poor are stereotypically described with derogatory words which result in excluding them further from society (Butler

2007:5). After studying the media representation of the poor, Clawson and Trice (2000:56) conclude that the media often describe the underclass in behavioural terms as criminals, alcoholics, drug addicts and as irresponsible. Other studies have shown that the media perpetuate stereotypes of the poor by framing them as lazy, sexually irresponsible, and criminally deviant (Parisi 1998:98; Gans 1995).

Len-Rios *et al.* (2005:2) argue that when journalists cover stories on political actors and societal elites, most of whom are men, they reproduce messages which privilege men. Len-Rios *et al.* (2005:2) further posit that if newspapers, which serve as the record of the day, underrepresent women they potentially contribute to the public's consent to a masculine cultural hegemony. Van Zoonen (1998:34) notes that, because the news is manufactured by men, it also seeks to reflect the interests of men. In this way, the news could be seen to be supporting a patriarchal society. In the present study a thematic analysis of the way women are represented in *The Post* was carried out.

Conceptual definitions of poverty

Poverty can be perceived as a sociological construction associated with space and time. Following a photo project carried out by Duncan McNicholl on the portrayal of poor Africans, the analysis of the photographs revealed that to be regarded as poor is a construction, but this construction is used by the media to suit particular interests Wade (2010). Although the project acknowledged the existence of poverty, it also emphasised the one-sided reports and motivations of poverty stories (Wade (2010) retrieved from thesocietypages.org 2010).

The study thus implied that poverty, as represented by the media, reflects a certain viewpoint of poverty. As with news stories that take different angles, stories on poverty can also be gauged from different viewpoints and angles. As a result of the fact that poverty has different perspectives through which it can be represented and narrated, it also has different meanings attached to it, depending on the context in which it is being used and the space and time. Poverty has been approached from different disciplines and one thing that all definitions have in common is deprivation or a lack of basic needs, which all culminate in issues of insufficiency and powerlessness.

Hagenaars and de Vos (1988:211) stated that both poverty research and social policy employ a variety of definitions of poverty. The term poverty is broad; hence, the approaches to

poverty are also differing and broad. Therefore, one needs to deal with the term with some precision and specificity with respect to its definition while handling it as a subject of inquiry. In the following paragraphs, two approaches to poverty are explained after Hagenaars and de Vos (1988:211): absolute minimum and subjective minimum. Each approach can be subdivided into categories to enable a simplistic understanding of the approaches. Although it is not the intention of the present study to explicate the term poverty in its broader sense, it is, nevertheless, essential to provide an overview of the various approaches to it, in order to ease the understanding of the term as used in multivariate contexts. According to Hagenaars and de Vos (1988:211), the term poverty can be classed into the following categories: poverty is having less than an objectively defined, absolute minimum; poverty is having less than others and it is feeling that you do not have enough to get along. This means that poverty can be absolute, relative, and in between relative and absolute, respectively (Hagenaars and de Vos 1988:211). Poverty defined as having less than an objectively defined, absolute minimum is sub-categorised by Hagenaars and de Vos (1988:211) into the basic needs approach. The basic needs approach defines poverty as the lack of 'basic needs' such as food, clothing, and housing. The other approaches include: the food income ratio, the fixed cost/income ratio, and the total expenditure income ratio (Hagenaars and de Vos 1988:211). The last three sub-categories have not been defined here as they have closer economic connections and would not represent the sociological viewpoint of poverty which is taken in the present study (see Hagenaars and de Vos 1988:211).

For the sake of substantiation, the income perspective on poverty has been criticised by authors who agree with the view that the income-related definition of poverty fails to capture other aspects of poverty, as a poor person is regarded as one who lives below an established poverty line (Tsui 2002:70). This means 'shortfalls of incomes from the poverty line encapsulate human deprivation' (Tsui 2002:70). The second definition of poverty states that poverty is having less than others in society (Tsui 2002:214). This definition is linked to theories of deprivation in that it needs to be calculated in respect of income and in respect of various commodities (Tsui 2002:214).

The present study, therefore, departs from the income approach and instead, engages with the human development approach because this relates to a definition of poverty as informed by Cameroon's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP 2003:5 retrieved from imf.org).

Poverty has been defined and approached from economic, cultural, social and even religious perspectives. Poverty has also been defined by civil society and international non-governmental organisations such as the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme (www.undp.org). Lexically, poverty refers to ‘want of the necessities of life’ (Oxford Dictionary of Current English 1995), however, these necessities are highly subjective and relative. Narrow definitions of poverty focus on its economic aspects with emphasis on wealth creation, with little account taken of the social context (Sweetman 2002:2). However, the wider notion of poverty relates to economic and socio-political exclusion (Sweetman 2002:2). From an economic point of view, poverty refers to constraints in accessing money, few assets, high unemployment, reduced savings, minimal income, and low productivity. From the social viewpoint, poverty delineates difficulties, such as the struggle to be independent, vulnerability, futility in life, attitudinal passivity and duress (Kingsbury *et al.* 2004:204). To summarise:

‘poverty means going short materially, socially and emotionally. It means spending less on food, on heating and on clothing than someone on an average income.... Above all, poverty takes away the tools to build the blocks of the future-your “life chances”. It steals away the opportunity to have a life unmarked by sickness, a decent education, a secure home and a long retirement’ (Oppenheim and Harker, 1996:4-5 qtd. in Alcock 1997:26).

Given its salience to women’s poverty, the present study adopts the definition postulated at the 1996 Beijing Platform of Action (www.cafra.org). Here poverty was described as the ‘lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure a sustainable livelihood, hunger and malnutrition, ill-health, lack of access to education and other basic services, increasing morbidity and mortality from illness, homelessness, and inadequate housing, unsafe environments, social discrimination and exclusion, it is also characterised by lack of decision-making in civil, social and cultural life’ (www.cafra.org).

In order to ensure that poverty is appropriately defined within the context of the Cameroon, the present study has also adopted the definition as elaborated in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of Cameroon (2003:5). According to this paper, poverty denotes the lack of

material and financial resources to satisfy basic needs such as food, clothing, housing, health care, education, access to water, good health, safe drinking water, etc. (PRSP 2003:5). The lack of educational facilities, insufficient and inadequate road infrastructure, and other services in some localities renders people poor (Sikod 2005:14). In addition, Cameroon's corruption has been rated amongst the worst in the world (www.postnewsline.com), and contributes to the increased rate of poverty generally amongst her people (www.undp.org). Together gender marginalisation in the public sector, tribalism and favouritism exacerbate poverty amongst Cameroonian women (www.afrol.com).

Perspectives on poverty

There are two different perspectives on poverty: the monetary and the human development perspective. The perspective on poverty which has been used in interpreting the concept in the present study is the human development perspective.

The monetary perspective on poverty

The monetary perspective defines poverty as falling below a certain income threshold. In line with this perspective, the United Nations and World Bank define people who live on less than one US dollar per day as being poor (World Bank 2003:1). However, poverty is often regarded as a highly gendered phenomenon, and indicated in ways that are not necessarily reflected by income (Kingsbury *et al.* 2004:36). Hence, measuring poverty purely from an income-related perspective masks the extent of poverty, particularly for women and children (Kingsbury *et al.* 2004:36).

The human development perspective

In contrast, the human development perspective, which is linked to the human development paradigm, defines poverty as the condition of being deprived of those opportunities and choices 'essential for a long, healthy life, freedom, dignity and a decent standard of living' (hdr.un.org). The human development approach to poverty captures three dimensions of poverty: income, basic need and capability perspectives, but the capability perspective is that which is emphasised (hdr.un.org). Poverty from this perspective can be referred to as a state of powerlessness and social exclusion from major decision-making processes which manifests in low levels of education, an increased mortality rate and poor health conditions (World Bank 2001:3).

Poverty in Cameroon

In Cameroon, 4 out of every 10 children under the age of five suffer from malnutrition (The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund Report (2004:8), and 63.5 out of every 1,000 babies born die at birth UNIDO (2004:1), World Fact sheet, (2006:2), while few ever get to visit a doctor as the country only boasts 1,025 physicians (all cited in Chin 2006:2). Arguably poverty only became a predominant issue represented in Cameroon's media when the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) and the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) were introduced in Cameroon by the International Monetary Fund (www.imf.org, www.afdb.org).

Two approaches were used in Cameroon's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper to evaluate poverty and to establish its determinants in Cameroon (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2003:5). Quantitative analysis revealed that the incidence of poverty was 43% as compared to 53% in 1990 (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2003). Poverty is regionalised between the urban and rural, the south and the north (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2003:6) and feminised, although the paper does not recognise that poverty in Cameroon is gendered. The regionalisation of poverty means a particular region has been assisted to alleviate poverty, whereas other areas remain rooted in poverty (Sikod 2005:23). The Anglophone regions in Cameroon have been marginalised in terms of development (Sikod 2005:23), yet development helps in combatting poverty, as it provides access to new opportunities for people.

There are many ways to account for women's continued poverty; for example, the individual rational behaviour of maximisation of gains leads men to invest in human capital for their professional life, whereas women prioritise investment in domestic activities (Basta *et al.* 1998:778). This rationale may be applied to explain women's greater vulnerability in the labour market (Basta *et al.* 1998:779), as suggested by an over-representation in precarious jobs and in unemployment, as well as gender segregation (Basta *et al.* 1998:779), the wage gap between men and women and greater exposure of women to material deprivation. Gender studies have stressed that poverty is gendered, as men and women's experiences of poverty differ, particularly within patriarchal societies (Basta *et al.* 1998:779). According to Todaro (1985:155), poverty adversely affects women because of their dual social roles as they work both in and out of the home. This is particularly true for Cameroonian women who engage in household activities such as cleaning the house and cooking, whilst working

in poorly-paid domains of public service; for example in secretarial work or as bar attendants, as well as working as petty traders and in subsistence agriculture (Sikod 2005:6).

Patriarchal discourse perpetuates the view that women are nurturers, thereby legitimising non-income-generating jobs such as water-fetching, farming and cooking, and making women reliant on men for their survival (Nana-Fabu 2006:2). Women in Cameroon are responsible for child care and male care: they prepare meals for men and children, clean and are responsible for all of the household chores (Nana-Fabu 2006:2). This division of roles within the family sphere is also evident within the public sector and it is responsible for women's increased poverty (Sikod 2005:2). The gender division of labour contributes to persistent poverty amongst women in Cameroon (Sikod 2005:2). As part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the government of Cameroon pledged to reduce poverty from 53% in 1990 to 25% by the year 2015 (Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2003:4). This improvement has, so far, benefited the urban areas mostly with a 22% reduction of poverty, while the rural areas are still struggling with the menace of poverty (Sikod 2005:2).

Another contributing factor to women's poverty in Cameroon is the high rate of illiteracy, particularly amongst women, which is estimated to be 50%, with girls under-represented in the educational system (IFAD 2007:9 retrieved from www.ifad.org). Education has been considered to be the key weapon in eradicating poverty and essential for meeting all the millennium development goals (www.undp.org). Women only undergo some elementary education, making it difficult for them to get into the job market, which has become highly competitive and based on academic qualifications (Sikod 2005:17). As a result, women are bound to have fewer employment opportunities, and receive lower wages than men (Todaro 1985:155).

Traditionally, the cultural discourse over women's rights to own land and property has been responsible for women's high poverty rates in Cameroon (Goheen 1996:2). Although 'sixty-six percent of rural workers are women, traditionally and culturally seen as responsible for providing for the family they hold only about one percent of land' (Goheen 1996:18). Limitations to women's rights to land ownership also lead to their economic and social marginalisation. The axiom 'men own the fields, women own the crops' remains central in gender discourse (Goheen 1996:72). In Africa, women are over-represented in the production of non-tradable crops (food production), and in informal low-technology activities, while men tend to dominate the tradable sector, producing goods and crops for exportation

(Wentholt *et al.* 1995:91). Another reason for women's poverty relates to the fact that women in Cameroon use rudimentary agricultural methods, such as tilling the soil with very primitive tools from dawn to dusk (Todaro 1985:303).

The feminisation of poverty

The feminist approach to poverty emphasises its gender implications and social aspects (Moghadam 2005:6). The roots of the feminisation of poverty can be traced to US debates during the 1970s on the status and well-being of single mothers (BRIDGE 2001:4). This approach to poverty was indicative of three factors: firstly, the higher incidence of poverty amongst women, which is acute compared to that of men. Secondly, it denoted the greater trend towards poverty amongst female-headed households, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (BRIDGE 2001:4). Thirdly, the feminisation of poverty has been viewed as due to the rising level of women and children in the informal sector, forced early marriages amongst young girls, different role assignments for household activities, high levels of school dropout amongst females, and low employment possibilities for women (Moghadam 2005:6). Feminist arguments on women's poverty emphasise the exclusion of women from certain profit-making trades, as well as the unequal distribution of assets and property and the gender bias within households. They further highlight legal and political systems in addition to labour markets throughout the world, and an increase in female-headed households (BRIDGE 2001:6).

In relation to news constructs, feminist researchers have also argued that over time women have been relegated to the private sphere and also when they are represented in news texts (Carter 1998:6). Barker (1999:7) explained how feminist approaches to cultural studies have explored the representation of women in popular culture and folk literature, and argued that women across the globe are regarded as the second sex and, thus, subordinate to men. The media also provide the foundations of information, symbols and ideals for most social groups. Regrettably, women's representation in the media, as Gallagher (2001) observed, helps to 'keep them in a place of relative powerlessness' (cited in Ross and Byerly 2005:3). Recently, feminist critiques have questioned and challenged gender blindness, arguing that concentrating on the differences between men and women in research and policy would disclose that women suffer poverty to a larger extent than men, and that their experience is unique, considering the demands placed upon them (Alcock 1997:134).

Media representations within patriarchal societies construct the male as powerful, physical, rational and located in the public sphere, whereas women are framed as passive, reliant, emotional and inhabiting the private sphere (Prinsloo 2003:3). According to the social conceptualisation of poverty, a group of people are said to be poor when they are passive, powerless, and lack the means to cater for their daily needs. This perspective is visible in media representations of women, and some have argued that this representation appeals to policy and decision-makers (www.panos.org).

In view of the attitudes outlined above on women and how female poverty manifests, it is necessary to be clear that, when undertaking the analysis of the present study, major aspects such as the human development approach to poverty will be employed to unravel the constructions of women with respect to poverty.

Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview of previous studies carried out on the representation of women in relation to poverty, with the recognition that women are under-represented in news constructs and, as such, have their status minimised in society. The various perspectives on poverty have also been pointed out, noting that the human development approach has been used in the present study. Women's continuous status as poor has been accounted for, particularly within patriarchal societies, and issues have been highlighted pertaining to the feminisation of poverty. The following chapter explores aspects of representation, discourse, and the manner in which tabloids potentially provide an alternative space for women, in particular, and the marginalised in general.

CHAPTER 3

REPRESENTATION: THEORIES AND PERSPECTIVES OF THE FOUCAULDIAN NOTION OF DISCOURSE

‘ In every society, the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized, and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality’ (Young 1981:52).

Introduction

The present study is concerned with the representation of poor women in the media. The first section of this chapter discusses the concept of representation and the part played by language in giving meaning to a subject. It represents an elaboration of the Foucauldian approach to discourse: how it is created, how it becomes operational and how it is regulated. It thus focuses on the production of knowledge, power, truth and subjectivity as propounded by Foucault in order to understand and highlight the operationalisation of discourse and how it shapes people’s lives. It is within this constructivist discussion on discourse that we understand the ways in which knowledge about subjects (the poor and women) is produced, controlled and attains the status of truth. This chapter also poses the question of how tabloids like *The Post* have the potential to provide an alternative platform for the poor’s untold stories.

Hall (1997:61) defined representation as a process in which members of a culture use language to produce meaning. Representation makes use of signs and images for members of a given culture to share meaning. Therefore, representation serves the purpose of helping individuals to interpret and make sense of the world in which they live. There are two processes involved in representation (Hall 1997:24). The first is the process by which objects are linked to a set of concepts (Barker 1999:12) and the second involves the use of language as an instrument of representation (Hall 1997:25). Language enables the interpretation of events, people, organisations and communities. The Cultural Studies theory argues that ‘language gives meaning to both material objects and social practices which are brought into

view by language and made intelligible to us in terms which language delimits' (Barker., 1999:12). The way in which people accord meaning to the world is influenced by language, although language is not a neutral medium for the formation of meanings and knowledge about objects which exist in the world. The view given above on representation suggests that there are three elements involved in the process of representation: object, the relationship between things, and language.

Language and representation

People who emerge from the same society and who have the same culture share a conceptual map which enables them to interpret signs while using the same language for the signs (Hall., 1997:25). In order for interpretation to take place, people must have access to two systems of representation: firstly, a shared conceptual map, which connects the object to the meaning, i.e. the signifier and the signified (Barker 1999:13). Once the connection between the signifier and signified is established, there is a need to share the codes as established by the culture. The essence of these shared codes is what defines a particular group of people; it could be argued that it is the shared codes that help people connect and give some order to the world.

