

Radio, Convergence and Development in Africa:

Gender as a Cross-Cutting Issue

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to argue for the consideration of gender issues in all research on radio, convergence and development in Africa. It is intended to guide the deliberations at our Butare roundtable (September 2009) discussion on a research agenda and to ensure that we put gender considerations front and centre as we design our research plans.

Rationale for this paper: Why is gender an important consideration for this research network?

- Without considering gender issues, the research conducted may in fact further marginalize individuals and groups. This speaks to the need for responsible research;
- It is part of doing sound social science research;
- It shapes our realities and thus it behoves researchers to examine the nature and the extent of these influences;
- The area of radio and its convergence with other types of ICTs is under-researched (Myers 2009), and thus new research in this area should be cognizant and responsive to gendered aspects of the research theory and design applied to the projects.

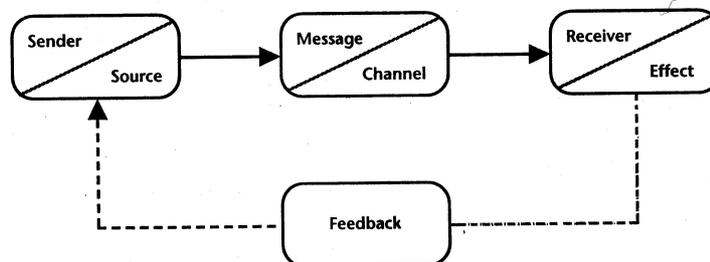
What do we mean by 'gender' in the present context?

Gender issues arise where the prevailing social, cultural and economic circumstances disadvantage one sex - usually women in relation to men. In the present context of media and development, gender issues arise and affect all parts of the communication equation.

Let us use the basic linear model of communication, where we have three main elements: the media producers (or message senders), the media content (or message) and the media audience (or receivers) (Shannon and Weaver, 1949)¹.

¹ This basic linear model has been much debated and refined since it was first posited in the 1940s (see, for example, Srinivas Melkote, 1991 *Communication for Development in the Third World: Theory and Practice* Sage). It is used here to provide a basic structure for this paper, but it is not being endorsed, here, as in any way definitive.

Linear Model of Communication



Media are always created and consumed in a social and cultural context; they are never context-neutral. Thus, media makers (e.g. broadcasters, journalists, editors, owners, technicians, advertisers, etc.) are all subject to the prevailing social, economic and cultural norms of their personal milieu, and their views, outlook and output will reflect those norms. Likewise, the media audience will also be subject to their own social, economic and cultural norms and the way they access, consume and interpret media content will be affected by these (Hall, 1980).

So, for example, a DJ presenting a youth radio show in, say, urban Canada will have a very different background, outlook and style from a presenter on a youth program on a rural radio station in, say, Afghanistan. The content of those two youth shows will reflect those cultural differences. Likewise, the audiences of those two shows will have very different life expectations and experiences and will expect the radio programs they listen to reflect those.

It is not hard to imagine how these two notional presenters are likely to talk in very different ways about women and girls on their radio programs. For example, a Canadian youth-show covering the issue of marriage will differ markedly from a show about the same issue in Afghanistan. Thus we see how gender issues arise and vary across different media and different audiences. Our two notional presenters will reflect their own cultural norms of the way women and girls are expected to behave in their own societies, in the ways they talk to and about, and feature the two sexes, and in the ways they select and present content in general. Similarly, the audiences for these two radio shows - in the context of urban Canada or rural Afghanistan - will have very different profiles as well as very different expectations and responses to the subject of marriage, as dealt with in these notional radio shows. As such, a gender-aware, -inclusive or -transformative project in one context will likely not be the same in another context.

Gender issues arise in all stages and aspects of media practice, production and consumption - that is why we are referring to them here as cross-cutting.

Of course, gender relations are very diverse across the African continent and we will have to accept to talk in generalities to some extent. With that caveat, let us now focus on gender issues against the backdrop of the subject which concerns us here, namely radio and information and communication technologies (ICTs) in Africa. For the sake of order, let us start by looking firstly at the left-hand side of the model above, namely media producers.

Gender issues and media producers

When looking at media producers, the most striking gender issue is that the industry is dominated by men. This is true all over the world, especially in Africa, where women's access to education, and consequently the professions, is generally lower than in developed countries.

In 2005, the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP)² showed that the only area of the media in which women are found in roughly equal proportions to men is as TV presenters. Women are under-represented in all other areas, and especially in the print media. Women journalists are often assigned the "soft" beats such as fashion and life style, rather than the political or economic beats, (GMMP, 2005 quoted in Lowe Morna et. al, 2006).

In a study by Genderlinks of gender parity within 126 media houses in Southern Africa (excluding South Africa), it was found that only about a third of media posts are filled by women, with men filling two-thirds. There are particular shortfalls when it comes to women in top decision-making positions. The study found that women throughout Southern Africa (South Africa included), constitute about 30 percent or less in the top four echelons of the media industry - 28 percent of those on boards of directors; 23 percent of top management; 28 percent of senior management and 31 percent of professionally qualified (Lowe Morna and Made, 2009).

In Africa there are still cultural impediments to women fulfilling the role of journalist, particularly in relation to the demands of the job, such as travelling away from home, evening work and covering issues like politics and sport which are felt to be masculine preserves. There is even evidence that women journalists in Africa may purposefully downplay their engagement with women's issues, for fear of being dubbed too feminist. For instance, the Southern African Media Services Organisation (SAMSO) reports:

there is an attitude [within media houses] that women can only be 'funny' or inconsequential in the style of their contributions as journalists, feature writers

² The Global Media Monitoring Project was first conducted on the eve of the Beijing conference in 1995; again in 2000 and again in 2005 (the tenth anniversary of the conference). Coordinated by the World Association of Christian Communicators (WACC), the GMMP is a voluntary one day of monitoring by gender and media activists around the globe that measures the extent to which voices of women are reflected in the media; what kinds of topics are covered and who speaks on what; the extent to which gender equality as a topic is covered as well as the gender breakdown of reporters, presenters and those who produce the news.

or expert contributors. Pro-women or feminist views risk the author being labelled as hysterical or a harridan (SAMSO submission to Lowe Morna et.al. 2006).

Apart from journalists and editors, other roles within media production, such as technicians, sound engineers, camera-operators, editors, advertisers, web-masters etc. are invariably male preserves due to cultural and educational reasons, and the fact that newsrooms' prevailing work practices are often not family-friendly. Thus, we find that women have limited access to decision-making within the media realm for a host of reasons. Lowe Morna and Made (2009) say these

...boil down to social stereotypes defining women's space as being in the private rather than public sphere. Politics and the media are among the most public of public spaces and therefore the most hostile for women to access. (Lowe Morna and Made, 2009)

It matters that fewer women are represented in media production than men because media at its best should reflect the different voices that make up society. Media should help articulate all groups' needs and demands and should help shape opinion and foster debate about social and cultural issues. Women media professionals are much more likely to reflect other women's needs and perspectives than their male colleagues. Furthermore, women's voices on radio and women presenters and newsreaders on television are much more likely to present positive role models for women and girls, generally, and to attract a female audience.

Of course, it is not impossible for men to cover gender issues, and not all women journalists or women producers or managers will necessarily be gender-aware or will have a natural inclination to cover women's issues themselves. But it is still easier for a female journalist to gain the confidence of women interviewees, and easier for a female producer to do a good in-depth report about all sorts of topics than it is for men. These issues are often dubbed 'just women's issues' and are therefore sidelined, but clearly they affect both sexes and all of society. The list is long, and it includes, for instance, children and family life, divorce, gender-based violence, pay differentials, food production and processing, land and property rights, abortion, polygamy, the plight of widows, HIV/AIDS, population issues, etc.

It is more likely that women journalists and producers will take an interest in, and seek out women as sources and as interviewees for their reports and features than

International Federation of Journalists Conference on Gender and Ethics Gender Equality in the Newsroom on 30 -31 May 2009.

Excerpt from the final Declaration:

"It is essential to hold strong to principles of ethical reporting to fight gender stereotypes, to combat aggressive behaviour, harassment, inequality in promotion, training and pay, and to stand up for dignity in our work as journalists and media professionals and that all media workers, journalists, and trade unionists should work together to improve ethical journalism, to respect the rights and dignity of all women, and to ensure that the images of women in media and society reflect the need to end all discrimination in social, economic, political and cultural life..." (quoted in World Association of Christian Communicators, 2009)

will men. At present the world-wide figures for women as news sources is still pitifully small, at only 21 percent of all news sources (GMMP, 2005, as quoted in Lowe Morna et.al. 2006).