Theories of representation

There are three approaches to representation: the reflective, intentional, and constructivist (Hall 1997:26). The reflective approach holds that meaning lies in the object, person, idea or event in the real world (Hall 1997:26). It suggests that language is used to reflect the exact meaning of objects as they are in the real world and is referred to as 'mimetic' (Hall 1997:26). In contrast to the reflective approach, the intentional approach argues that it is the author who gives meaning to what is in the world and to events happening in the world through the use of language. Words mean exactly what the author intended (Hall 1997:27). The third approach recognises the social nature of language; things in themselves are meaningless unless we grant meaning to them through the use of representational signs. This is termed the constructivist approach. Put succinctly, 'things don't mean, we construct meaning using representational systems, concepts and signs' (Hall 1997:25). Hall (1997:25) noted that 'it is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about that world meaningfully to one another'.

According to this line of thought poverty does not mean anything unless it is given meaning in different contextual settings and in different disciplines and as such, it can be perceived as a construction. Therefore, meaning arises as a result of a culture's shared conceptual maps (Hall 1997:60). It is these shared meanings that enable us to relate to one another and to understand words like poverty and women in a way that allows everyone to understand the meaning of the two terms, although they may vary across space and time. It follows that the media has come to play an increasingly central role in the construction and interpretation of the world (O'Sullivan *et al.* 1994:19), as it assists with the dissemination and propagation of meaning.

The meaning of discourse

Discourse is a term that is used in various disciplines to analyse the systems of thought, ideas, images and other symbolic practices which constitute culture (Foucault 1970:170). According to Foucault (1981:100):

discourse can be considered as a multiplicity of discursive elements that come into play in different strategies; it is this distribution that we must reconstruct, with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden, that it comprises; with the variants and different effects - according to who is speaking, his position of power, the institutional context in which he happens to be situated - that it implies; and with the shifts and reutilisations of identical formulae for contrary objectives that it also includes..

Applied to journalism, together with the terms 'poverty' and 'woman', discourse can be seen as a complex process involving the historical period in which the terms are used or situated, the socio-cultural environment in which journalists, poor people, and women find themselves, the authority from which they speak, and institutional rules used to shape their understanding of 'real' events. By shaping our perceptions of the world, pulling together chains of associations that produce a meaningful understanding, and then organising the way we behave towards objects in the world and towards other people, one might say that journalistic discourse generates the world of our everyday life (Hall 1997:68). In this way, discourse produces the knowledge of journalists, women, and poor people, and validates this position as truth.

Knowledge

Knowledge for Foucault is not something that exists independently of language (1980:49). In other words, all knowledge is organised through structures, interconnections, and associations that are built into language (Foucault 1980:50). Foucault argued that ‘knowledge is power’ (condensing this principle to ‘power/knowledge’), and suggested that power is implicated by the manner in which certain knowledge is applied (Hall 1997:48). For example, a journalist’s story is given credence because of the institution s/he works for and the fact that s/he has undergone some training as a journalist. For example, the assassination of the Pope reported by an unknown radio station in Cameroon might easily be dismissed as rumour, whereas the same story reported by Reuters would not be regarded in the same way. This illustrates Foucault's (1980:50) argument that knowledge emerging from a body of authority can not only be accepted as truth, but because it comes from an authority of power, it can be perceived as truth (cited in Hall 1997:49).

Truth

Truth, according to Foucault, does not exist without power, but is created in different periods and is dependent on what grouping has the power to make it true (Hall 1997:50). Truth is, therefore, to be understood as a structure of well-organised procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements (Hall 1997:50). Foucault did not speak of truth as a journalist might, but rather spoke of ‘regimes of truth, supported by discursive formations, which are made true through discursive practices’ (Foucault 1977:68).

Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth; that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true, the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned. (Hall 1997:49)

From this perspective, truth is perceived to be historical and rooted in knowledge and power. Hence, the true meaning of poverty would capture the historical moment, space and the authority which explained it. Hence, the idea of a poverty reduction strategy programme, as proposed by the IMF in order to help alleviate Cameroonians from poverty, had to contextualise the meaning of poverty according to the situation in Cameroon.

Power and subjectivity

Foucault's view of power is different from that of Gramsci (1926) and Marx (1978) (both cited in Femia 1981:75), who conceived it as stemming from the ruling class. In contrast with this top/down model, Foucault saw power as something which circulates. Power seeps into every site of social life from the family, the public arena and even our sexuality. It is not exclusively held at one centre but is 'deployed and exercised through a net-like organization' and needs to be understood as a 'productive network which runs through the whole social body' (Foucault 1980:98). Consequently, 'power creates knowledge, it produces discourse' (Hall 1997:50). For any form of power to be effective, it must become operational. Foucault argued that power relations have an immediate relationship with the body and the exercising of power is possible only if the body is caught up in a system of subjection (Foucault 1979:25). This subjection, which operates through discourse, is affected 'without involving violence, it may be calculated, organized, technically thought out; it may be subtle, make use neither of weapons nor of terror and yet remain of a physical order' (Foucault 1979: 26). Thus, the subject is produced within discourse and is dependent on discursive formations (Hall 1997:51). This means that all subjects, whether male or female, rich or poor, are constituted through discourse. From this perspective, those who grow within patriarchal societies have their knowledge framed and regulated by patriarchal discourse. For example, the knowledge that the man is usually the breadwinner and the woman takes on domestic roles while remaining completely reliant on the man for her survival is understood as a truth under the regime of patriarchy. For us to become the subject of a particular discourse, and thus the bearers of its power/knowledge, we must locate ourselves in a position from which that discourse makes most sense, and thus become its 'subjects' by subjecting ourselves to its meanings, power and regulation (Hall 1997:52-53). By analysing the discourse a speaker uses, one can often imply things about the speaker's gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class and, even more specifically, their relationship with others around them (Hall 1997:54). By analysing the major themes used by journalists in representing women, one can deduce and infer how women are constructed.

The subject cannot be separated from discourse; it obtains meaning from discourse and hence must submit to its rules and conventions. The subject, therefore, 'becomes the object through which power is relayed' (Hall 1997:55) and cannot be perceived as the unique author of power and knowledge. Foucault's work allows an understanding of how, in our various cultures, 'human beings are made subjects'. For example, women within patriarchal cultures

are expected to be subjected to male authority. Furthermore, Hall (1997:56) noted that ‘all discourses, then, construct subject positions, from which they make sense’. In other words, subjects identify themselves with discourses that appeal to them, so they are prepared to subject themselves to the meanings, power and regulatory premises of these discourses. For example, a woman who gets married following the customary rites knows the implications of such a marriage; she identifies her position within the discourse of a customary marriage and is willing to accept it and subject herself to its norms because she understands it. The woman accepts being regulated by its discourse.

The way discourse is regulated

Foucault explained that the production of (discourses) knowledge is legislated by what he termed ‘externally applied systems and internally applied rules for the control and delimitation of discourse: censorship, the fabrication of binary opposites, the will to truth, inter-textual repetition, authorship, discursive formations and qualification to speak’ (Foucault 1990:148). Having studied the factors which control the production of knowledge, I decided to elaborate on censorship, the fabrication of binary opposites, inter-textual repetition, authorship, discursive formations, and qualification to speak. These are directly connected to the present study in that they explain how discourse is controlled within patriarchal societies as well as within media institutions. This is, therefore, useful in understanding the objective of the study of analysing the way journalists are controlled in disseminating their stories by institutional regulations.

Censorship refers to externally applied rules of exclusion that prohibit speaking about certain topics (Foucault 1971:149). For example, the topic of becoming a traditional female chief in Cameroon is never discussed as it is perceived as taboo. This is evident from the number of women who become interested in traditional politics; this could be a platform from which to empower women and deliberate on how to amend cultural discourses which negatively affect their status in society. Within media institutions, censorship takes place in various forms, notably tabloids like *The Post* are bureaucratized and the workers are provided editorial guidelines which mould the manner in which they represent stories (Nyamnjoh 2007:167).

Another feature which legislates for the production of discourse is the fabrication of binary opposites, which provides room for certain ‘divisions and dichotomies’ to be created. Examples are reason and insanity, rich and poor, beauty and ugliness (Foucault 1971:149).

From the same perspective, the binary opposite of the rich and the poor creates the inclusion and exclusion of a particular group of people, whether defined by gender, ethnic group, religion and region. Women have been seen to be excluded from the formal sector of the economy, which would help to provide a reasonable income for meeting daily needs (Todaro 1985:7).

A further procedure which governs the production of discourse is commentary. Inter-textual repetition is termed commentary, meaning that each text is a commentary on an earlier text (Foucault 1971:50). As Foucault noted, commentary ‘gives us the opportunity to say something other than the text itself, but on condition that it is the text itself which is uttered, and in some way finalised’ (1971:152). In brief, Foucault made us understand that we are at liberty to comment on the text, but then, we can only make conclusions based on the text.

Authorship is another internally applied rule that governs the production of discourse. The individual is not the author per se; rather, it is the ‘unifying principle in a particular group of writings or statements lying at the origins of their significance, as the seat of their coherence’ (Foucault 1971:153). Journalists operate within certain discursive spaces and at different historical moments which shape the manner in which they represent any story, whether on poverty or wealth. ‘Accordingly, the production of discourse is controlled, selected organised, redistributed via a certain number of procedures whose role is to alter its powers and its dangers, to cope with chance events to evade its ponderous awesome materiality’(Foucault 1971:149).

One of Foucault’s principal objectives was to analyse the power relations governing the production and dissemination of discourses. He was conscious that oppositional discourses often extend the very relations of their own domination (Foucault 1971:149). Yet, all of these discourses, be they oppositional or productive, are controlled and legislated by various procedures.

News stories are created by a variety of discursive practices (see Fairclough 1995). For example, we can differentiate economic, judicial, feminist, academic and medical topics in terms of their own discursive rules and practices which, together, dictate how we articulate and interpret these topics (Fourie 2007:166). Within patriarchal societies, these discursive practices (cultural, religious and social discourses) define or frame a woman as a reproductive being. Cultural feminists argue that all of these discursive practices seek to maintain women

in a position of relative powerlessness, which is one of the major aspects of poverty (Carter *et al.* 1998:23). In Cameroon, cultural discourses place women in positions which do not empower them economically (Goheen 1996:8).

Understanding tabloids and exploring their origin

The idea of choosing to discuss tabloids stems from the fact that *The Post*, which is used as a case study, is a tabloid. It would, therefore, be unwise not to touch on the major aspects of tabloid journalism, as discussed by previous authors. *The Post* rarely focuses on stories on women, indeed I failed to identify any stories on women during the first two months of the 2009 publication of the tabloid. Most budding democratic states are battling with the scourge of poverty, therefore, it was the focus of the present study to understand the debate on tabloids like *The Post* in providing alternative spheres for the poor, women and the underprivileged. The media constitutes a platform through which ideas can be expressed and shared, thus forming part of the public sphere (Dahlgren 1995:7). Despite the universal expectation of the media to accommodate and represent all events, realistically this is not possible. Therefore, in practice, news values define what is to be depicted in the media.

Media scholars are divided between those who agree that tabloids can provide a space where democratic ideals or principles can be fostered, and those who criticise tabloids for concentrating on immediately popular issues (Ornebring and Jonsson 2004:287). Tabloids can be defined in relation to three characteristics: the format, style and subject of the newspaper. Norris (2000:15) defined tabloids by looking at their form, explaining that tabloids are designed to be physically smaller and easier to manage than broadsheets. Tabloid is derived from a 'tablet-like' pharmaceutical, suggesting a journalism that condenses stories into an easily absorbed format with the intention of stuffing all news into one package (Ornebring and Jonsson 2004:287). Their news style is simple and descriptive, using photographs and exaggerated headlines to convey messages (Norris 2000:16). Their focus is on entertainment stories, violence, scandals, celebrity, and sports (Machin & Papatheoderou 2002:36). Ornebring and Jonsson (2004:287) noted that:

From the very beginning, the tabloid press was criticized for sensationalism and emotionalism, for over-simplification of complex issues, for catering to the lowest common denominator and sometimes for outright lies.

When the word 'tabloid' is mentioned, what immediately comes to mind is the manner in which their news is selected and presented (Ornebring & Jonsson 2004:287). Tabloid journalism concentrates on stories on the well-to-do, bringing into the limelight the glossiness of their way of life. Critics contend that tabloids are fashioned to attract readers emotionally, and to provide pleasure and entertainment for their readers (Machin & Papatheoderou 2002:37). The tabloid press has been contrasted with 'quality' press (Fiske 1992:53). Tabloids are viewed by some as not respecting the norms of mainstream journalism which include unbiased, truthful and balanced reporting. Ornebring and Jonsson (2004:289) argued that, by not upholding the norms of professional journalism, tabloids don't get the respect accorded to mainstream journalism. If tabloids are unable to achieve this respect, what is their role within budding democratic states fighting poverty?

Tabloids as alternative platforms for excluded publics

Critics argue that tabloids neglect the ethics of journalistic practices in favour of sensationalism, thereby 'tarnishing' the reputation of all journalism (Todd cited in Sparks 1992:37; Bird 1992). However, it can be argued that sensationalism is not meant to distort information but, rather, give a descriptive and dramatic representation of events so as to provide a magnetic pull to readers (Ornebring & Jonsson 2004:284).

Tabloids can function as spaces for the organisation and creation of new groups, as well as a base for agitator activities directed towards a diverse public (Fraser 1989:124). The other concept of the public sphere does not see it as one unit of public life, with the main participants being the bourgeoisie. Ornebring and Jonsson (2004:284) argue that tabloid journalism may, in many respects, serve the public good in a way that mainstream journalism does not, positioning itself as an alternative public sphere. Thus, the tabloid press can actually be an influential and salient part of the mainstream mediated public sphere serving the public good. Ornebring and Jonsson (2004:293) argued that:

The populist nature of tabloid journalism may have many faults, but it can also be seen as an alternative arena for public discourse, wherein criticism of both the privileged political elites and traditional types of public discourse play a central role.

Therefore, the tabloid press potentially represents a new opportunity for people not normally covered by the prestige media to speak in public and to gain attention. Thus, tabloids can

potentially play a role in including and accommodating subordinated groups, allowing them to circulate issues that affect them, but which are less of a concern to the mainstream media (Fiske 1989:117; Grisprud 1992; Strelitz & Steenveld 2007:2; Wasserman 2005:2). Therefore, rather than viewing tabloids as indicative of a collapse of the public sphere, they could instead be perceived as pointing to its renewal in different forms (Grisprud 1992:92).

Fraser (1992:291) defines these different spheres as ‘subaltern counterpublics’. Subaltern counterpublics are platforms for discussions, where members of subordinated groups create and circulate counter discourses of their interests and needs (Fraser 1992:291).

‘Members of subordinated social groups – women, workers, peoples of colour, and gays and lesbians - have repeatedly found it advantageous to constitute alternative publics. I propose to call these *subaltern counterpublics* in order to signal that they are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs.’ (Fraser 1992:123)

From the analysis above and the standpoints described, one could argue that the study of poor women’s representation in *The Post* could provide the basis for understanding women’s identities in the news media. Equally, it could provide an understanding of the discursive practices which govern the production of discourses with respect of women.

Conclusion

This chapter elaborates on the constructivist approach to discourse as propounded by Foucault, highlighting principal aspects such as the creation of the subject, relations of power, the will to know truth and the different rules which legislate the production of a topic within any discursive field, particularly the production of news. Tabloids as potential alternative public spheres have been discussed in this chapter, as *The Post* is a tabloid with the potential to provide an alternative space for the poor and marginalised.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODS AND TECHNIQUES USED FOR DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

In an attempt to generate data from the present study which was aimed at finding out whether women are represented as poor in *The Post*, a case study research design based on qualitative research methods was adopted. This chapter commences with a brief discussion of the meaning of qualitative research and the study's objectives. It goes on to explain the research design and the various methods used in the study, with an elaboration on the procedure of thematic analysis.

The present study was designed to understand the manner in which women are depicted, based on the supposition that although women are more likely to live below the poverty line, the media take this reality to mean that portrayals of poverty ought to focus exclusively on women (<http://suite101.com/article/portraying-poverty-in-the-news-a12909>). In order to verify this hypothesis, the study looked at the manner in which women in Cameroon are represented by *The Post*. The present study employed the qualitative research methods of thematic analysis, which principally illuminate the key themes through which women are constructed. The stories, which fall under the major themes identified, have been analysed using Thompson's modes of operation of ideology. A document analysis of the editorial policy was conducted in order to understand the rules which govern news production and content. Finally, an electronic interview with the regional bureau's chief editor questioned practices uncovered by the analysis of stories on women's representation.