Apart from a lack of women journalists available to cover women's stories and issues, there are other practical constraints to gender sensitive coverage by media houses. These include a general lack of resources such as budgets for transport and communications, which means that making an extra effort to seek out female interviewees - such as travelling to rural areas to interview poor village women - is often not possible because of lack of time, money and transport. As one female journalist from Dimtsi Haffash, Eritrea's state broadcaster, told the author:

'I don't get out into the field very often... Maybe twice a year. Not more than that... It is a great problem because most of my listeners are outside Asmara, and I want to collect voices of mothers talking about their children... [But] I need permission first of all, then transport and materials, everything..If we had our own vehicles I could go out for one night and come back, but I have to go by bus to Keren [a day's journey], but even there this is not by target audience, so I need further transportation to take me to the rural areas.' (quoted in Myers, 2004:188)

The current changes in the way media is produced and distributed in Africa and the increasing fragmentation of the media market are other important factors affecting producers' ability to cover gender issues. With increasing commercialisation and the rise in numbers of small private radio stations, we are seeing an erosion of the public service function which was formerly fulfilled by the large state broadcasters. This can mean that women's issues - along with other developmental programs - are covered much less fully and often. The International Women's Media Fund was particularly pessimistic on this point in a recent report:

No longer monopolies, state media have undergone severe budget cuts; they struggle for audience share against hundreds of new outlets; and hoping to remain financially viable, they are shifting away from public interest programming and toward "commercial" content. Media-for-development, in other words, is drying up. (IWMF, 2009).

Gender issues in media content

Among the findings of the Global Media Monitoring Project, which monitors the media globally, are that women are more than twice as likely to be portrayed as victims than men in news stories. 86 percent of all 'spokespeople' in the news are men while women are featured as 'experts' only 17 percent of the time. Women make up more than half of the world's population but are featured in only 21 percent of the world's news headlines and women are far more likely than men to be identified according to their family status (e.g. as someone's wife, daughter,

partner, etc.)³. In Africa, specifically, the GMMP showed that representation of women was even lower than the global average, with women making up only 18 percent of people featured in the news (IFJ, 2009).

Although women are often featured as victims of war, natural catastrophes, accidents, etc., there seems to be an exception when it comes to sexual violence. Again, the GMMP showed that domestic and sexual violence are under-reported in the mass media, generally, and are the least-reported subjects among those where women are portrayed as a victim (quoted in IFJ, 2009).

It is also pertinent to consider much more subtle aspects of media production like camera angles, language and voice quality. Most of these generally portray a male perspective and 'speak' - albeit subconsciously - more readily to a male audience. For example, the use of higher camera angles, rather than those taken from an average woman's height, will make women seem more diminutive. Furthermore, the use of non-inclusive language such as 'he', 'men' and 'mankind,' and the predominance of male voices, especially as newsreaders, tends to perpetuate rather than challenge male dominance of the public sphere. At present, worldwide, women's voices only comprise 14 percent of those who speak on politics (GMMP, 2005, as quoted in Lowe Morna et.al. 2006).

In terms of radio content, the classic 'women's subjects' in Africa are those relating to the family and the domestic sphere. For example, in one of the author's studies about Eritrea (Myers, 2004), it was found that the only radio program directed at women in that country is a 15-minute program called 'Mother and Child.' This in spite of the fact that Eritrea had a long history of women's involvement in the country's liberation war, with 30 percent of its fighting force (the EPLF) made up of women, and, at one time, Eritrea had some of the most progressive policies for the advancement of women on the African continent.

Other issues of prime importance to African women in their productive roles - especially as food producers - are also often neglected. The International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) conducted quantitative and qualitative research in 2008 on how the media cover agriculture, rural development and women in three countries: Mali, Uganda and Zambia. The results of the study (IWMF, 2009), revealed "a profound disconnect between African media coverage and people's lives" when it comes to reporting on agriculture and women in agriculture. Findings show that even though agriculture plays a crucial role for Africa's economic growth, it

"One of the greatest challenges facing journalists, both men and women, is to resist the culture of casual stereotype in our everyday work. That is no easy task when media are full of images and cliché about women and girls. Many are relatively harmless, but some, often the most powerful, portray women as objects of male attention -- the glamorous sex kitten, the sainted mother, the devious witch, the hard-faced corporate and political climber." –
Aidan White, IFJ General Secretary

Preface to International Federation of Journalists Handbook on Gender Equality in the Media, 2009: iv.

³ GMMP website <http://www.whomakesthenews.org>). Accessed 4th September 2009

comprises only four percent of media coverage. What is more, even though women produce 70 percent of food in sub-Saharan Africa and make up half of the region's population, just 11 percent of the sources and 22 percent of the reporters were found to be female, and women were focal points of just 7 percent of the stories analysed.

Extract from International Federation of Journalists' Gender Guidelines on reporting on violence against women:

- Use accurate, non-judgmental language. For instance, rape or sexual assault is not in any way to be associated with normal sexual activity; and trafficking in women is not to be confused with prostitution.
- Good journalists will strike a balance when deciding how much graphic detail to include. Too much may be sensationalist and can be gratuitous; too little can weaken the victim's case.
- At all times, the language of reporting should avoid suggestions that the survivors may be to blame, or were otherwise responsible for the attack or acts of violence against them. (IFJ, 2009: 18)

The Media and Masculinity

Before we turn to consideration of the radio audience, a word must be said about the way the media treat men, since this is a gender issue too. So far, we have seen that there are serious biases in terms of women's portrayal in the global and African media. But men are subject to stereotypes too. For instance, men are typically characterised as forceful, virile, emotionless, physically and economically dominant, in contrast to women, who are generally portrayed as weak, emotional, dependent and victimised. This is a construction of masculinity which leaves little room for variety, exception and alternative visions of what 'being a man' means. It tends to deride and discourage homosexuality, for instance. It also tends to demean men in caring or domestic roles, vulnerable men, men who oppose violence, and any man who, in some way or other, may fall outside the dominant norms of masculinity.

Both the global and the local media, especially through action-movies, advertising and music, help construct and sustain men and boys' views of themselves (Busby, 1985; Fejes, 1992; Gunter 1986). Various studies have investigated and established links between media narratives and actual anti-social, violent and harmful events and trends. For instance, gang membership in South Africa has been associated with media narratives which continuously link violence with masculinity and 'real men', in the eyes of male youth in economically-deprived townships (Sauls, 2005). On the positive side, the media can be, and sometimes is, used constructively to portray as

role models young men who serve as voices for respect, non-violence, self-control and resistance, for example in the Soul City radio and TV series in South Africa (Barker & Ricardo, 2005)

Therefore, in our examination of gender issues in radio in Africa, we must remember that they are not just about uni-directional inequalities in the form of powerful men against vulnerable women, but that there are important power relations that need addressing in relation to men and boys as well.

Gender issues and the African radio audience

Because of women's marginalised status in most societies (indeed, women have been called the 'largest minority'), the presence of community media which prioritises women's concerns can make a positive difference to women's status and welfare within the community. For example, in Kenya, where community radio station Radio Mang'elele started operating in 2004, rural women's problems with water provision have been addressed. This came about because the radio station publicised the fact that some local politicians were closing community boreholes in the area so that they could sell water to the village women from their own boreholes. Young women working at the radio station took up this issue:

'When one of them did this...after the radio went on air, we covered it on the radio, explained what he had done, and what it meant to us – and that he had no right to do what he did. He got furious...[but]...when he cooled down he realised that he had no case... And we are sure that such things won't happen again. And if they do, we are there!!!' (quoted in Jallof 2007:62)

In addition to addressing women's practical gender needs such as clean water, community radio can be used to shine a light on more strategic needs, such as very sensitive issues around domestic and sexual violence within communities. For example, in Western Uganda, where the Kagadi-Kibaale Community Radio operates, abused children and women give testimonies about domestic violence, rape and incest on the radio. The administration follows up with the manager of the program, and later with the local authorities, to seek redress. According to Mwalimu Musheshe, the radio's manager, there has been a reported 60 percent reduction in domestic and gender-based violence as a result of programs aired on the radio (Musheshe, 2007)