Understanding qualitative research

Qualitative research cuts across different disciplines, fields and subjects. Babbie and Mouton (2001:270) described the term qualitative as a 'broad methodological approach to the study of social action referring to a collection of methods and techniques which share a certain set of principles or logic'. A qualitative research paradigm is often used by authors to refer to that 'generic research approach in social research according to which research takes as its departure point the insider's perspective on social action' (Bryman 1998:271). Consequently, qualitative research employs qualitative research methods to collect and analyse data (Babbie

and Mouton 2001:270). Qualitative research is all about in-depth or thick descriptions of specifics in order to understand actions and events (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:3).

Qualitative researchers make use of semiotics, narrative, content, discourse, archival and phonemic, photo analysis and statistical data (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:3). The present study takes the form of textual analysis principally using thematic analysis as a text-based method to understand how language is used to give meaning to women and their status in society. The major themes established will lead to a discussion of the manner in which women are depicted and talked about by definers of social activities (journalists). All these research practices ‘provide insights and knowledge’ (Denzin and Lincoln 1994:3).

Generalisation and validity in qualitative research

Generalisability involves the outcome of a study referring to a broader population (Brannen 1992:9). The issue of generalisability in qualitative research is not based upon statistical samples; it is unlike quantitative research (Brannen 1992:9). According to Maxwell (1992), the focus within the interpretive paradigm is on comprehending the particular rather than generalising to some broader population (cited in Mabweazara 2004:119). This is particularly the case with the present study, as the study’s findings cannot be generalised. Maxwell argued (1992:293) that ‘generalisation in qualitative research usually takes place through the development of a theory that not only makes sense of the particular persons or situations studied, but also shows how the same process, in different situations, can lead to different results’.

Some authors have defined different forms of generalisability; internal and external generalisability. Internal generalisability involves generalising within the community, group or institution, events and settings that were not directly probed or observed. External generalisability, meanwhile, delineates generalising to other communities, groups or institutions (Maxwell 1992: 294). The present study takes the internal form of generalisability as it bases its findings in *The Post* within an allocated timeframe - the month of March 2009.

Validity in qualitative research

The notion of validity has been attributed to a diverse range of meanings in qualitative research. Some researchers have referred to validity as quality, rigor and trustworthiness (Lincoln and Guba 1985; Davis and Dodd 2002; Mishler 2000 all cited in Golafshani

2003:602). As such, the issue of validity is thought to be dependent on the researcher and the account s/he puts forward to justify the findings, and to obtain the best answers to the research questions.

Quantitative researchers have often questioned the relevance of issues of validity and reliability of qualitative research findings, as the results are argued not to be positivistic. In response, qualitative researchers have argued that, when validity is applied to accounts and not to methods, qualitative research can acquire reliability (Maxwell 1992:114). The qualitative researchers' argument is based on the fact that qualitative research can be valid if it is reliable and possibly replicable. Maxwell wrote (1992:114)

The applicability of the concept of validity does not depend on the existence of some absolute truth or reality to which an account can be compared, but also on the fact that there exist ways of assessing accounts that do not depend entirely on features of the account itself, but in some way relate to those things that the account claims to be about.

The case study research design

The present study made use of a case study research design, which has become frequently used in qualitative research. Here, a case is defined as a methodological approach which utilises several sources of evidence to investigate certain phenomena in their contextual setting (Yin 1984:14). The main point of using a case study is that it allows the researcher to use several methods in order to provide an accurate and detailed analysis of the subject under study (Deacon *et al.* 2007:33). Case studies permit the researcher to acquire an in-depth understanding of specific cases. This is related to the usefulness of purposive sampling aimed at identifying particular types of cases for in-depth investigation (Punch 1988:55). Consequently, the results of the findings obtained from case studies cannot be generalised (Punch 1988:55; Yin 1984:34). Punch (1985:55) noted that a good case study provides value where knowledge is 'shallow, fragmentary, incomplete or non-existent'. In the same way, the present study was aimed at adding value to the construction of women represented as poor in *The Post*, while minimal research has been carried out on the representation of women as members of 'the poor' in Cameroonian society.

Data Collection Methods

Sample selection and size

The study employed purposive sampling to select ‘cases with a specific purpose in mind’ (Neuman 1997:206). Purposive sampling is useful in three ways. Firstly, a researcher may use it to select unique cases which are particularly informative (Neuman 1997:206). For example, in this study different stories on women were used, recognised from the use of pronouns and names to draw out themes that related to their representation in *The Post*. The year 2009 was chosen as a typical year, coinciding with the commencement of data collection. Hard copies of *The Post* were used because it was available from the newspaper’s regional headquarters in Bamenda. Hard copies were preferred because key words could easily be highlighted and the stories to be analysed numbered. Further, the online version of *The Post* does not carry all the stories found in the hard copy.

Data was collected from six editions of *The Post* during the month of March 2009. In normal circumstances, where there was no women's day celebration or Papal visit, *The Post* would have only four editions in a month. All stories that focused on women were included in the data, but those that fell under the announcement, opinion and advertisement pages were excluded. This was mainly because these columns are not driven by news values and, therefore, could not constitute part of the analysis of the present study, which sought to question the manner in which women are represented in news constructs.

The case for electronic mail interview

This study employed electronic mail interviews with journalists working for *The Post*. This is because I had moved from Bamenda, where journalists working for *The Post* are based. Telephone interviews would have been viable, but the journalists did not want me to record their responses using my cell phone. Due to this and the unforeseen cost of telephone calls, the best means of contact and communication was electronic mail. I sent an email to the regional bureau chief editor of *The Post*, Chris Mbunwe, who wrote down answers to my questions and later scanned and sent the responses to me via email. Several qualitative researchers have made use of electronic mail interviews to gather data for analysis (Foster 1994; Murray 1995; Shneider et al. 2004, all cited in Meho 2006:8). Interviewees are not constrained by the pressure to answer any questions and they can provide the answers they want to how they want to, which would have been more regulated in the presence of an interviewer. The main advantage of using email interviews is their immediacy and speed

(Meho 2006:9). A semi-structured interview was used and the email correspondence is in the appendix.

Data analysis: thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative approach for recognising, selecting, analysing, and presenting patterns (themes) within data (Boyatzis 1998:24). It often transcends the recognition and analysis of themes by interpreting several domains of the research topic (Boyatzis 1998:25). Thematic analysis is used in different disciplines, but there is no clear cut unity in the way it should be employed (see Boyatzis 1998:25; Tuckett 2005). It can be seen as a very poorly ‘branded’ method, in that it is named as a form of analysis in the same way as other methods (e.g. narrative analysis, grounded theory) (Boyatzis 1998:25). Braun and Wilkinson (2003:30) raised the argument that many qualitative studies are linked to thematic analysis, but these analyses are claimed to be different by researchers, and put under headings such as discourse analysis, or even content analysis. Others do not identify any particular method, and state, for example, data were ‘subjected to qualitative analysis for commonly recurring themes’. If researchers do not succinctly outline the procedure used in their analysis, it blurs research ratings and makes it difficult to compare it with other studies on the topic, which may prevent similar research from being carried out in the field (Attride-Stirling 2001:16). It is, therefore, important that the methods used in thematic analysis should be made explicit, as this will enable replicability.

A theme in thematic analysis is ‘a single assertion about some subject matter’ (Wilbraham 2005:2). In categorising themes, the researcher seeks to classify texts according to the issues as they arise (Hansen *et al.* 1998:113; Holsti 1969:116). The themes which come up during categorisation should come from the content being analysed and not from the researcher’s personal list of categories (Holsti 1969). Thematic analysis of this nature ‘does not rely on the specific use of words as units of analysis, but relies upon the coder to recognise certain themes or ideas in the text, and then to allocate these to predetermined categories’ (Beardsworth 1980:375, cited in Deacon *et al.* 1999:118).

The advantage of thematic analysis is its flexibility. It involves a ‘fairly flexible unit of analysis based on decisions about themes of meaning’ (Wilbraham 2005:1). This is in contrast with quantitative content analysis, which relies on fixed units of analysis like word counts (see Hansen *et al.* 1998). Like critical discourse analysis, thematic analysis seeks to analyse texts in their contextual settings (see Fairclough 1995). Thematic analysis also

provides a means of organising and summarising findings from a large body of texts (Mays *et al.* 2002:8). Thematic analysis is also ‘permeable’, meaning that other research methods can be conveniently used alongside it (Mays *et al.* 2002:8).

Qualitative researchers have mentioned informally that thematic analysis is not a method and that ‘it is time consuming’ (Holsti 1969:116). The criticism is that there is no logical procedure involved in extracting the themes of the content under study. This is, however, untrue, as thematic analysis has a set of rules applied by the researcher, which can easily be replicated by another researcher for the purposes of testing validity (Boyatzis 1998:25).

Procedure in thematic analysis

The process of thematic analysis begins when the analyst begins to notice, and look for, patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest during data collection (Boyatzis 1998:20). The endpoint is the reporting of the content and the meaning of patterns (themes) in the data, where ‘themes are abstract (and often fuzzy) constructs the investigator identifies before, during, and after analysis’ (Ryan and Bernard 2000:80). Writing constitutes an inherent part of the analysis; it takes place as the analysis is being carried out, so writing should begin in the first phase with the noting of ideas and potential coding schemes, and proceed through the entire analytical process (Ryan and Bernard 2000:80). Newspapers were scanned to see what stories would make up the data for analysis. During the scanning process, stories that captured all aspects of women were sought, noting key words/headings that each story could fall under.

There are two views regarding when one should engage with the literature relevant to analysis. The first view holds that ‘early reading can narrow the researcher’s analytic field of vision, leading her to foreground certain aspects while neglecting other potential crucial aspects’ (Boyatzis 1998:25). The second view posits a theoretical approach in which the researcher is involved with the literature before analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006:87).

In this study, an outline has been provided to guide the reader through the phases of analysis. It is salient to note that the direction in thematic analysis is not governed by strict rules, therefore, it can be made flexible at any time (Patton 1990:28). This is to emphasise the point that ‘analysis is not a one way process where you simply move from one phase to the next

instead it is volatile' (Ely *et al.* 1997:17) and should not be hastily carried out. Boyatzis' (1998:25) method was used to carry out the analysis.

Initially, the researcher needs to study the content (Boyatzis 1998:25). The content of this study consisted of stories on women obtained from *The Post* during March 2009. Engaging with the content meant I had to immerse myself with the text in order to identify meanings and patterns. The entire data set was read through in order to look for stories on women and stories on poverty while formulating the possible themes.

The themes on poverty that emerged were informed by the different conceptual definitions of poverty identified in the literature review. During the initial analysis phrases were jotted down which could constitute possible themes on women. Having familiarised myself with the data, I came up with a preliminary list of ideas and what was peculiarly interesting about them. The list of ideas included violence against women, women celebrate, literacy and powerlessness.

In qualitative coding, the researcher is expected to create the codes whilst becoming familiar with the data (Charmaz (1995:37) cited in Boyatzis 1998:62). Coding is the production of categories in relation to data: 'the grouping together of different instances of datum under an umbrella term that can enable them to be regarded as the same type' (Gibson 2006:3 qtd. in Boyatzis 1998:62). Data in the present study came from *The Post's* editorial guidelines, and stories within *The Post*. Codes identify a feature of the data that appears interesting to the analyst, and it is basically a component of the data that can be meaningfully analysed with respect to the phenomenon under study (Boyatzis 1998:63). Coding depends on whether the themes are theory-driven and not data-driven (Boyatzis 1998:65). If coding is theory-oriented, the researcher might approach the data with specific questions in mind that they wish to code (Braun and Clarke (2006:77) cited in Boyatzis 1998:66). This study-coded data is driven by the theory that informs the study: in this case mainly looking at the construction of women, and the major parameters that define who they are in *The Post*. Coding equally depends on whether the researcher is aiming to code the content of the entire data set, or whether they are coding to identify particular (and possibly limited) features of the data set (Boyatzis 1998:66). I coded to determine particular features of the data specifically related to women and their status in society.

In thematically analysing data, Boyatzis (1998:67) emphasised that it is salient to work rigorously through the entire data set, paying full attention to each data item, while

‘identifying interesting aspects in the items that may form the basis of repeated patterns across the data set’. Initially I had to identify the codes, and then match them up with data extracts that demonstrate that code. For example, the code ‘literacy’ had data extracts such as women's publications and female authors. Bryman (2001:159) advises that at this ‘level of analysis, it is important to code for as many potential themes as possible one never knows what might be interesting later, code extracts of data inclusively i.e., keep a little of the surrounding data if relevant, a common criticism of coding is that the context can be too broad and gets lost’ (qtd. in Boyatzis 1998:66).

Following the coding procedure described above, each story was given a working title. I branded these working titles as codes and had a list of the different codes identified across the entire data set. Essentially, I had to look for key words that encapsulated each code and I named these key words ‘themes’. Each story could then fall under a theme. For example, when the theme on injustice against women formed the main category under the code; stories on physical violence and violence against women all constituted part of this theme. A table was created in order to give guidance as to which story had already been categorised, as some codes could suitably fit under other codes. At this stage, there was a set of codes that did not seem to belong anywhere, and it was perfectly acceptable to create a theme called ‘miscellaneous’ to house these codes temporarily. This coding process was completed with a collection of main themes and sub-themes, and all the extracts of data that had been coded in relation to them. At this point, I began to have a sense of the significance of individual themes.

A set of main themes was devised. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:78), some themes cannot be used in a study's analysis if there is not enough data to support them, or if the data is too diverse, or if some data could be collapsed into other categories. Data within themes should glue together meaningfully, while there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between themes (Patton 1990:44, cited in Braun and Clarke 2006:82). The themes in this study are not complex and are easily distinguished for easy comprehension.

The next level involves re-defining and re-establishing themes. This means the analyst needs to read all the collated extracts for each theme, and consider whether they appear to form a coherent pattern (Braun and Clarke 2006:82). Also, if candidate themes appear to form a coherent pattern, one can safely move on to the next stage (Patton 1990:44, cited in Braun and Clarke 2006:82). However, if the researcher's candidate themes do not fit, s/he will need to consider whether the theme itself is problematic, or whether some of the data extracts

within it simply do not fit there, in which case the researcher will need to rework the theme (Patton 1990:44, cited in Braun and Clarke 2006:82). Reworking the theme means creating a new theme, finding a place for those extracts that do not currently work in an pre-existing theme, or discarding them from the analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006:82).

The validity of themes is carried out by testing whether the thematic map accurately reflects the meanings evident in the data set as a whole (Braun and Clarke 2006:84). However, in this phase the researcher checks the entire data set again for two purposes. Firstly, to ascertain whether the themes work in relation to the data set and, secondly, to code any additional data, that have been missed in earlier coding stages, within themes (Braun and Clarke 2006:84). If the thematic map works, then the researcher needs to move on to the next phase of the analysis. However, if the map does not fit the data set, the researcher needs to review further and refine his or her coding until a thematic map is devised with which the researcher is satisfied (Braun and Clarke 2006:82).

At the next stage, the themes presented for analysis were defined and further refined, and the data within them analysed. Define and refine, means identifying the essence of what each theme is about and determining what aspect of data each theme encapsulates. It is important that a theme does not do too much, or is too diverse and complex (Braun and Clarke 2006:82). It is vital that the researcher does not just paraphrase the content of the data extracts presented, but identifies what is interesting about them and why, mainly drawing ideas from the theoretical framework and literature review that informs the study (Braun and Clarke 2006:82).

By the end of the theme familiarisation phase, the researcher should be able to define sufficiently what his/her themes are and what they are not (Boyatzi 1998:68 cited in Braun and Clarke 2006:82). According to Braun and Clarke (2006:85), one can test for this by determining whether one can describe the scope and content of each theme in a couple of sentences.

The final stage is when the researcher has all the themes set aside to be used in the final analysis. The write-up must provide sufficient evidence of the themes within the data, i.e. enough data extracts to demonstrate the prevalence of the theme (Braun and Clarke 2006:86). Boyatzi (1998:68) emphasised that it is imperative to choose extracts which capture the essence of the point one is demonstrating, without unnecessary complexity. The analytic

narrative needs to go beyond ‘description of the data, and should make an argument in relation to your research question’ (Boyatzis 1998:68 cited in Braun and Clarke 2006:88).