As a result of such initiatives –particularly where community radio stations are run by and for women – there are reportedly important positive changes in the way women and girls see themselves and their own potential. As one young woman from the Mang'elele area of Kenya said:

'Men do not want to share power. But they will have to. We see – and our mothers see – how life improves when we know more and feel stronger and

are able to do more. The radio is very important in this change'. (Jallov, 2007: 59)

Another example of the positive promotion of gender-aware radio content is provided by Econews, an organisation which supports Mang'elele and other community stations:

'All the stations we are supporting have gender programs. For example in the pastoralist radio, the question of HIV/AIDS and polygamy is discussed and we encourage men and women to participate and give ideas to discuss issues that are seen as taboo. The discussions include the negative impact of taboos on society and what can be done to respect our cultures but also to move on.' (quoted in Lowe Morna et al. 2006)

However, these positive stories are the exception because women generally have problems accessing radio across the whole of sub-Saharan Africa, a problem which is particularly acute among the poor and rural dwellers. Several factors negatively affect rural women listeners, namely men's ownership and control of radio sets, women's lower levels of education (and lack of knowledge of languages other than their mother tongue), and women's higher and more constant domestic workload, which leaves them little time to devote to radio listening. Added to this, and depending on region and local culture, women are often not allowed to join men as they gather to listen to radio outside the household (Gurumurthy, 2004).

Reliable statistics are hard to come by, but the male bias in terms of higher numbers and greater frequency and length of radio listening is borne out in several studies (such as in the table below), despite the fact that data is mostly gathered in urban areas and does not tend to capture the gap between men's and women's radio use in rural areas.

Percentages of Male and Female respondents who listened to the radio 'yesterday' (average sample size 2,000)		
	Male	Female
Mozambique (Intermedia survey in 5 cities 2005)	73%	64%
Senegal (weekly listening) (Intermedia survey, mostly Dakar, 2006)	95%	92%
Tanzania (Intermedia survey 2006)	78%	64%
Uganda (Intermedia 2006)	73%	63%

(Source Balancing Act 2008).

Anecdotal evidence suggests that among the urban poor and in rural areas, the gap tends to be wider because rural women have less leisure time, and what few consumer goods (e.g. radio sets) there are tend to be concentrated in the hands of men because they tend to have more purchasing power and more mobility. For

instance, it tends to be young men rather than young women who migrate from rural to urban areas, and pick up news via the radio.

Analysing the circumstances under which women in Africa listen to the radio is important for an understanding of the contribution radio can make to their lives. In the author's study of radio in rural Eritrea (Myers, 2004), it was found that women had little time to devote to radio listening in the home and most also complained of the burden of housework and the noise and distraction of their children impeding their concentration.

Their problems are illustrated by the following quotes (Myers 2004:144-5):

'My radio's not been on for more than a month. It's because I have so many children and my husband is out all the time...I listen to songs but I can't remember which ones. I just can't pay attention because first one child cries, then another and I can't concentrate'. – (Woman respondent, Gahtelay village, Eritrea)

'For us [women], when we listen there are lot of worries, and we are exhausted. Our attention is divided. But for men, they come home and their work's over, so they can concentrate and grasp better than us.' - (Female focus group member, Awlietseru village, Eritrea)

Furthermore, the study revealed that women regarded their own illiteracy and lack of schooling as an impediment to understanding and making the best use of radio programs, even when those programs were designed for them and were about developmental issues. For instance, one woman respondent from Eritrea said:

'I hear everything through my ears but my heart doesn't write it. I can't remember what I heard yesterday [on radio] because... our fathers did not send us to school.' (Quoted in Myers, 2004:148)

The study showed that many factors contributed to rural Eritrean women not retaining and understanding educational programs on the radio. Some related to lack of access to radio and programming times clashing with women's daily schedules; however, many related to a lack of self-confidence among women listeners themselves and the monotony and difficult language used in the radio programs. In controlled listening tests, it was found that rural women, whether schooled or not, were, in fact, able to comprehend and retain as much information from educational radio programs as their male counterparts, as long as they were able to sit and concentrate quietly on the programs, which they were rarely able to do in their daily lives.

Gender and Convergence of Radio with new ICTs

The convergence of radio with different ICTs can alter the way in which radio is perceived, accessed and used. Converging with other ICTs has opened up radio stations through Internet streaming, downloading and listening on mobiles and other handhelds, and the increased interaction through a range of different ICTs. However, while technology empowers, it also affects and alters gender relations.

The following are some socio-cultural factors that impede women's use of ICTs, particularly in rural areas:

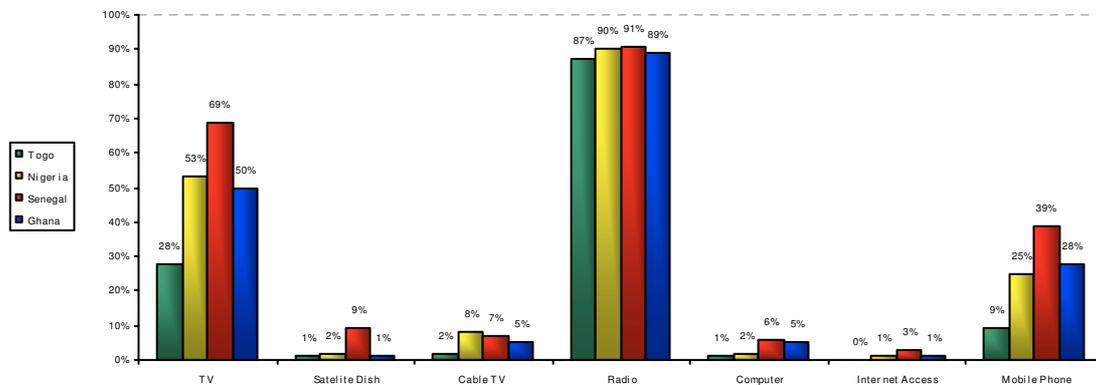
- Cultural attitudes discriminate against women's access to technology and technology education.
- Women are less likely to own communication assets, such as radios and mobile phones.
- Women in poor households do not have the income to use public facilities.
- Information centres may be located in places that women are not comfortable visiting.
- Women's multiple roles and heavy domestic responsibilities limit their leisure time, and centres may not be open at times when it is convenient for women to visit them.
- It is more problematic for women to use facilities in the evenings and return home in the dark (Gurumurthy, 2004)

Added to these are problems of literacy; women account for two-thirds of the world's illiterates. Without literacy, computing presents enormous problems and even mobile phone use is limited.

The beauty of radio for the female audience is that, as an affordable, portable, oral/aural medium, it overcomes many of the barriers posed by other ICTs. The advantage of radio for female producers and managers is its relative accessibility in terms of technical specifications and its affordability in terms of initial equipment investment. But as radio and new ICTs converge, with, for example, increasing use of mobile phones for audience feedback and computer and MP3 technology for radio production, the same lessons in terms of gender-differentiated use of technologies need to be read across and applied to radio as well. For instance, modern studios with computer editing and satellite transmission are becoming increasingly technically complex, which means women producers are often at a technical disadvantage because they have historically had less educational opportunities in science and technology, especially in Africa.

It can be exciting to contemplate the possibilities for interactivity, information provision and advocacy offered by the Internet, e-mail and mobile communications. But let it not be forgotten that radio access far outstrips computer and mobile phone access throughout the population of sub-Saharan Africa, as the graph below illustrates.

West Africa: Equipment ownership (Balancing Act, 2008)



What little sex-disaggregated data we have point to much lower access to and usage of computers and Internet technology among African women as compared with men. For instance, in a UNESCO study from 2003, it was found that in Uganda and Senegal, women Internet users only constitute about 31.5 percent and 12 percent of Internet users, respectively (0.1 percent of the total population in both cases), while in South Africa women users constitute 19 percent of Internet users (0.3 percent of the total population). In most parts of Africa, women users are part of a small, educated urban elite (Primo, 2003).

Therefore, initiatives such as streaming radio stations on the Internet and introducing podcasting radio content to MP3s or mobile phones are likely to reach relatively few people, of whom an even smaller number will be women. It is therefore important that new ICTs do not deflect attention from radio and, where radio and new ICTs are combined, it is important that women's access is supported appropriately. For example, in South Africa, the Women'sNet community radio project is based on appropriate technology use. It includes a web-based clearing house of radio content on women's issues, whose main features are a database of searchable audio features, clips and news, links to gender resources for "radio on the Internet", and a help section that includes information about how to get connected and where to get the right software (Primo, 2003).