Analysis of data

This study uses Thompson’s five modes of ideology and Aristotle’s mode of persuasion (Richardson 2007:154) to analyse the ideological meanings rooted within the various articles. Ideological constructions within texts can only be unravelled using certain textual methods like Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), theories on argumentation and Thompson’s modes of ideology (Richardson 2007:154). According to Aristotle, rhetoric is ‘the ability, in each particular case, to see the available means of persuasion’ (1355:27 cited in Richardson 2007:156). Aristotle described three forms of rhetoric: ethos, pathos and logos, all used in advancing, denying and substantiating arguments (Richardson 2007:156). Ethos depicts the character of an individual, pathos is appeal based on emotion, and logos refer to reasoning (Richardson 2007:156). These logical tools of persuasion are techniques which have been used here to unravel the various means of persuasion attached to texts

Thompson's modes of operation of ideology

Following his ‘reformulation’ of the concept of ideology, Thompson (1990:60) outlined a framework which distinguishes five general modes through which ideology can function: legitimisation, dissimulation, unification, fragmentation; and reification. Each of these modes can be ‘linked with various strategies of symbolic construction’ (Thompson, 1990:60). Legitimation is expressed as rules, traditions and authority applied to the use of power. Three strategies make up legitimisation: rationalisation, which refers to a sequence of reasoning to persuade; universalisation, which signals the interests of particular people as if it were meant for the good of all, and narrativisation, which is the description of past events. The second mode is dissimulation which is defined as power made operational by way of camouflage. Thompson identifies three strategies linked to this mode: displacement, which is the use of a term to mean one thing in place of another; and euphemisation, a process in which social relations denote positive things. The third mode is trope, which is the use of figurative language, for example synecdoche, metonymy, and metaphor. The last mode of operation is unification, which treats individuals as one, despite divisions which may exist between them. Unification can be produced through standardisation and fragmentation. A schema associated

with this mode is differentiation, which is the recognition of differences made conspicuous amongst individuals of a group. Another schema related to this mode is ‘expurgation of the other’, which is the framing of an individual as posing a threat to the entire community (Thompson 1995:60). The last mode of operation is reification, where a historical period is presented as if it were normal, lasting and constant. Strategies involved in this *modus operandi* are externalisation, which refers to presenting historical occurrences as unchangeable, and nominalisation, which is the use of nouns to describe the participants in an action.

It is important to note that Thompson (1990:60) stressed a number of qualifications with regard to his schema. Firstly, he acknowledged that the operation of ideology is not restricted to the five modes outlined. Secondly, the strategies listed are not exhaustive, and those which are listed are not necessarily ‘uniquely associated’ with the modes with which they have been identified. As Thompson (1990:61) noted, ‘the most one could say is that certain strategies are typically associated with certain modes’. Thirdly, the strategies outlined are not necessarily ideological in themselves, but depend ‘on how the symbolic form constructed by means of this strategy is used and understood in particular circumstances’ (Thompson 1960:61). That is, whether it serves to sustain power relations in a particular context.

Document analysis

In the current study the editorial guidelines of *The Post* were also analysed in order to determine whether their policies play a role in representation, and particularly in women’s representation. The editorial guidelines of *The Post* cover certain priorities and neglect others. According to Wimmer and Dominick (1991:160), documents as a source of data are used in research in an attempt to answer the ‘why’ and ‘how’ questions. How are stories on women constructed? Do they reflect their status? What regulations define such representations? These are the fundamental questions which drove the present study. When studying a document attention is given to how the specific issues it raises are structured, organised and how the content of the document seeks to persuade one about certain issues. Moreover, there is a need to emphasise the specific discourses it draws on or excludes, alongside the specific identities of subject positions that are produced, sustained or negotiated (Rapley 2007:124). The steps as elaborated by Rapley (2007:124-129) were followed to analyse the editorial policy of *The Post*.

Steps in document analysis

Five steps are involved in carrying out a document analysis (Rapley (2007:128). Firstly, ‘think about what is present and absent’ (Rapley 2007:128). Exploring a document basically depends on identifying the specific idea within it as well as highlighting the omissions. It is equally important to focus on how the different elements of the text under study combine to consolidate further or to disrupt meaning (Rapley 2007:128). For example, the editorial guidelines of *The Post* emphasise the need to represent stories from the English-speaking part of Cameroon. This suggests that they are neglecting other parts of Cameroon in favour of the English-speaking regions. This uncovers the reason for low sales and the aspect of regionalisation and the discourse of differentiation are made visible, which are the main factors impacting on the national unity of the country. Within the editorial policy, stories on the prominent remain favoured as opposed to stories on the poor.

The second step involves arguing the case (Rapley 2007:128). Arguing the case involves interest in the rhetorical work of the document, how the specific issues it raises are structured and how it seeks to persuade one about the authority of its understanding. ‘The focus is on the range of sources of knowledge and evidence the article draws on’ (Rapley 2007:128).

Expanding an argument is the third step in analysing a document (Rapley 2007:128). Attention was paid to how the editorial policy works in order to shape discourses and representations of stories in *The Post* and how this is evident in the various stories about women.

The fourth takes into account the problems found within the document and what solutions may be suggested (Rapley 2007:128). If there is anything missing, whose fault is it? The main idea is to read the policy with some degree of scepticism in order to question the basic components of the document.

Finally, it is worth taking into consideration the historical context of the text’s publication (Rapley 2007:129). The editorial policy is attached to Appendix I, and is analysed and interpreted in Chapter 5. This analysis was carried out in order to understand the rules which govern the representation of stories and the discourses which inform such representations. Only policies which cover the representation of stories are analysed.

Conclusion

The chapter details the research methods and procedures of the study. Thematic analysis, an

electronic mail interview and document analysis have been discussed. The following chapter presents the findings of the present study. The thematic features will initially be presented. The final section of the chapter explicates the implications of these findings according to Foucault's discourse theory and the discursive practices which govern journalistic content in *The Post*.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Introduction

Butler (2007) made the claim that the extent to which poverty is depicted in the US as an ‘affliction suffered mainly by women or people of colour is exaggerated by the media’. This claim is backed by the feminisation of poverty based on the statistics that since women make up the majority of the poor; one would expect stories on them to reflect this situation <http://suite101.com/article/portraying-poverty-in-the-news-a12909>. A similar situation occurs in Cameroon and one would expect stories on women to reflect their status as poor. In the light of this, the key objective of the present study was to ask whether women were represented as ‘poor’ in *The Post* between 1st and 31st March 2009.

The analysis involved articles about women and all six editions of *The Post* were sampled. The analysis began with identification of the major stories which discussed women. A total of 18 such stories constituted the data for analysis. The themes established were drawn from stories informed by the human development perspective on poverty. The thematic analysis revolved around the following themes: injustices against women, women in celebration, women in roles of authority, and women as authors. Reflected in these themes and drawn from the stories were further sub-categories, such as powerlessness, violence and discrimination.

The analysis showed that injustices against women occurred frequently in reports during the month of March because the theme of the 2009 International Day of Woman was ‘Men and women uniting to fight violence against women’. This, therefore, implies that stories would revolve around issues which highlight this theme which was selected by the United Nations.

Further, the month selected for analysis may reflect that women were celebrating. However, it would be expected that the concerns of women would be equally highlighted; for example, stories of women suffering from violence, and also coverage of conferences on how to pave the way forward for men and women in order to curb violence and discrimination in both domestic and public spheres. What follows is an analysis of *The Post's* structure in order to understand how it operates.

Analysis of women's representation in The Post

The table below illustrates the number of stories which represented men and women. It should be noted that this analysis of general frequency was designed to enhance the researcher's in-depth understanding of news coverage with respect to women and men in the newspaper under study. To obtain this analysis, all stories which talked about women or men were counted. Those that could not be fitted into either male or female categories were placed under the default category ('general', to mean unspecified).

Number of women's stories and percentage	Number of men's stories and percentage	General and percentage	Total number of stories and percentage
50 stories on women	360	414	824
6.06%	43%	50.24%	100%

The above statistical representation demonstrates the under-representation of women in *The Post* during March 2009, which was discovered to have had more stories than other editions because it is the month women celebrated the International Day of the Woman. The difference is huge, with only 6.06% coverage for women as opposed to 43% coverage for men. Tuchman (1979:533) referred to this as a 'symbolic annihilation of women'. This concept basically connotes the under-representation and what Tuchman calls 'trivialisation' of women in news stories. According to Tuchman, the media has failed to keep pace with the increasing number of women in political positions by not representing them in these positions; instead, the media 'discredits, isolates and undercuts' (Tuchman 1979:533) them.

News type

The news in *The Post* ranged from hard news to soft news, with most of the front pages carrying hard news. The front page stories were usually about men in politics undertaking public actions. This related to the idea of the public sphere as first formulated by Habermas, who asserted that the discourse of hard news lends itself to prominent men, while the working class are often side-lined to the last few pages. The major question is why are women under-represented in *The Post* in general? Tuchman (1979:53) argued that the deleterious

representation of women in news constructs was as a result of there being fewer women in top managerial positions.

The use of news sources

News sources account for an important part of who is visible and invisible in news constructs. Based on this reasoning, the sources used by *The Post* were investigated to identify the social actors in *The Post's* coverage of news. The 18 stories analysed mainly reported prominent women as a source of information, while the ordinary woman's view seemed to be excluded. The prominent women used were those who held high-ranking political positions in the government. For example, some of the references were drawn from the delegate of women's affairs, a parliamentarian, and the superintendent in charge of prison affairs, etc. As a result, one can deduce that news about women in *The Post* concentrated on prominent people. An electronic mail interview with the regional bureau editor of *The Post*, Mbunwe (2011), supported its position in targeting prominent people:

‘*The Post* reports events and people who make news. It so happens that the rich we report about are those who have embezzled billions and are being hunted. The poor feature in societal news.’ (Mbunwe, 23 October 2011)

This statement revealed that news in *The Post* is laid out and presented according to status. According to Mbunwe (2011), ‘the poor feature in societal news’ and the rich cover the front pages.

Structure of The Post's coverage

The length of the stories in *The Post's* coverage of events showed that issues concerning the marginalised and unimportant people tended to comprise only a few lines, while prominent personalities were given detailed explanation. Since women make up the less prominent in Cameroonian society, they are most likely to be covered on the back pages of *The Post*. As an example, in all the stories analysed, the journalists mainly used prominent people as sources, while the ordinary were unheard. This suggests that the stories in *The Post* focused on prominent people, many of whom were men who occupy top political positions, while poor women were apparently invisible.

Data Analysis

In analysing the texts, first of all the themes were identified and categorised. The themes analysed within this section focused on stories published in *The Post* during the month of March 2009. Each story is used as a code. Despite the fact that some stories comprise only about five lines, the analysis of this study does not include any stories which amounted to less than seven lines, and many of these stories fitted under the odd beats (miscellaneous).

There are three issues which need to be highlighted in order to understand the manner in which thematic analysis was carried out. Firstly, the themes have been foregrounded instead of using Thompson's modes of operation because it was the intention of this study to find out how women are thematically constructed; Thompson's modes of ideology go a long way in assisting in unravelling the connotative meanings embedded within the various stories. Secondly, the interviews have not been separated to make up a different section of analysis because the interview was carried out after the thematic and document analysis and, as such, the questions posed sought to explain what was missing in the analysis. Thirdly, each story that falls under a theme was analysed separately. Aristotle's modes (Richardson 2007:124) of operation of ideology were also used to analyse selected stories. (See appendix for code schedule.)

Theme: Injustice against women

Other stories could have fitted into this theme. However, only four were chosen for analysis because they exceeded five lines and evoked major aspects of the theme when compared to the other four, which were not analysed.

Article 1

Headline: 'Nursing mother is detained' by Olive Ejang

In this story, a nursing mother was detained at a community prison cell for reporting that she had discovered bags of cement in a bathroom. The police detained her and her 2-month-old baby. She was detained on suspicion of stealing bags of cement, which she found and reported to the police. Before her release, she was expected to bail herself out and pay an extra 7000FCFA, which is equivalent to US \$15.

Text analysis

Pathos

The journalist behind the headline presented the anonymous nursing mother as someone with whom we should sympathise. This sympathy was evoked more when the journalist emphasised that the woman was detained with her baby. From this perspective, one can suggest that pathos had been used, as the journalist in article 1 expressed the condition in which the woman finds herself as a detainee, i.e. nursing a baby just a couple of months old. The reporter described how a woman, together with her 2-month-old baby, were detained at a community prison cell for reporting that she had seen bags of cement in a bathroom (Ejang, *The Post*, Monday March 23 2009:8). In reporting the stolen bags of cement to the police, the woman was depicted as being honest and a ‘good citizen’ who trusted the police to take charge of the case reported. However, the situation backfires and she is not only detained, but also expected to bail herself out with an extra 7000FCFA. The journalist/story did not state the purpose of the extra sum. The use of police power, which undermines the roles of citizens in assisting the police, was evident as the woman found herself in a rather unfortunate situation and regarded more as a threat to the community.

Thompson’s modes of operation of ideology

Fragmentation via expurgation of the other

Thompson’s mode of unification through the schema of expurgation of the other is evident as the woman was detained, together with her baby, for no justifiable reason, which suggested that she and her baby constituted a threat to the community in which they lived. This was not necessarily the case, as the police had failed to question her as they should in order to obtain the facts about her story. Unfortunately, the reporter did not go into any detail as to what happened to the bags of cement after the woman and her baby were given bail. This in part demonstrates a laxity in the profession with reports seemingly left unchecked with little or no further investigation. The expectation would be that the journalist should report what happened before, during and after the event so as to provide a complete and unbiased story.

Legitimation through the schema of rationalisation

Rationalisation is another schema employed, as the woman in article 1 was detained with her baby for reporting to the police that she had discovered bags of cement around her house. In the article, the woman bailed herself out of prison with ‘an extra 7000FCFA’ (Ejang, *The Post*, Monday March 23 2009:8). Again, the journalist obscured the reason why ‘an extra

sum' (Ejang, *The Post*, Monday March 23 2009:8) was included in her bail-out fee. There was some degree of corruption which was not emphasised, but indirectly hinted at in the story by the journalist. The concealment or omission of the reason for the extra charge may reflect a society in which journalists condone certain police practices by omitting to report them, while it could be that the journalist failed to collect sufficient information to make the story whole. According to *The Post*, the Transparency International 2005 world barometer of most corrupt institutions ranked the Cameroon police force as the most corrupt institution in the world (allafrica.com/stories).

Discussion

In order to grasp fully the meaning associated with the construction of this story, it is important to look at the professional practice which informs the production of news stories of this kind. From the institutional perspective, the reporter obscured the identity of the child and the mother, probably to protect the two. However, an anonymous view of the mother's and police versions of the story could have provided a more objective account of the story, while enabling an ideological understanding of the reasons the police detained a woman with a baby for apparently no reason.

The police in Cameroon whose roles are to protect the feeble and to ensure national security are predominantly male. But, the attitude of policemen towards the woman in this article exposed the injustice suffered by her. The negligence of the police in not probing the case behind the woman's story further calls into question their policing skills and their gender insensitivity, and could account for the injustices suffered by women. The power relation between those in control and those subjected to that control is top-down with the vulnerable, such as women, silenced through the execution of power.

The fact that the journalist did not visit the police to obtain their views raises concerns over journalistic professionalism. The story was reported with actors involved, but neither was interviewed in order to provide a full understanding of the event and the different perspectives of the story. The story eliminated participants, but prioritises the theme of a woman detained with a 2-month-old baby. According to Van Dijk (1988:177 cited in Deacon et al. 2007:155), the pacification of actors in the news can serve 'to dissimulate the negative actions of elite or powerful groups'.

By reporting this story, *The Post* as a constituent of the public sphere contributed to holding

‘the authorities to account while simultaneously playing a watchdog role often associated with the mainstream media’ (Strelitz & Steenveld 2007:21). The focus was on the journalist's surveillance of police power which, according to Wassermann (2005:12), embodies a significant role played by tabloids in checking the overuse of those with power and money. This type of exposure or form of accountability may provide a sense of power to tabloid readers (Wassermann 2005:17). In other words, those who read tabloids might be content that at least certain misbehaviours do not go unnoticed and unreported. The representation of this story brings to mind the discursive practice of the environment in which the reporter, the woman and her baby, and the police are immersed. This story suggested that the injustice perpetrated against this woman was without cause. The representation of this story depicts a culture of corruption which is silent, and portrays the injustices suffered by women and children at the hands of police who fail to carry out their duty.

The story constructed the woman as honest, powerless and an example of a ‘good citizen’, who showed enough concern to assist the police in order to recover stolen items. However, the treatment she received from the police could have possibly put her at risk in her community. This detention could have resulted in the woman’s alienation from the community as members would avoid any association with her. It seems that being honest is a virtue that the police do not applaud. Assisting the police in retrieving stolen items should be encouraged; rather than, as the story emphasises, resulting in the plight of a woman and her baby for identifying stolen cement bags and reporting the case to the police. Embedded within this story are concerns which suggested fear and silence, as one would prefer to remain silent than cooperate with the police. This was a subtle way to oppress and intimidate this woman through the misuse of power. Furthermore, the woman could be regarded as helpless and powerless in the sense that she is unable to do anything immediately in order to prevent her own detention and that of her 2-month-old baby.