Research Challenges

In contrast to the radio literature, in which we find few references on the topic of African women, there is a relatively large body of literature on gender and new information and communications technologies (ICTs) in developing countries (see, for example, Rathgeber and Adera 2000; Hafkin and Huyer 2002, 2006; Olatokun 2008; Buskens and Webb 2009). Much of this literature argues that ICT has widened the digital divide between Africa and the rest of the world on one hand, and between males and females on the other, although, as noted by almost all authors on the subject, reliable statistics that are disaggregated by gender are hard to come by.

This marked lack of accurate data means we do not yet have a satisfactory picture of the extent to which radio, ICTs and convergence in Africa are gendered, and there is a strong need for data both from the supply-side and the demand-side. As the World Bank states:

From both observation and anecdotal evidence, we "know" that there is a gender gap in the digital divide in several developed and many more developing countries, but there are very little data. Without such data, it is difficult, if not impossible to make the case for the inclusion of gender issues in ICT policies, plans and strategies for policymakers. Sweeping generalizations based on identified trends and simplistic conclusions are of little value. - World Bank, 'Engendering ICT Toolkit'⁴

The ITU (International Telecommunication Union) is not able to provide gender disaggregated statistics and also bemoans the gender gap. It notes that there are many examples of woman-centred ICT-related development projects but...

..Impact analysis to monitor the evolution of the gender divide and the impact of projects, such as ICT indicators disaggregated by gender, are extremely scarce. Detailed information on gender access to ICTs exists only for a tiny number of countries.⁵

There are many challenges to incorporating gender issues in media research. Some are on the macro-level, such as lack of resources in national statistics bureaus. Others are encountered at local levels, for example, in household surveys in which it is more difficult, expensive and time-consuming to reach women respondents, so consequently they are often left out of the picture. Take this recent example of a

⁴ See

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/EXTICTTOOLKIT/0,,contenMDK:20272986~menuPK:562601~pagePK:64168445~piPK:64168309~theSitePK:542820.00.html>

Accessed 4th September 2009

⁵ See

<http://www.itu.int/osg/spu/newslog/Using+The+DOI+Monitoring+The+Gender+Divide+In+ICT.aspx>
accessed 5th September 2009

Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) questionnaire administered in a research project about radio and biotechnology funded by the IDRC in Kenya:

The KAP questionnaire in Kenya set out to incorporate the 30 percent gender requirement according to national policy. In the actual KAP the enumerators reported that women shied away from answering the questionnaires referring them to their husbands even when it was so clear that the women were the actual managers of the farms. This was a clear indication on where women stood in decision making. Although the men acknowledged the work done by the women they went ahead to answer the questionnaire anyway. There were two women enumerators...one in the maize-growing region was not able to finish together with her colleagues because of her workload. While the men could work over the weekends or later in the day she could not. She had young children to attend to and other obligations such as her responsibilities in the church. (ISAAA, 2009)

In a study commissioned by the World Bank's InfoDev looking at gender issues in six of their ICT field projects, the following lessons emerged:

- It is nearly impossible to find a project without gender issues...
- ...but if you 'don't ask' for gender, you 'don't get' gender in project proposals
- In virtually all projects, women emerged with greater knowledge and self-esteem
- While technology empowers, it also affects and alters gender relations
- The socio-cultural context is critical – technology does not operate in a vacuum
- Aspects of e-commerce make it particularly attractive to female entrepreneurs
- Projects should actively ensure the participation of women as well as men...
- ...but gender awareness is more than counting women in a project, it means taking into account relations between men and women and their impact on community life (Hafkin and Huyer, 2002).

The review also suggested that the successful incorporation of gender in project design requires that beneficiaries are involved, that gender considerations are entered from the beginning, and that gender-aware persons be involved (Hafkin and Huyer, 2002).

Research Themes for Discussion

We can divide our areas of research into three: baseline data, impact evidence and future trends.

Firstly, on establishing a gendered baseline, there are some basics we still do not know, for instance:

- How many (or how few) women have access to working radio sets in Africa as compared to men?
- How large is the female radio audience, particularly in rural areas?
- How many women/girls have access to mobile phones, computers and the Internet, and where are they?
- How do they make use of these technologies and where are the gaps in access and provision?

Further unknowns, in terms of baseline, include:

- The proportion of female to male journalists,
- How many female media producers and managers exist in sub-Saharan Africa, where are they and what are their needs?

Secondly, in terms of impact evidence, we also know little about the impact of content related to gender issues on audiences. Whereas there has been some research on the impact of some of the classic 'women's subjects' such as family-planning campaigns, social issue dramas and sexual and reproductive health messaging (see, for instance, Papa et al., 2000; Singhal & Rogers, 1998), there has been little research about the impact of mainstream content such as news, advertising, soap operas and music on women and girls as listeners. Likewise, we know little about the effects of radio content on men and boys' concepts and ideals of masculinity. Of general interest would be:

- Issues of women's agency and voice and how these are responding to changes in the radio landscape.
- Ways in which radio in its different incarnations is influencing perceived and actual values, culture and gender norms in different African countries and contexts.

More specifically:

- To what extent has the new trend for live phone-ins on local radio involved and influenced the female audience?
- How has the rise of local vernacular stations impacted women and girls - have they increased the relative proportion of women listeners?
- Has the rise of mobile phones enabled more women and girls to participate and interact with radio?

Thirdly, in terms of predicting and preparing for future developments in technology, regulation and broadcasting trends, looking at future trends through a gender lens might include, for example:

- Understanding not only what the future holds for pro-poor programming, but also for pro-women programming. Is it, as some seem to predict, likely to fall off the agenda?
- As broadband expands and becomes cheaper, and Internet radio increases its reach, does this mean that both radio and the Internet will become increasingly accessible by African women?
- How women's practical and strategic gender needs might be best served by citizen journalism and social media. For instance, are these new media likely to be used by women and men to challenge gender norms?

All of the above would be interesting research topics in relation to the empowerment and advancement of women and to an understanding of gendered norms for both women and men.

Potential Partners on Gender Issues in Radio and ICTs

There are a few organisations, NGOs and professional bodies which are actively promoting positive gender policies in the media in Africa. One of these is the Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA), whose gender policy principles are set out in the box below. Other organisations active in this area include the already quoted Econews and Genderlinks as well as AMARC, Panos (East, West and Southern Africa), Federation of African Media Women in Southern Africa (FAMSA), and Tanzania Media Womens Association (TAMWA) and South Africa's Association for Progressive Communications, which has a dedicated women's program called Women's Networking Support Program (APC WNSP). The International News Safety Institute (INSI) has regional programs - including in various African countries like Zimbabwe and Somalia - to help promote safety among news reporters and has special programs and guidelines for the safety of women journalists in war zones.

The International Women's Media Foundation (IWMF) has an interesting project funded by the U.S.-based Howard G. Buffett Foundation called *Reporting on Women and Agriculture*. This project focuses on Mali, Uganda and Zambia in its efforts to educate journalists about women in agriculture and provide special leadership training for women reporters.

There are also a growing number of initiatives being undertaken by and for women in radio. Uganda's women-run station, Mama FM, Senegal's Manoré FM, and Radio Mange'lete in Kenya are all examples of women's radio projects that have been successful.

Our discussions will undoubtedly identify more potential partners on gender, radio and ICTs.

Principles of the MISA Gender Policy

As one of the main shapers of public opinion, the media has a critical role to play in the advancement and attainment of gender equality.

- As an agenda setter, the media has a duty to portray not just what is, but what could be; to be exemplary in its own practices; and to open debate on the complex issues surrounding gender equality.
- MISA wishes to state clearly that gender equality is intrinsic to a pluralistic and diverse media; giving voice to all members of the community; realizing human aspirations as well as freedom of association. It is therefore one of the important indicators for measuring whether each of these is being achieved.
- Gender-based violations such as sexual harassment should be recognized as an impediment to the work of media practitioners.
- Funding for alternative media, as espoused in paragraph ten of the Windhoek Declaration, should include publications and programs that specifically aim to give voice and opportunities to women and to publicise gender disparities in the media.
- The establishment of professional associations to help preserve pluralism, diversity and independence in the media should include media women's associations and other civil society organisations that promote gender balance in the media. (Quoted in Lowe Morna et. al, 2006)

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