Article 2

Summary:

‘Lady shoved aside violently’ [sic] by Nsom & Bongben

The writers captured vividly the manner in which a woman was pushed aside for doing her utmost to greet the leader of the Roman Catholic Church, who visited Cameroon upon the invitation of the president of the republic. The journalist wrote ‘a lady who was trying to

shake hands with the Pope by all means was violently shoved aside by security guards in the process of making her way to greet the Pope” [sic] (Nsom & Bongben, *The Post*, Friday, March 2009:2). Cameramen were also pushed aside violently as they struggled to take pictures for their news organisations. The writer used seven lines to explain what happened to the lady and two lines to state the same fate suffered by the cameramen.

Text analysis

Aristotle’s mode of persuasion

Logos

In article 2, the author made use of logic as he justified the lady being briskly pushed aside: ‘she was trying by all means to shake hands with the Pope when she was pushed away from the red carpet that was being rolled for the Pope’ (Nsom & Bongben, *The Post*, Friday, March 2009:2). The reason for her yearning to greet the Pope at all costs was not evident from the text, which leaves one wondering why this had been the case. However, there is a mythological discourse that, if one should succeed in touching the Pope’s hands and even his garment, a person becomes ‘blessed’. This myth could be linked to *The Bible* and compared to the biblical story of Jesus, who healed and blessed all those who had the opportunity to touch him. The link is made under the narration that the Pope is Jesus’ disciple.

Pathos

Pathos as a mode of persuasion was also used when the author made use of the term the lady ‘trying by all means’ to shake hands with the Pope, but then she was ‘violently shoved aside’ (Nsom & Bongben, *The Post*, Friday March 20 2009:2). This text captured the desperation of a woman and one is drawn to sympathise that, in spite of her bravery and courage in running through body guards, and dashing across the red carpet to greet the Pope, she is still physically mishandled. This illustrated and constructed the woman as being determined, although this determination was thwarted by security guards.

Thompson’s modes of operation of ideology

Rationalisation

The journalist failed to explain why the woman was ‘violently shoved aside’ (Nsom & Bongben, *The Post*, Friday, March 20 2009:2). ‘Violently shoved aside’ was not explicit, as the text did not describe how the guards pushed the woman aside; therefore, this leaves one doubting whether the description ‘violently shoved aside’ depicts the violence appropriately, and whether the journalist meant to say ‘briskly pushed aside’. If it is the former, then there

was a problem with the choice of words used by the journalist who in this context conveyed the wrong message. If this were the case, it would become a question of the wrong choice of words and the meaning would be that the woman was mishandled, but not in a way that could cause severe hurt as presented in the text. The story does not state whether others also wanted to greet the Pope, but were not prepared to go against protocol in an attempt, as in the case of this woman.

Legitimation

The ideological mode of legitimation through the strategy of narrativisation is wrapped up in the text, as it carries the ideological belief that, if anyone touches the Pope, they will be blessed by God, be healed of their diseases, and have their problems resolved. This myth has been narrated from generation to generation and has now gained the status of truth for those who believe. Hence, people converge in large numbers to see, hear and even disrespect protocol to touch the Pope, as shown by the case of this woman, who ran across the red carpet to greet the Pope.

Reification

The ideological mode of reification through the schema of nominalisation encapsulates the futile attempt of a woman to greet the Pope and reifies the mythical belief in Cameroonian society that, if one greets the Pope – or any religious leader, for that matter – one will be blessed. The attempt by the woman to ignore all other protocols and dash hurriedly onto the red carpet to greet the Pope may suggest that she was a bearer and executor of the belief. Cultural beliefs, such as this one, may continue to subordinate women's position as they seek to greet the Pope in order to get blessed.

Discussion

Headlining this story as 'lady violently shoved aside' was meant as an indictment of the police or authorities. Violence in any form is a public concern, especially for those who endeavoured to ensure that occasions such as the papal visit to Cameroon go without violence or scenes of aggression. The journalist wrote that this woman was 'violently shoved aside' again reflecting the manner in which the police treat women in Cameroon. The woman could have been stopped without being 'violently shoved aside' by the police, which is the very body that checks against violence of any sort. But then, one could argue that the text sought to reinforce the theme of the March 2009 International Day of the Woman. This means that stories were angled to fit a particular theme, setting, and time.

In the short story, the writer clearly treats the subjects differently, paying more attention to and vividly describing the futile struggles by a woman in her efforts to greet the Pope. This constructs the woman as futile, as all her efforts to greet the Pope are brought to an end by bodyguards and it demarcates the way personalities are treated. This differential treatment of subjects is achieved from the journalist's detailed description which captures the desperation of one woman who yearned to greet a prominent male-religious leader, i.e. the Pope. Cameramen (photojournalists) also ran across the red carpet to take pictures of the Pope, but the journalist's story emphasised the plight of the woman, which suggests that *The Post* takes an interest in narrating women's experiences. The journalist's failure to emphasise the experiences of others including the cameramen, whom he mentions at the end of the story, could be interpreted as the differential treatment of subjects, which may be construed as an attempt to promote the unequal power relations between men and women.

The journalist would have produced a more convincing story if he had managed to get in touch with the woman and obtained reasons for her actions. Because he failed to do so, this leaves doubt as to whether the woman was informed by the mythical belief, or something else.

Article 3

Summary

The German ambassador to Cameroon and other officials of some prominent Cameroonian-based German non-governmental organisations met in Yaounde, the capital, to discuss the issues pertaining to violence against women and how it is connected with slow economic growth. Those present at the meeting highlighted some major factors that contribute to the discrimination of women in the economic sector, such as the fact that more women are involved in food production, but fewer of them own land certificates. Another point made was the low salaries women receive compared to their male colleagues; men receive more money with the same qualifications and experience as women. The fact that some parents choose to keep their female children at home while the boys attend school is another discriminatory factor, and is, according to the German ambassador, practised in many sub-Saharan African countries where it forestalls the educational development of women, hindering their participation in development. The meeting ended with proposals being put forward as to how women could be assisted in improving their positions in order for them to contribute to economic growth.

Headline: Violence, Discrimination against Women Stalls Development - German Ambassador by Kini Nsom

Aristotle's mode of persuasion

Many statistical figures were used in the text in order to substantiate certain points made. For example, the statistic that 40 per cent of women who work receive lower salaries compared to their male counterparts and the statistic that 70 per cent of women produce food items, but only 12 per cent own land certificates. No source was given for any of the statistical evidence, but this would have provided a reference for those who wish to recheck. Since these statistical sources were absent, it casts doubt on the authenticity of the figures given in the text, even when the journalist emphasised the figures were quoted. This suggests that the quotes were not his own findings for the piece he put together.

Thompson's modes of ideology of operation

Rationalisation

The lead suggested that development was being curtailed as a result of violence against women. This ideological position was supported by a point echoed in the text when the reporter rationalised the ambassador's understanding of the matter. The reporter provided the ambassador's view in order to make the point appear convincing, stating that 'it is incumbent on government and other stakeholders to empower women economically, politically, and legally because they constitute the engine of development' (Nsom, *The Post*, March 13 2009:7). This meant that the government has to make efforts to provide a platform through which women can contribute to aspects of growth. From this perspective, violence against women makes women powerless and, hence, forestalls the country's development.

Fragmentation

Instances of fragmentation abound in the text, as the reporter explained the discussions that were highlighted during the meeting with the German ambassador which were aimed at sensitising the public to issues of gender equality in Cameroon. The first instance of differentiation emphasised the economic discrimination that takes place in the public sphere, with 40 per cent of women who work receiving lower salaries than their male counterparts who do the same job; hence, the projects of the prominent German organisations mentioned in the text were being tailored towards curbing discrimination against women in employment and training, and to ensure food security. Also, the German diplomat differentiates between women from Cameroon and those from elsewhere when he refers to the 70 per cent of

women who produce food items, but own less than 12 per cent of land certificates. To go by statistical evidence that people only own land if they have land certificates is questionable. In the grassroots region of Cameroon, women can actually own undeclared land mainly because they do not have the money to process official documents which pertain to the acquisition of land. In these cases, the buyer and the seller know who owns the land, as do some neighbours. So, the citations made by the German ambassador have some exceptions, which are not mentioned in the text. As the media also partakes in the representation of such facts without stating the exceptions in such cases, this could be a reflection of an uncritical media which may contribute to misinformation with respect to real situations.

Fragmentation was further employed when the German diplomat, Gruner, provided an example of how gender inequality affects some homes in other countries. In this example, some parents choose to educate only their male children; as a result of financial constraints while the girls stay at home. The power relations that exist in these parts of the world undermine the potential for girls to be empowered through education and this, in a way, connects female subservience with male power. This assists in reinforcing patriarchy, and also ensures that women remain in a disadvantaged and poor position.

Trope

An instance of trope was highlighted by the reporter who quoted the ambassador as saying ‘fighting poverty in Sub Saharan Africa also means empowering women, ‘poverty’, according to the ambassador, ‘has a female face’ (Nsom, *The Post*, March 13 2009:7). This attempt to associate poverty with a female face is indicative of gender discrimination, as poverty is represented with the face of a woman and not of a man. This personalisation of poverty is backed-up by statistical facts showing that the majority of women are poor, giving it a status of truth. The journalist quoted Gruner as saying that ‘70 per cent of women here produce over 80 per cent of food items but only 12 per cent own land certificates, only 25 percent’ according to him, ‘are paid for the work they do, while 75 percent receive no salary’, he said, ‘60 per cent are illiterate’ (Nsom, *The Post*, March 13 2009:7). The figures suggested a high level of poverty amongst women, particularly in the economic sector. The journalist appeared to distance himself from the statistics as he emphasised that it was the German diplomat who provided them.

Thematic Conclusion

In all three stories quoted, which encapsulate the theme of injustices against women, the reporters do not give any perspectives provided by the women. The women are not used as sources, arguably depicting these women as passive. This passiveness could be for all sorts of reasons: to obscure the identity of the women, to protect them, but also to undermine the voices of women in reporting stories.

Theme 2: Women celebrate

Two stories fall under this theme. Article 1 illustrated the way that Cameroonian women in Canada celebrate Women's Day. Article 2 showcased the event as celebrated in Cameroon, thereby providing a comparison of the celebration for Cameroonian women in Canada and those in Cameroon.

Article 1

Headline: 'Cameroonian Women Celebrate in Splendour; (sic) Montreal' by Elvis Tah

The first article narrated the experiences of Cameroonian women in Canada as they commemorated Women's Day. These women, who belong to an association called Goodwill Women, had met in Montreal, Canada, and with other invited Canadian guests, to attend an event to commemorate Women's Day. In order to provide the reader with a sense of the importance of the occasion, the author informed readers of the prominent women in attendance: the Federal Parliamentarian for LaSalle Borough Council and the Mayoress. The reporter painted a scene in which women are in a happy mood and dressed up as they commemorated Women's Day. The first three paragraphs of this story explained why Cameroonian women in Canada were celebrating in splendour. The manner in which these women were dressed marked the 'celebrative' aspect of the occasion. Women were dressed in the 'traditional women's day loincloth commonly called "kaba" to celebrate' (Tah, *The Post*, March 23 2009:2). In advance of this day, many Cameroonian women look for every means possible to order the material in order to sew their Women's Day outfit. It is commonplace for women to queue in front of a manufacturer's shop (Laking) to buy their outfit. This day means so much to women in Cameroon that they begin saving money for their Women's Day loincloth months in advance. The reporter recounted the event with emphasis on Cameroonian women emulating the examples of Canadian women in wielding power while, at the same time, calling on Cameroonian women not to forget their traditional values because they are far away from home.

Thompson's modes of operation of ideology

Symbolisation

The author used the ideological mode of symbolisation as they reported that the Cameroonian and Canadian national anthems were sung to kick-start the occasion. These anthems are national compositions, which help people to identify with a particular nation. The lyrics of national anthems often contain words of struggle and emancipation. The singing of the Cameroonian national anthem by Cameroonian women at an occasion in Canada provided a sense of unity, reminding them of the value of nationhood and the fact that they share a common nationality irrespective of the fact that they are in Canada. Singing the national anthem could be seen as a re-enforcement of a patriotic bond regardless of their statuses. For Canadians present at the occasion, having to sing their national anthem at a Cameroonian occasion suggested respect for their nation and evoked a sense of togetherness. Furthermore, the theme of the 2009 Women's Day: 'men and women united to fight violence against women' was in itself symbolic, as men were being called upon to join women in order to curb violence against women (Tah, *The Post*, March 23 2009:2). This theme was symbolic in that it recognised that gender relations cannot be obfuscated in the fight against violence perpetrated on women.

Reification

In this story, the reporter reiterated the need for women to 'respect tradition and culture' and to shun negative practices like gossip, laxity and blackmail (Tah, *The Post*, March 23 2009:2). This contrasted with the previous paragraphs, in which the speaker urged women to take up political positions, noting that tradition and culture within patriarchal societies do not permit women to occupy roles of authority. The journalist referred to the president's speech calling on 'men to work with women to fight violence against women' and women were repeatedly advised to 'respect cultural values', for example by respecting and serving their husbands (Tah, *The Post*, March 23 2009:2). This promoted patriarchal values, which are a part of Cameroon's 'traditional values'. It is these cultural discourses which, debatably, continue to impinge on women's rights, as men endeavour to maintain superiority over women.

To reinforce the role of traditional practices in Cameroon, the author concluded the story by stating that 'women had to serve their husbands with food' (Tah, *The Post*, March 23 2009:2). The narration of such ideas is generational, as mothers tell their daughters that a good woman

is one who serves her husband good food. Clearly, here we see a report that promoted certain practices, such as men sitting at high tables and being served by women. In this way it, arguably, contributes to keeping women in subordinate positions (Ross & Byerly 2004:8). Therefore, it could be argued that tabloids within patriarchal societies are carriers of patriarchal discourses. The implication is that this naturalises certain cultural practices which promote the servitude of women.

Article 2

Headline: 'MPs and Mayors Told to Defend Women's Rights'

Another story talked about the southwest delegate for women's empowerment and the family, Dr Margaret Niger Thomas, addressing women on the occasion of the Women's Day celebrations. She called on female parliamentarians and mayors to defend women's rights, noting that the government of Cameroon had signed several conventions against the discrimination of women and girls. She requested women to 'wake up from slumber' and propose projects to their members of parliament and mayors to help ameliorate poverty amongst women (Ejang & Ngoh *The Post* Monday, March 23 2009:2). Furthermore, she emphasised the need for those in power, particularly women, to get involved in women's investments which, according to her, would 'foster much needed development in Cameroon' (Ejang & Ngoh, *The Post* Monday, March 23 2009:2). This report showed how women garner their energy and attempt to be supportive of each other. As the journalist wrote, the southwest delegate challenged the deputy mayors of Kumba III and Konye councils to 'use their position to galvanise resources for women' (Ejang & Ngoh, *The Post* Monday, March 23 2009:2). The report also showed how women in power fight to protect the rights of all women, by calling on other female parliamentarians to publicise issues regarding injustices against women so that the rights of Cameroonian women can be respected. This article thus constructs women as being pivotal in seeking solutions to ameliorate their own problems. In order to be in a position to help other women one must be work from a power position where they can influence actions. However, what is missing from the discussion is the need to include men in the battle against women's poverty, as they hold many of the top positions, allowing them to prioritise certain developmental issues.

Rationalisation

According to the delegate, if economic development is to occur, the government must embark on projects which seek to ameliorate the lives of women. In article 2, the reporter used the

examples of two female parliamentarians who were sponsoring 25 girls at a women's centre in Buea. The reporters employed the mode of rationalisation when they explained that investing and empowering women would 'foster much needed development of Cameroon' (Ejang & Ngoh, *The Post* Monday, March 23 2009:2). However, the journalist does not indicate what should be done to empower women to promote development. By not representing the manner by which women can be empowered in this report, the journalist holds back information which may be vital in helping women.

Trope

The author quoted the mayor's metaphorical language 'You must get up from slumber', which suggested that women need to 'wake up' (Ejang & Ngoh, *The Post* Monday 23, 2009:2). She called on girls and women to be 'alert and confront their MPs and mayors with projects' (Ejang & Ngoh, *The Post* Monday 23, 2009:2). This metaphor symbolises the state in which women are said to be and the need for them to wake up and act on issues that concern their well-being.

Aristotle's mode of persuasion

Logos

The delegate presiding over the ceremony called upon female parliamentarians and mayors to include women in their micro-projects, stating how recently, a female parliamentarian invested in girls. She uses logos to persuade the MPs and mayors that, by so doing, the 'development of Cameroon will be fostered' (Ejang & Ngoh, *The Post* Monday 23, 2009:2). According to the delegate, women are still in a state of unconsciousness and must arise from their sleep and take action over things that affect them.

Discussion

Embedded within the theme 'women celebrate' is the aspect of socialisation. It is through this process that women identify and discuss their needs. This concurs with Fraser's (1992:124) assertion, that 'public spheres are arenas for discursive opinion; in addition they are arenas for the formation and enactment of social identities'. The representation of these celebrations thus created a sense of oneness amongst the women who participated. It is during these celebrations that women reflect on their successes and failures and discuss how to better themselves economically. Both stories reinforced the need for women to wake up from their slumber and work hard towards ameliorating their own conditions. It could be

argued that these celebrations enable group socialisation, providing a platform for women to identify problems and seek solutions to them. It is also a day which recognises the many injustices in society that women suffer from.

Theme: women as artists

Introduction

There are two stories within this category: a story on female artists in need of financial assistance, and a book review. Article 1 reported on the refusal of male artists to support women artists in receiving financial funding. Article 2 is a book review of a successful female Cameroonian writer who publishes on ways to succeed in life.

Article 1

Headline

'Pampering Female Artists Encourages Quacks' by Leocadia Bongben

The first story told of the unanimous position taken by artists who gathered at *The Goethe Institute* to argue against financial assistance being given to female artists. The reporter wrote 'Cameroonian artists have unanimously come to terms that female artists should not be given any assistance' (Bongben, *The Post*, March 20 2009:4). In support of their opinion, the artists raise the point that such action would bring 'unwanted artists to the profession' (Bongben, *The Post*, March 20 2009:4). Cameroonian artists argue that special assistance for women would attract adventurers to the sector, adding that 'determination and passion should be the driving forces for those who want to succeed' (*The Post*, March 20 2009:4).

Thompson's modes of operation of ideology

Fragmentation

The use of the ideological mode of fragmentation separates female artists from male artists while, suggesting that there was a unanimous view by all artists not to provide financial aid to female artists. The schema of differentiation was used to establish the unequal relations of power that exist between men and women and, exposed the neediness of female artists while suggesting that male artists are well-established.

Rationalisation

The rationalisation given by male artists was that, if assistance is given to female artists to encourage them, others might just 'join the profession for the sake of it and not necessarily for the passion of it' (Bongben, *The Post*, March 20 2009:4). This supports the discourse that

men within patriarchal societies are key definers of women's fate, by deciding what should be given to women and what should not. This assistance may have helped some women to establish themselves as artists, but instead, as noted by the journalist, 'women would continue to be relegated to the background of the Cameroon cultural scene' (Bongben, *The Post*, March 20 2009:4).

Evidence was given of another instance of rationalisation in the article, as the journalist described artists in Cameroon who were against financial assistance being made available to female artists. The provision of financial assistance to female artists may invite unwanted artists into the profession, which may play down the importance of artists within Cameroonian society. Their agenda was concealed on the premise that providing funding to women artists will attract 'adventurers' and not women passionate about their craft. But, one can surmise that this refusal to accept women artists was to protect their own privileged position as male artists and to avoid them having to compete with women artists, who may be better than them if given a chance.

Dissimulation

Article 1 is also evidence of an example of 'dissimulation', as the 'reason' given by the male artists for not supporting their female colleagues was a way of masking their possible concern that their privilege as artists would be challenged (Bongben, *The Post*, March 20 2009:4). This accounts for the statement the reporter made as he noted that women would continuously maintain their position in the background of the Cameroonian cultural domain.

Article 2

A review of 'Your Journey to Success' by Azore Opio

Another story linked to the theme of women as artists was the story on authorship. A book written by Maceline Bih entitled *Your Journey to Success* was reviewed. It was not a news-breaking event and appeared in the interview column. According to the story, Bih (the author) unpicks her life experience, going against the odds to academic success (Opio, *The Post*, Friday, March 2009:11). In this book review, the journalist told the reader of the importance of the book. It 'brings in to sharp focus the vague ideas on how to succeed'. The journalist highlighted the vocabulary used by authors of the 'How to Succeed' genre: for example words like 'determination', 'discipline', 'dedication', 'desire' and 'decision' (Opio, *The Post*, March 2009:11). The writer explained the various routes to becoming successful outlined in the book. The first, is to have 'a passion'; the second, to believe in yourself; and,

thirdly, to work steadfastly towards your goals (Opio, *The Post*, March 2009:11). The reporter made us understand that the author used many quotations from *The Bible*, and stated that 'the book is a miniature *Bible*' (Opio *The Post*, Friday, March 2009:11). This emphasised the point that women are conversant with biblical knowledge and brought to the fore the value of religion amongst women in patriarchal societies. Religion, it could be argued, is one element which contributes to women's continuous subservience to men, but here it seemed to be used to encourage women by providing them with a common discourse. As if to play a part in advertising the book, the author finished the review by stating that 'by the time you are done with this book, you will have taken a dozen bold steps on the trail of success' (Opio, *The Post* Friday, March 2009:11).

Thompson's modes of operation of ideology

Nominalisation

An instance of nominalisation was used when the journalist wrote that the author, Bih, quoted Napoleon Hill several times in her book. Napoleon Hill is a prominent and prolific writer of this genre; using him to describe what is in the book suggests that the book has the potential to be perceived as reaching a high standard. The journalist extracted one quote from the book, which read 'to every setback that we encounter there is a seed of equal or greater opportunity within it' [sic] (Opio, *The Post*, March 20 2009:11). This genre is the type which awakens high expectations, and raises hopes in situations in which a majority of people are poor, and desperation thrives.

Universalisation

Universalisation was used in this review, particularly as the journalist presented Bih's book as though there was just one, unique universal method of achieving success. He enumerated the various words which exemplify the route to success. These included: the principles of determination, desire, discipline, and dedication (the four Ds). That people have to use the four Ds to achieve success cannot be a direct mathematical solution, as success can be subjective and the routes people take to get it differ. Some people coincidentally achieve success without applying any of the four Ds. The meaning of success in this context is hidden. But a deduction from the author's life story, as summed up by the journalists, indicated that success meant the attainment of one's goals.

Another use of universalisation was employed when the reporter summarised *Your Journey to Success* as having 'a passion for something which you can do even for nothing and still

remain gratified and fulfilled, then you must stay focused and believe in yourself; like Barack Obama, whose motto is, “Yes we can!”” (Opio, *The Post*, March 20 2009:11). Universalisation is evident as Barack Obama, a particular case, employed the ‘yes we can’ motto to reach the height of presidency; so, too, it is suggested that everyone else can succeed using the same motto. That Barack Obama became president did not depend solely on the belief that he could do it. Other factors came into play, which the journalist failed to account for and, instead, presented the story as though everyone else can be like Barack Obama and become president.

Trope

Trope is used when the journalist writes, ‘the book is a miniature Bible in its own right’ (Opio, *The Post*, March 20 2009:11). To liken the book to a mini-bible was an attempt to give the authenticity and power which is accorded to *The Bible*. The portrayal of the book as a ‘Bible in miniature’ may suggest that the writer targeted the Christian audience (Opio, *The Post*, March 20 2009:11). This would follow as the majority of Cameroonians are Christians (Christians comprise 69 per cent of the population, with Roman Catholics making up 38.4 per cent of the Christian population (www.state.gov).

Fragmentation

Fragmentation was used when the journalist presented the view that many books which fall into the ‘how to succeed’ category succeed by using discipline, desire, determination and dedication as key principles. What constitutes the difference between Bih and others is that Bih is a ‘born and bred Cameroonian woman’, while, as the journalist noted writers of this genre are mainly from the West (Opio, *The Post*, March 20 2009:11). The journalist reinforced this point by quoting the author as saying the book is written ‘with Cameroonians in mind’ (Opio, *The Post*, March 20 2009:11). This emphasises the public targeted but, at the same time, it alienates any potential ‘Western’ readers and, hence, possibly limits the book’s reach.

Aristotle’s mode of persuasion

Logos

In article 2, the journalist attempted to persuade readers that obtaining a copy of Bih’s book *Your Journey to Success* would be the beginning of ‘a dozen bold steps on the trail of success’ (Opio, *The Post*, March 20 2009:11). This mode of persuasion was probably aimed at persuading the population, the majority of who are poor, to read this book so that they can

become successful, although not necessarily rich.

Discussion

In the first story, we see women artists constructed as being in need of financial assistance to enhance their artistic works. However, this is opposed by male artists, who argue that financial assistance would attract unwanted and unenthusiastic artists who may join the profession due to the funding made available, and not necessarily for the love of the profession. In order to protect the image of Cameroonian artists in general, artists unanimously objected to assistance being given to female artists. Here, we notice that male artists were indirectly construed as guardians of the artistic profession, while professional women were powerless in any decision that affected their profession and themselves. The second story under the theme women as artists, constructed the woman as knowledgeable in a particular genre, which encouraged people to achieve success. The attempt by the journalist to relate the book to *The Bible* reflects the societal background of Cameroon, where many women believe that success comes from God.

Theme: The construction of women in authority

This theme discusses the construction of women in power. There were two stories supportive of this theme: a woman appointed as leader of WWF, and two female parliamentarians reported to be clashing over the same position.

Article 1

Headline: 'WWF Central Africa Gets New Boss' by Kini Nsom

This 35-lined article reported the story of a woman, Natasha Quist, who had 20 years of experience and who was appointed head of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Central African Regional Programme (Carpro). She holds dual nationality from Britain and Nigeria. An overview of the previous head, Laurent Some, was covered. He was said to have held the position for only seven years, after which he was upgraded and transferred to the post of WWF Director for Africa and Madagascar. Quist then took over and her role was to 'oversee the programmatic, financial administration of WWF in Central Africa' (Nsom, *The Post*, Friday March 13, 2009:3). The story ended by emphasising Quist's previous experience of leading many other 'multinational and international organisations in the domain of management' (Nsom, *The Post* Friday March 13, 2009:3). A close-up picture of Quist accompanied the story. The photo caption read 'Quist: WWF new boss' (Nsom, *The Post*, Friday March 13, 2009:3).

Thompson's modes of ideology

Legitimation

The journalist, in a sense, legitimised Quist's ability to take the role as head of the WWF when he referred to Natasha Quist's previous experience with other 'multinational and international organisations' (Nsom, *The Post*, Friday March 13, 2009:3). This was mainly aimed at justifying her being called upon to become leader of the WWF Central African Region branch. Although Natasha has led several other organisations, her role as the WWF Central African Regional leader is new. Irrespective of her previous experience, she was viewed as being competent enough to coordinate the WWF for Central Africa.

Fragmentation

The ideological mode of fragmentation through the schema of differentiation was used when the journalist compared the number of years the two bosses have been involved in working in various positions of authority. The previous boss had been there for seven years, whilst Quist had gained experience with other organisations over a period of 20 years. The underlying meaning in this is that, despite Quist's several years of experience with working for non-governmental organisations, she is still subject to the same position as her male counterpart. This is to say women are discriminated upon when it comes to handling top managerial positions, and this can purvey the idea that women are less competent even after several years of experience. Men on the other hand, are competent enough with little experience as indicative of the previous boss who is transferred to head the organisation at a continental level. He is to be WWF Director for Africa and Madagascar. However, the journalist does not provide ample information of the previous boss's experience and therefore, limits the understanding as to why Quist with several years of experience is relegated to a lower position. This could also reinforce the unequal relations of power that exist between men and women in the public sphere which seeks to undermine women's output and competence.

Discussion

This was news in Cameroon, as Cameroon heads the Community of Central African States and it was expected that the new boss would take up their duties and residence in the capital city of Cameroon, Yaounde. Sometimes it can be quite difficult for journalists to access information that involves top-ranking leaders, and the detailed information provided was indicative of serious journalism, although the picture used in the story was an archived picture. The detailed background information provided by the journalist suggests that he had

done his research, in order to be able to state the number of years each of the bosses have worked and their previous work history. However, the journalist was unable to give any views as to Quist's reaction to being appointed the head of WWF Central Africa Region.

This story potentially highlighted the way men and women were assessed for top jobs: Quist with 20 years of experience succeeded a male with 7 years' experience. By focusing on the disjuncture between their experiences and role, the journalist may suggest that the traits accorded to women within patriarchal societies are not those normally characteristic of a leader; for example, being reticent over 'self-promotion' or not being risk-takers (www.referenceforbusiness.com). Women in Cameroon are generally perceived as nurturers, not as leaders and controllers, and this may explain why there are fewer Cameroonian women in leadership positions. This may account for the journalist choosing to emphasise the nationality of the new female leader. The woman in this story was referred to as 'boss' which constructed her as the controller and the chief of affairs.

Article 2

In this story, two prominent women, one who is replacing the other in parliament, were reported to clash with each other. There was a photograph of the two women just beneath the headline. The photo caption reads 'Lifaka (L), stepping into Abunaw's shoes'.

Rationalisation

The author employed the ideological mode of rationalisation to demonstrate the reason why Abunaw relinquishes power. The writer stated that Abunaw was dropped 'soon after *The Quail* newspaper exposed her involvement in suspected visa racketeering'. The words 'clash', 'walk into Abunaw's shoes', 'dropped', 'replaced', 'destabilise' and 'overthrow' are all indicative of the fact that these two women were fighting (Tah, *The Post*, Friday March 13, 2009:2). The reporter made it seem as though there was a battle between the two. However, this was not the case, as the story explained that the parliamentarian, Abunaw, was quitting parliament because of her involvement in 'visa racketeering' (arranging visas for individuals who are siblings). As she left parliament, another woman took over, thus they were not necessarily 'clashing' (Tah, *The Post*, Friday March 13, 2009:2). The belittling of women in political life should be seen as an attack on the female political voice. www.moirarayner.com.au/articles/.

Trope

The article employed a metaphor to describe the exchange that took place between the two women. The reporter wrote ‘Lifaka walks into Abunaw’s shoes’ (Tah, *The Post*, Friday March 13, 2009:2) which literally means that Lifaka is replacing Abunaw in parliament following the latter’s ordeal and involvement in ‘visa racketeering’.

Discussion

The women were constructed as clashing with each other, which adds credence to the popular myth that a woman’s worst enemy is another woman; whereas one parliamentarian was simply replacing another. This reinforces the ideology people have of women in patriarchal societies, that women are not good at handling affairs outside the domestic space.

Document review

The present study was aimed at understanding the structural rules which govern the coverage of stories in *The Post*. As a result, an analysis of its news policy document was carried out. An electronic-mail interview was undertaken with the regional bureau chief of *The Post* in the North West region, Chris Mbunwe. Responses from the electronic-mail interview were used to defend or critique certain practices as stipulated by the editorial policy.

According to the regional bureau chief, Mbunwe (2011), ‘there are no institutional policies that guide the coverage of women. However, women’s issues are given wider coverage as the need arises’. Mbunwe (2011) stated that ‘in the past, *The Post* concentrated so much on women in the media and politics. Rural women are now given coverage because of their activities in the divisions’. Although Mbunwe (2011) states that *The Post* now covers stories on rural women, the analysis carried out in this study for the month of March 2009 did not reflect *The Post*’s coverage of rural women.

Another editorial policy stipulates that ‘the paper should not be used for promoting the public image of anybody’. In this regard, journalists are prohibited from enhancing the personality of those who seek political positions, irrespective of gender. The tendency is for most political figures to want news outlets to project and boost their images as they compete for political positions. The analysis in the present study showed that journalists report many more stories on public figures and use them as their news sources. Mbunwe (2011) wrote ‘one of the news values which shape the representation of stories in *The Post* is politics’.

This is the reason why mainly women in politics, or women of high status, are given preference in coverage. Mbunwe (2011) highlighted the fact that men are given more coverage because they are more ‘daring in politics than women’.

The Post editorial guidelines caution that ‘where possible, controversial issues concerning individuals should be handled through personal interviews of the principals concerned’. So, journalists of *The Post* are cautioned by the editorial guidelines to report only after having interviewed the subjects concerned in order to gain evidence and acknowledge sources. This guideline emphasises one of the rules of journalistic professionalism, where journalists are called upon to contact sources for their stories and to protect these sources in cases which may impact on their privacy. However, the story on the clash between the two female parliamentarians did not tell both sides of the women's stories, suggesting that the journalists did not follow the editorial norms. The story on the woman detained for informing the police about having discovered bags of cement is another in which the journalist did not contact the principal actors in order for them to tell their versions of the story. This suggests that, although journalists have their policies and guidelines, there are occasions when they are not respected; the editorial board ignores these omissions and publishes stories that may affect the quality of *The Post's* publication.

‘Cultural events in the country should be given the widest possible coverage.’ This tenet of *The Post's* editorial guidelines suggested that cultural discourses which help to maintain women in subordinate positions should be given the broadest coverage possible. Having examined the content of *The Post* for the month of March 2009, I observed that stories which were published were more politically angled than culturally motivated. Hence, many of the stories covered mainly men in politics rather than women, because as Mbunwe (2011) says, ‘men are more daring in politics than women’.

‘The publication should be more picture-oriented than existing newspapers, and should as much as possible, use pictures of events as opposed to pictures drawn from archives.’ The authors of the editorial policy are aware that journalists do use archival pictures to tell current stories. The story on the WWF appointing a new boss, Quist, made use of an archived picture. The use of archived pictures was supported by Mbunwe (2011) when he wrote ‘archived pictures are handy’. Therefore, journalists often use archived pictures because of difficulties in obtaining actual pictures of stories.

‘The publication shall run with 12 pages and carry a price of 400FCFA.’ This sum, when converted, is estimated to be about one dollar. The issue of penury becomes important here, as the majority of working class Cameroonians live on less than one dollar a day. It is a reality that many Cameroonians, particularly women, are poor and can barely afford the luxury of purchasing newspapers.

Editorial policies are said to serve as guidelines and, as such, curtail the very free environment under which journalists are supposed to function and operate. The norms of journalistic professionalism highlight the importance of journalists working under certain guidelines, which, arguably, curtails their power to operate freely and, thus, influences their news production (Soloski 1989:226). However, it has also been argued that, although news policies do limit journalists in carrying out their day-to-day work, journalists do not necessarily see these rules as interfering and constraining (Soloski 1989:209). This is because journalists see these 'professional norms and news policies' as rules of the game that they must learn to play (Soloski 1989:218). These rules are usually subject to change, as this flexible type of control is required when dealing with different situations, hence making the nature of professionalism contestable (Soloski 1989:214).

Conclusion

This chapter covered the main findings of the research under the themes: injustices against women, women in power/authority, women celebrate Women’s Day and women as artists. The news policy was also reviewed in order to understand the institutional perspective from which stories are pursued, articulated and given salience. The discussion was around the theoretical and methodological frameworks which informed the study; that is, Foucault’s discourse theory and the Habermasian concept of the public sphere. Specifically, the study looked at different scholarly perspectives on tabloid journalism, highlighting some of the positive contributions as well as limitations associated with tabloids as an alternative public sphere for the underprivileged. The following chapter concludes the study.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Introduction

The study specifically sought to ask whether women's representations in *The Post* reflect their status as being poor. In order to find out whether women are represented as poor, the study used thematic analysis to categorise the main ways in which women were represented in *The Post* during the period of study, and then used Thompson's five modes of operation of ideology to discover the underlying meanings of women in *The Post's* construction of them. *The Post's* editorial policy was also examined as this shapes its news values. This was complemented by an electronic mail interview with the bureau chief to ascertain how this policy shapes *The Post's* coverage of women's issues.

Despite research carried out on the representation of women (Clawson 1992:53; Butler 2007; Unifem 2008; Gilens 1996; Golding & Middleton 1982), the findings have remained significantly unchanged (Tuchman 1979:534). Thematic analysis exposed the under-representation of poverty in news constructs, mainly as fewer stories on women compared to men were counted. *The Post* failed to bring poverty to life, to foreground it and make it a major concern for public debate. The word poverty was not used in any of the stories analysed. This is indicative of the fact that, although journalists in Cameroon live in a society in which poverty thrives, their stories concentrate the least on people's day-to-day experiences of poverty.

One of the motivations of the present study was the observation that women were under-represented in *The Post*. Due to the fact that women were under-represented, the study selected the month of March, which has a greater number of stories on women because this coincides with the International Day of the Woman as well as Mother's Day. Due to this, the data chosen for analysis would have been skewed because it was expected that coverage of stories during this month would predominantly be on women celebrating Women's Day. Also the theme for the Women's Day celebration was designated by the United Nations. As a case study, the findings of this study cannot, therefore, be generalised.

With respect to the way women were depicted, *The Post* did not show them to be poor. There were two ways in which women appeared to be constructed in *The Post* and these have been categorised. First of all negatively - when women were depicted as powerless, voiceless and bearers of an unjust police system. This is based on the themes of injustice against women and women in financial need as artists. As artists, women were shown to be in need of financial assistance, and to require the authority of male artists to support the bid to assist them in their profession. Unfortunately, men refused to endorse their support for financial assistance to female artists on the grounds that it would invite quacks to the profession.

Secondly, positively - when women were represented as being in positions of power and were knowledgeable. Even though women were represented in positions of power, the story of two female parliamentarians clashing promoted the view of women as 'bitches fighting'. This misuse of power showed women as incompetent and not to be trusted when vested with power. Although *The Post* exposed the parliamentarian involved in visa racketeering, denouncing such practices, it also depicted women fighting and clashing to take power. In this sense, *The Post* could be seen to be a tabloid serving the interests of the 'masses' by exposing stories on misdeeds carried out by governmental representatives, whose counter-parliamentary actions would otherwise be unheard in society. In as much as *The Post* plays its role as the watchdog of the political sphere, it does so in a manner which suggests playing down the role of women in politics and could also convey the feeling that women are incompetent, and misuse their power in political roles. In contrast, the new WWF boss for Central Africa was a woman who had been vested with control of the organisation at the regional level, thereby depicting women as competent at working in top-ranking managerial roles and in serving the interests of the public. Yet, women seem to be discriminated upon as Quist with several years of experience is appointed to head the regional office while her male counterpart with seven years of experience is transferred to head the organisation for Africa and Madagascar. The book review showed a female writer who had taken matters into her own hands and urged others, irrespective of gender, to work hard, and seek opportunities to empower themselves.

Many of the sources used talked about women in political positions such as delegates, parliamentarians, mayors and divisional officers. This suggests that stories in *The Post* are driven by prominence, although this is not categorically indicated in their editorial policy which was used in the analysis of this study. Poor women's experiences of poverty were rarely narrated or depicted; on the contrary, their voices were passive in *The Post's* coverage

of events. This is evident as the term poverty was not directly mentioned, but implied following the key definers of poverty used in this study (see literature review chapter). The regional bureau editor of *The Post* Mbunwe (2011) added that stories on poverty are uninteresting, not new, and do not sell, hence the reason for their lack of coverage. But some theorists have argued that tabloids are popular with the ordinary, hence their sales and circulation (Strelitz and Steenveld 2007; Berger 2008:2). Although they are popular with the ordinary, it does not mean their stories narrate ordinary life.

Given the news values that promote stories about prominent people, it is not surprising that *The Post's* journalists fail to highlight women's poverty. The news criteria that news stories should cover the prominent have probably deterred journalists from writing stories about the poor, particularly women, who make up the majority of the poor.

Is The Post an accommodating public sphere?

While it has been argued by feminists that tabloids could provide a subaltern space for women and marginalised groups (see Fraser 1989), there is still a lot more work to be done by journalists, tabloids, and journalistic institutions to give tabloids that overarching inclusive space. Weak women were the subjects of many of the stories analysed, yet in none of these did we hear women telling their version in the narratives. The sources used in the stories analysed were mainly women in positions of power, such as the mayor and the female parliamentarian. This suggests that the voices of poor women are still silent in news narratives, which, arguably, continues to keep them in a state of poverty. Despite the stories of women celebrating, which was expected during March when International Women's Day is celebrated, there were still undertones of patriarchal discourses. During this celebration, women were reported to serve men sitting at high tables. This is indicative of the fact that *The Post* as a tabloid re-enforces certain discourses which seek to make women subservient to male power when it emphasises women to respect tradition and culture.

Are women represented as poor?

From the stories analysed, *The Post* as a tabloid attempted to narrate stories of women, even though they are limited by the fact that the voices of women experiencing poverty are inactive. This situates *The Post* as a newspaper which continues to reflect current societal issues about women. However, the limitations placed by the absence of women's voices as sources suggests that women are decreasingly considered as providers of public opinion on

the circumstances which affect them (Berger 2008:86). *The Post*, therefore, could be said to use prominent women to speak in the place of ordinary working-class women.

Summary

In summary, women are represented as poor by implication, in that they are represented in ways which are deemed constitutive of conditions of poverty as expressed in the human development view of poverty. The representation of poor women as depicted in the month of March 2009 by *The Post*, positions women in society as powerless and voiceless, which is highlighted by themes of violence against women. It further showed women to be incompetent in handling political power while, at the same time, they can be qualified enough to be appointed to manage top international organisations and be trusted to execute efficiently the power vested upon them. However, some women appeared in *The Post* as professional artists and book writers. The concern about *The Post's* representation of women is that it reports, in a large proportion, the voices of already established and prominent women. Women, who are powerless, but have their stories told, are unheard and this is worrying for the practice of journalistic professionalism. This calls for journalists to seek to tell both sides of the story in order to achieve some degree of truth, to be regarded as unbiased, and, critically, to be seen as working in the interests of all, and not for the prominent few.

As *The Post* attempts to report stories, it should be noted that the newspaper is rarely read by ordinary working-class women, for the simple reason that they cannot afford to buy it. Therefore, *The Post's* target readers have always been public personalities, civil servants, and businessmen who can at least afford copies and keep the paper in business. This is why the paper fills its pages with stories on people drawn from these sectors of life. The argument according to Mbunwe (2011) is that stories on poverty do not sell. It is interesting that, although stories on poverty do not sell, stories on prominent and political figures sell mainly because members of these sectors are said to have the means to afford a newspaper, which costs the same amount as poor people have to survive on per day. Clearly, *The Post's* interest as a tabloid is not to serve the 'subaltern', but to serve the prominent, hence the struggle to find stories on the 'subaltern', while stories on the prominent abound.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I Electronic mail interview

Questions

During my analysis I noticed several grammatical errors. Why is this so?

What news values shape news production in *The Post*?

Are there any institutional policies which guide the coverage of women?

What shapes your (you as a journalist) representation of news

Don't you think not covering poor women maintains them in a position of powerlessness? If you were to amend *The Post's* coverage of news stories what aspects would you prioritise?

Why does *The Post* still make use of archived pictures in some stories?

Why use pidgin language in Dante's corner?

Why does *The Post* pay more attention in writing stories (that is longer stories) about the prominent rich than the under-privileged poor?

Is it the policy of *The Post* to represent stories during the month of March based on the theme of that year's celebration?


Why does *The Post* generally cover fewer stories on women as compared to men? (I carried out a gendered content analysis during the first four months of *The Post's* publication for 2009 and discovered more stories on men than on women even during the month of March which is the month set aside for women.

The Post Newspaper

EDITORIAL POLICY

- ❖ News information concerning the interests of English-speaking Cameroonians should be given coverage and prominent attention in the paper.
- ❖ The Editorial line should be seen as being totally professional and having a cutting edge from a journalist point of view.
- ❖ The paper should not be used for promoting the public image of anybody.
- ❖ The newspaper should not, in any way be perceived as being pro-government or going soft on government shortcomings.
- ❖ The newspaper should avoid diatribes against individuals who could initiate litigation against the publication. However, any activities carried out by individuals where the public interest is at stake should be given the most informative coverage possible.
- ❖ Where possible, controversial issues concerning individuals should be handled through personal interviews of the principals concerned.
- ❖ Cultural events in the country should be given the widest possible coverage.
- ❖ The publication should be more picture-oriented than the existing newspapers and should as much as possible, use pictures of the events as opposed to pictures drawn from archives.
- ❖ The publication shall run with 12 pages and carry a price of 400FCFA
- ❖ The publication shall appear once a week until the situation justifies a higher frequency
- ❖ For no reason whatsoever, should any write-up degenerate into diatribes, invectives or gratuitously vituperative language.
- ❖ The publication shall carry personal classified ads free of charge from the general public. The classified ads should not be more than 30 words long including the name of the sender and his address. The classified ads should be sent exclusively by fax to a fax number which shall be indicated on the publication.

CHRIS MBUNWE

Chris Mbunwe




Appendix III Answers to Questionnaire

Answers to Questionnaire from
Delphine Ngetondab

Chris M. ...
Nkingi



- 1) The Post still makes use of archived pictures because they are handy. Some of the pictures are those of elderly statesmen and women like Late Tandeng Solomon Muna, former House Speaker, John Ngul Foncha. Again, most of our archived pictures are "telling" or action pictures.
- 2) Pidgin language use in Dante's corner is to reach out to illiterates and communicate freely because there are expressions in Pidgin you can find in English language.
- 3) The Post report events and people who make news. It so happens that the rich we report about are those who have embezzled billions and are being hunted. The poor feature in societal news.
- 4) No. The Month of March is all but noise about fasting and no concreat projects to help women. However, we recently went to Fundong in boys and covered the launching of this year's Women's Day celebration and local women (widows) who produce 'Savon' were our focus.
- 5) Men are more daring in politics etc. than women. That is why the Post covers more stories on men. Recently, we covered more stories on female candidates like Edith Kah Walle who ~~was~~ ^{was} Respected candidates 2011 etc.



6/3/2012
Edinburgh

Chris Mbumbe

- 1) News Values that shape news in the Post have to do with Politics, economy, human interest, editorials and critical analysis of daily events.
- 2) There are no institutional policies that guide the coverage of women. However, Women issues are given wider coverage as need arises. In the past, the Post concentrated so much on prominent women in the media and politics. For instance Hon Lyfaka Ejanda, Hon-Esther Ngala, Mrs Anne Nsang, late Beki Ndive etc Rural women are now given coverage of their activities in the divisions. For example Oil Palm Producers in Ngie - Mbengwi and Njindom.
- 3) What shapes my representation of news is strictly on topical events which I try as much as possible to be balanced.
- 4) Covering poor women does not maintain ^{them} a position of powerlessness, instead, they are brought to the fore and most of them get support from NGOs and their problems attract public sympathy.
- 5) Concentrate on empowering women to take elective positions is what I can amend in the Post.
- 6) Grammatical errors ~~can~~ in some editions come as a result of poor proof reading. No human effort is perfect.

*Appendix IV Code schedule: thematic representation of women in The Post
March 2009*

Theme	Sub-theme	The manner in which women are constructed	Title of story thematically analysed within this category and their authors	Total Number of stories within category	Number of stories thematically analysed
Injustice against women	Sexual violence/physical violence	Weak, in need of rescue and suffering from inhumane treatment in prison cells. Constructs women as honest	First Lady Shoved Aside Violently (Nsom & Bongben) First Lady Misses her Way (Nsom & Bongben) Human Rights Commission calls for Respect of Widows Rights (Edith Wirdze) Nursing mother is detained (Olive Ejang)	8	4
Injustices against women	Feeble law to protect women/ Discrimination against women	Women working hard to discuss issues pertaining to women's rights and also calling on mayors and MP's majority of	Delegate Defends Women's Rights (Olive Ejang & Tubeg Ngoh) Lawyer pleads free services for widows, orphans (Olive Ejang & Tubeh	2	1

		whom are men to assist.	Ngoh)			
Women celebrate	Celebration in Cameroon		Cameroonian Women celebrate in Splendour (Elvis Tah) Delegate Calls on MP to Defend Women's Rights (Leocadia Bongben)	2	1	
Literacy	Authorship/book publication	/women in need	A review of 'Your Journey to Success' by Acore Opio Pampering female artists encourage quacks Leocadia Bongben	4	2	
Women in roles of authority	Power	Leadership & Power conflict	WWF Appoints New Boss Female parliamentarians clash over power positions	2	2	
				18	10	

Appendix V: The Newspaper Articles

The POST NO. 01036 MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2009 PAGE 5

Monday Edition NEWS/BOOK REVIEW Monday Edition

WOMEN'S DAY IN CANADA:
Cameroonian Women Celebrate With Splendour

BY ELLEN TAN

Cameroonian Women in Montreal, Canada, joined their counterparts worldwide to celebrate the International Women's Day with pomp and pageantry.

CELBRATED under the banner of the Cameroon Council of Associations of Montreal Women, the annual Women's Day celebration by Cameroonian women in Quebec featured a grand parade, a fashion show, a concert, a play and a panel discussion, typical of the Cameroon week.

The Cameroonian women parade and concert, held at the Centre Culturel Africain de Montreal, drew a large crowd of spectators. The parade, which started at the Centre Culturel Africain and ended at the Grand Hotel, featured a variety of cultural performances, including traditional dances, drumming, and singing. The women were dressed in traditional Cameroonian attire, showcasing their rich cultural heritage.

The parade was followed by a fashion show, where the women displayed a variety of traditional and modern Cameroonian clothing. The concert, held at the Centre Culturel Africain, featured a variety of musical performances, including traditional Cameroonian music and contemporary African music.

The panel discussion, held at the Centre Culturel Africain, was moderated by the author of the article, Ellen Tan. The panelists discussed the role of women in Cameroon and the challenges they face. The discussion was a success, with many women expressing their appreciation for the event and their commitment to the women's movement in Cameroon.

The Cameroonian women also participated in a play, which was performed at the Centre Culturel Africain. The play, titled "The Women of Cameroon," depicted the struggles and triumphs of women in Cameroon. The play was a success, with many women expressing their appreciation for the event and their commitment to the women's movement in Cameroon.

The women's day celebration was a success, with many women expressing their appreciation for the event and their commitment to the women's movement in Cameroon. The event was a testament to the strength and resilience of Cameroonian women and their ability to overcome adversity.

Consistent messages, messages and others in Women's Day Festival in Cameroon

Cameroonian women and their counterparts in Montreal, Canada, celebrated International Women's Day with a series of events, including a parade, a fashion show, a concert, a play, and a panel discussion. The events were held at the Centre Culturel Africain de Montreal, a venue that has become a hub for the Cameroonian community in the city.

The parade, which was the highlight of the celebration, featured a variety of cultural performances, including traditional dances, drumming, and singing. The women were dressed in traditional Cameroonian attire, showcasing their rich cultural heritage. The parade was followed by a fashion show, where the women displayed a variety of traditional and modern Cameroonian clothing.

The concert, held at the Centre Culturel Africain, featured a variety of musical performances, including traditional Cameroonian music and contemporary African music. The panel discussion, held at the Centre Culturel Africain, was moderated by the author of the article, Ellen Tan. The panelists discussed the role of women in Cameroon and the challenges they face.

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The Cameroonian women in Montreal, Canada, are active members of the Cameroon Council of Associations of Montreal Women. The organization is dedicated to promoting the interests of Cameroonian women in Montreal and to fostering a sense of community among them. The organization has been instrumental in organizing the Women's Day celebration and other events that have brought the Cameroonian community in Montreal together.

The Women's Day celebration in Montreal was a success, with many women expressing their appreciation for the event and their commitment to the women's movement in Cameroon. The event was a testament to the strength and resilience of Cameroonian women and their ability to overcome adversity.

Tit-Bits On Papal Visit

Suspense Before Pope Alights From Plane

Though the plane, Boeing 777-200 that brought in Pope Benedict XVI touched down at 3:40 pm, twenty minutes ahead of scheduled time, the Holy Father finally emerged from it many minutes later. The population was wondering what was wrong when the stairs provided could not fit in squarely with the door of the plane. The time to adjust this kept the anxious population that had been waiting for long to catch a glimpse of the Pope, jittery.

First Lady Misses Her Way

Attention was paid to the Pope as he entered his special car which was brought in for the occasion from the Vatican. At this point, the First Lady was suddenly seen alone trying to figure out which way to go. Luckily, she was rescued by a protocol who showed her the right direction.

Mammoth Crowd Welcomes Pope

Yaounde inhabitants, delegates from all the Regions of the country and around the world turned out en-mass to welcome the Pope. The crowd, most of whom were clad in the fabric designed for the occasion, was described as the most important in years, with no comparison so far. From the Yaounde Nsimalen Airport, they lined the streets right to the entrance of the Unity Palace and to the residence of the Apostolic Nuncio to Cameroon, in the Mont Febe Village.

Viewers Angry With CRTV

Cameroonians who were not privileged to move to Nsimalen to get a glimpse of the Pope's arrival simply watched it on TV as the events unfolded. In some quarters, groups could be seen in drinking places where TV sets were available, watching and chit-chatting. Others brought their TV sets to open air. For about 30 minutes, the streets of Yaounde went dead only to regain life afterwards. However, after broadcasting images at the airport, CRTV went 'black' and only resurfaced with images when the Pope came into town to the chagrin of viewers.

Lady Shoved Aside Violently

A lady who was trying to shake hands with the Pope by all means was violently shoved aside by security officers. In the process of making her way to greet the Pope, she was instead barring the way for the Pope who had to go out of the red carpet rolled out for him. Cameramen who were trailing the Pope were equally pushed aside violently as they ran in every direction to take pictures.

Presidency Communicates For Once

Human Rights Commission Calls For Respect Of Women's Rights

BY EDITH WIRDZE

The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms, NCHRF, has urged prison authorities to respect the rights of inmates, especially women.

The call was made recently during activities organised by the Commission to mark this year's International Women's Day.

Members of the Commission visited the Mfou Prison with the aim of sensitising prison authorities and prisoners on human rights particularly on the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

The Secretary General of NCHRF, Barthelémy Obongono Eye, said detainees ought to be treated humanely. He said detainees' rights have to be protected in conformity with international norms.

The main objective of the visit, he stressed, was to ensure that prisoners' rights of enjoyment and attainment of their physical and mental state of good health are respected.

The Superintendent of the prison, Mrs. Jeanne-d'Arc Bindoua, lamented the poor conditions of the prison. She said lack of potable water is a major problem and also complained of overcrowding, stating that the prison built for a capacity of 100 people is now hosting almost 300 inmates. She talked of poor feeding, adding that prisoners eat once daily.

Going by her, the prison lacks adequate medical facilities and means of transportation. She revealed that since she took over office two years ago, a medical doctor has visited the prison twice.

However, she said the prison has a first aid service where a nurse treats less serious illnesses while complex cases are sent to the Mfou District Hospital or to Yaounde.

Mrs. Bindoua pointed out security problems especially with the cases of prisoners who have mental illnesses. She explained that it is very risky to transport prisoners to Yaounde for trial considering their meagre facilities. Drug trafficking, she went on, is another problem.

However, she said, the prison possesses recreational facilities such as a garden, poultry, library, tailoring workshop and a sport facility where prisoners could play football. Moreover, she said, religious organisations visit them and organise ceremonies for prisoners.

NCHRF posters with human rights messages and basic necessities such as soaps and pads were offered to prisoners.

A Review of "Your Journey To Success"

BY AZORE OPIO

This book, "Your Journey To Success", brings into sharp focus the vague ideas on how to succeed. In it, the author shares her insights of what it takes to succeed in life, illuminating those intriguing, seemingly unreachable, let alone workable estimates with practical experiences.

It is really nothing new what Bih is lucubrating in her book. Many books written within the gamut of the "How to Succeed" genre are generally grounded in the universal principles of "determination", "discipline", "dedication", "desire" and "decision". Nonetheless, most of them written by Western authors might be generic.

What makes the big difference, however, is that Bih is a born and bred Cameroonian woman. Hence, she wrote "Your Journey To Success" with Cameroonians in mind. Bih has set in cast iron the principles of "determination", "discipline", "dedication", "desire" and "decision"; there are no two ways; either you apply them as they are or you perish. The catchwords here, however, are, "passion", "focus", "belief in oneself" and positive attitude.

"Your Journey To Success" prescribes that you must first have a passion for something which you can do even for nothing and still remain gratified and fulfilled; then you must stay focused and believe in yourself; like Barack Obama, whose motto is, "Yes, we can!"

"To believe in yourself is vital for your success," says Bih. So you must develop a positive mental attitude; have a passion for something and work steadfastly towards attaining and maintaining it, because the human mind is capable of doing unimaginable things - every one of us has an intrinsic talent.

"Your Journey To Success" is a stimulating and engaging novella; to be read and learnt from. Sprinkled with Biblical quotations, the book is a miniature Bible in its own right.

Much as Bih sets forth catchwords, she acknowledges that many factors are involved in any estimate of human life. There are negative people that

can be bad for your ideas, so watch out who you hang out with; Bih calls them "dream killers"; flies in the fruit, dampers.

Napoleon Hill, whom Bih quotes frequently in her book, says "To every setback that we encounter, there is a seed of equal or greater opportunity within it."

BIH says you should change the habit of looking for the negative side in every circumstance. Instead, you should concentrate on the means of succeeding.

She also warns against playing the blame game; the victim; she goes on to give a pile of great examples including her own victim story; pregnant at 14, back to school after delivery and making it in life, though marginalised and oppressed.

Bih cautions against the likelihood of seeking approval, of trying to please the oppressor and in the course of hanging onto the coattails of the "great one", you run a high risk of cultivating self-hatred and, subsequently, becoming obsequious.

Pampering Female Artists Would Encourage Quacks

BY LEOCADIA BONGBEN

Artists have agreed that pampering female artists by way of giving them special assistance would bring in quacks into a sector that should be left for women who really deserve to be there.

This was the position of artists who gathered at the Goethe Institute to debate on the topic "Empowering Women in the Arts" organised within the framework of the second edition of the German Cooperation's Gender Programme in Cameroon under the theme: "Strong Women and Girls: United Mobilised and Certain to Advance."

The argument goes that since a real system of arts and collection is a major problem for all artists, giving special assistance to women would be attracting adventurers into the sector.

Though women have peculiar problems related to their having to cope with family duties and sexual harassment, this is compounded by their relegation to the background in the Cameroonian cultural scene.

Their entry into the sector is difficult due to social exigencies and those who have chosen this area have a problem of being recognised in the face of male domination.

Training especially in arts was identified as the starting point with training programmes inserted in schools and that the determination and passion should be the driving force for those who want to succeed.

It was agreed that there is need for a cultural policy for the development of arts with the implication of councils.

The debate moderated by Claudia Martinek Atatah had as panellists Emelda Ngufor Samba, Theatre Arts Director cum Lecture at the University of Yaoundé I, Kate Krucial, musician, Angeline Solange Bonono, writer, Marilyn Douala Bell, Doaul'art Goddy Leye, Artist and Ginette Daleu, painter.

The Goethe Institute has been promoting the development of Cameroonian culture through a competition of creative writing for young girls organised last year, building capacities of journalists in writing culture articles amongst others.

To Defend Women's Rights

Emilia Lifaka, has called on female MPs and Mayors to defend women's rights.

THE Delegate was speaking in Kumba recently in a workshop to assess the impact of government's investment on women and girls.

She stated that though government has signed several conventions against the discrimination of women and girls, they are yet to fully respect the conventions.

She enjoined female MPs to always include women in their micro-project grants in order to empower them.

She recalled that Hon. Emilia Lifaka of Fako Constituency recently invested on 25 girls by sponsoring them at the Women Empowerment Centre, Buca.

ger explained that such investment would empower the girls to foster the much needed development of Cameroon.

The Delegate challenged the Deputy Mayors of Kumba III and Konye councils, Bertha Tazi and Alice Balemba, respectively, to use their position to galvanize resources for women.

"You must get up from slumber. Meet your MPs and present projects to them that would affect women's lives," she advised.

Reflecting on the 2008 Women's Day theme, the Delegate said it was not enough for women to celebrate on March 8.

Rather, she insisted that the women must reflect yearly on their theme to change their status.

She told parents to invest on their girl children rather than exploiting them for money.

On his part, the Divisional Delegate for Employment and Vocational Training, Meme Aloysius Fomkem Araba lectured

on PIASSI loan scheme and other opportunities offered by his ministry to assist women and the girl child.

The Coordinator of Change Mentalities and Empowering Group CHAMEG, Agbor Meg, who organized the event, called on women to get information for their empowerment.

She expressed satisfaction with women's participation and promised to organize workshops in the future.

Dorothy Ebako, a participant, proposed that certificates given to women groups should be recognized as a legal entity besides that from the delegation, Agriculture and the Senior Division Officer.

She said most women groups could benefit from national and international grants but are hindered for the lack of a legal entity.

Mayor Disputes Legality Of City Board Re-election

BY OLIVE EJIANG TEBUG NGOHI

Lawyers Pledge Free Services For Widows, Orphans

BY OLIVE EJIANG TEBUG NGOHI

Lawyers in Meme Division have pledged to defend the rights of widows, orphans, street children and unlawfully dismissed workers for free.

GROUPED under the Cameroon Commonwealth Lawyers Association for Human Rights, CAMCOLAHR, the lawyers would also educate the public on good governance and human rights.

Speaking to The Post recently, the President of CAMCOLAHR, Barrister Daniel Ngenko Lissock, said there are lots of underprivileged people dying out of ignorance in the country.

According to him, due to poverty, many people cannot pay for the services of lawyers to fully defend their rights which has led to a lot of injustices and untimely deaths.

Ngenko explained that even when human rights associations try to assist people with such cases, they are handicapped because such associations are not manned by practising lawyers.

When such organisations are headed by lawyers, he said, they would easily prepare and prosecute human rights abuses free of charge.

Barrister Ngenko stated that CAMCOLAHR would not jeopardise the role of lawyers who usually make money from such cases.

He said they would assist only those who don't have the means to hire a lawyer.

Besides their services to the underprivileged, Ngenko said they would oversee the maintenance of human rights in prisons, police and gendarmerie cells.

He reiterated that they would liaise with the Cameroon National Commission of Human Rights and other international bodies in ensuring the respect of human rights.

The CAMCOLAHR President called on the Kumba population to report cases of human rights abuses at their office in Commonwealth Avenue for subsequent action.



Barrister Ngenko: advocating respect for human rights

News

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Violence, Discrimination Against Women Stall Development - German Ambassador

By KINI NSOM

The German Ambassador to Cameroon, Karin E. Blumberger-Sauerteig, says violence and discrimination against women impede development in any society.

THE Diplomat made the remark in a speech at the opening ceremony of the second edition of the German Cooperation's Gender Programme in Cameroon dubbed "Strong Women and Girls".

The programme, that began last year, is the German government's contribution to the fight for gender equality in Cameroon.

While presenting the Ambassador's speech at the Freiderich Ebert Foundation in Yaounde March 9, Horst Gruner, a senior official at the Embassy, said the event was geared at sensitising the public on the virtues of gender equality.

Following the International Women's Day, the Diplomat said the Embassy was devoting a whole week from March 9-14 to advocate gender equality in Cameroon.

Thus, the German Technical Cooperation, GTZ, the German Development Service, DED, and the German Development Bank, KfW, are all engaged in a campaign to sensitize stakeholders to halt all forms of discrimination against women and girl children.

He said 40 percent of women who work receive fewer salaries than their male counterparts who do the same job. That is why, he said, their projects are tailored to eliminate injustices against women in the domain of training, employment, revenue and food security in tandem with the UN Millennium Development Goals, MDGs.

He said fighting poverty in Sub Saharan Africa also means empowering women, since, according to him, poverty has a female face.

Citing statistics, the German Diplomat pointed out that 70 percent of women here pro-

duce over 80 percent of food items but less than 12 percent of them have land certificates. Only 25 percent of them, going by him, are paid for the work they do, while 75 percent receive no salary. He said 60 percent of the women are illiterate.

Gruner noted that, in some countries, when parents do not have enough money, they send only their boy children to school while the girl children are asked to stay at home. It was revealed that 6000 girls in Sub Saharan Africa undergo genital mutilation while 57 percent of women are HIV positive.

The Ambassador posited that it is incumbent on government and other stakeholders to empower women economically, politically and legally because they constitute the engine of development.

On her part, the Director of DED in Cameroon, Maria Weitz, said 52.5 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced violence. To her, the violence is manifested in forced sexual encounters by husbands or boy friends and other forms of domestic violence.

She said 39 percent of married women in Cameroon have had sexual violence. Women, she disclosed, constitute 75 percent of new HIV infections in Sub Saharan Africa.

Weitz pointed out that despite the fact that Cameroon ratified the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination



German officials during Gender Programme at the Freiderich Ebert Foundation

Against Women, CEDAW, in 1994, much remains to be done in order to eschew discrimination against women. She said they v working with NGOs and governments amend gender-biased laws.

Highlighting measures taken to mitigate fragile reproductive health of girls, Dr. Fla Ndonko of GTZ said the organisation is training some 10,000 girls that are mothers to be manage their sexuality

He said 5000 people infected with HIV have been trained on how to take treatment and positively. Ndonko said one out of five girls infected with HIV and other sexually transmissible diseases. He also revealed that the nomena of rape and incest are growing in Cameroon.

Andreas Schleenb of DED briefed journalists on the German Cooperation's Policy of rural resources for rural development.



Lifaka (L) stepping into Abunaw's shoes



Quist: WWF new boss

WWF Central Africa Gets New Boss

By KINI NSOM

The World Wild Fund for Nature, WWF, Central Africa's Regional Programme, CARPO, now has a new Regional Representative.

Natasha K. Quist was appointed recently to replace Laurent Some who held that post for seven years before being appointed the WWF Director for Africa and Madagascar Programmes in 2008.

According to a release issued by the WWF Communication Service, the new Regional Representative is responsible for the overall programme, financial, administrative and personnel-related management of WWF in Central African Sub Region.

Natasha Quist will be leading a team of WWF conservation experts in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Gabon.

She is expected to accelerate the putting into place and roster functional, the Green Heart of Africa Network Initiative and position the Central Africa Office as a leading contributor to WWF's conservation efforts worldwide.

The new WWF Regional Representative holds British / Nigerian dual citizenship and comes to WWF with more than 20 years of experience. She has worked in several multinational and international organisations in the domains of management, strategic business development, planning and marketing, financial analysis and inter-bank banking in the USA, Europe, the Middle-East and Africa.

Prior to joining WWF, she headed the Oxfam GB West Africa Regional Programme as Regional Director for over five years.



Quist, WWF new boss