



Veranda Langa, a reporter with the newly launched *News Days*, a private daily newspaper, in the newsroom in Harare, Zimbabwe on 20 August 2010.

Photo: Thabani Mpofu

GENDER IN THE MEDIA

The 2003 GMBS showed that women comprised 17% of news sources in the region and 15% in Zimbabwe. Women were portrayed in a limited range of roles, most often as sex objects or as victims of violence. The news in Zimbabwe is told largely through the voices and perspectives of men. Women, who constitute 52% of the Zimbabwe's population, are largely absent in news. Women were more likely to be seen than heard.

This chapter will explore the progress that has been made since the GMBS. The chapter analyses whether women and men are equitably represented in the news. It gender, topics, age, function and occupation of sources and images in news stories. A further question of enquiry is the proportion of women and men sources who are identified by a personal tag. The chapter is about omission, where views and voices have been left out, as well as the consequences of commission.

Gender blindness

The assessment of gender gaps in editorial content is concerned with what is included and excluded in the news and what is presented as news. Omission, or gender blindness, is reflected in multiple ways in which women's views are being ignored.

Sources by gender overall

This is the single most important measure with regard to gender and the media and reflects how society gives voice to women.

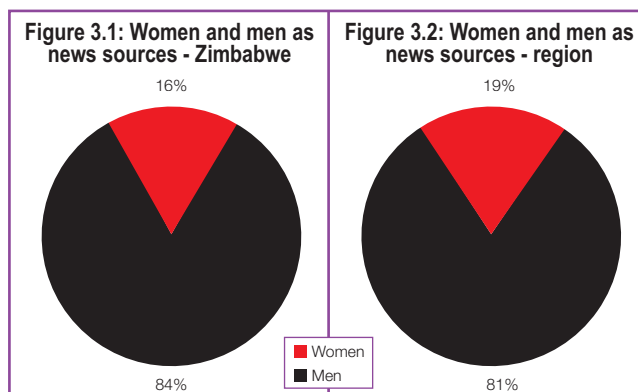


Figure 3.1 shows that women sources in Zimbabwe constitute 16% of news sources compared with 19% in the region (see figure 3.2). The regional average is lower than the findings in GMMP which found that, across the globe, women constitute 24% of media sources. That is against 19% for the whole of Africa, which is identical to the GMPS findings for Southern Africa. There are many examples in the Zimbabwean media in which women's voices have been silenced.

Silent voices and missed opportunities

Elderly widow jailed for not vacating farm

BY SANDRA MANDIWEZHA

HESTER Theron, the elderly mother of the Commercial Farmers' Union (CFU) president, Deon Theron, was on Friday given a wholly suspended three-month jail term for refusing to vacate her farm.

Harare magistrate Archie Wochiunga told the tearful 79-year-old grandmother that she had 30 days to vacate her dairy farm, on which she has lived since 1957.

Her lawyers Scanlen & Hol-

derness, represented by Godfrey Mamvura, who have tried to save Theron's Friedanthe Farm in Beatrix, also brought the court's attention to the plight of 17 workers who stand to lose their livelihood should the eviction go ahead.

Theron's lawyers said the state had made no plans to compensate the elderly widow in the event that she agreed to hand over her farm.

"Prosecution is pursued along racial lines as it is primarily targeted against white farmers. She is a victim of state-organised rac-

ism," said Theron's lawyers in their four-page submission.

Magistrate Wochiunga was unmoved and threatened to put the distressed elderly Theron behind bars if she insisted on staying on the farm. Mamvura said he was appealing against Theron's conviction and sentence.

Her son, CFU president, Deon Theron, who was present in court when sentence was passed, said afterwards all was lost.

Deon said his mother would have to slaughter all her cows

numbering about 400 before she vacates the farm. "Although we are going to appeal, my mother would have to get out of Friedanthe Farm."

"What is happening in the land issue is for the benefit of individuals, not the nation," said Deon whose farm was also invaded last year.

"We have tried many times to talk to the Minister of Lands and Land Resettlement, Herbert Murerwa, but we never got the chance."



DISTRESSED — Hester Theron at court

An example of a gender blind reporting is the article "Elderly widow jailed for not vacating farm" published by *The Standard* of November 8-14, 2009. The story is based on a court report about a 79-year-old woman being sentenced to a suspended three-month jail term for refusing to vacate her farm. The woman was then given 30 days to vacate her dairy farm she had occupied in since 1957. The farm was taken over as part of government's land redistribution programme.

The writer relies mainly on what the magistrate and the woman's lawyers, who are all men, had to say during and after the court proceedings. The woman was not quoted at any point in the story. She is portrayed as a helpless victim with no agency and therefore had to be spoken for. The sourcing in the story is completely gender blind, as only men sources are expressing their opinions. She is portrayed as a spectator and as having to look up to her son to handle the situation.

This story is an example of how women's property rights are being violated, while their voices are silenced by the media. The reporter has missed an opportunity to give views from women's organisations.

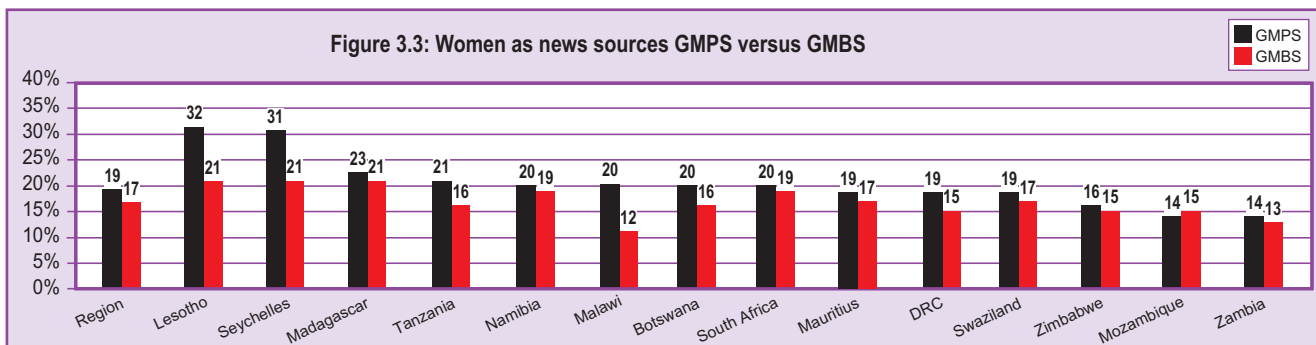


Figure 3.3 compares performance by country, reflected in the comparison of results from the GMBS and GMPS. The proportion of female sources in Zimbabwe over the seven years increased marginally, from 15% to 16%. Across the region, women sources rose 2%. Although only Mozambique recorded a decline in women sources, the increases are all fairly small. Seychelles and Lesotho are the exceptions. Zimbabwe ranks among the worst performers, along with Mozambique and Malawi. That reflects a relative lack of progress in the region despite considerable policy, training and advocacy work on gender and the media.

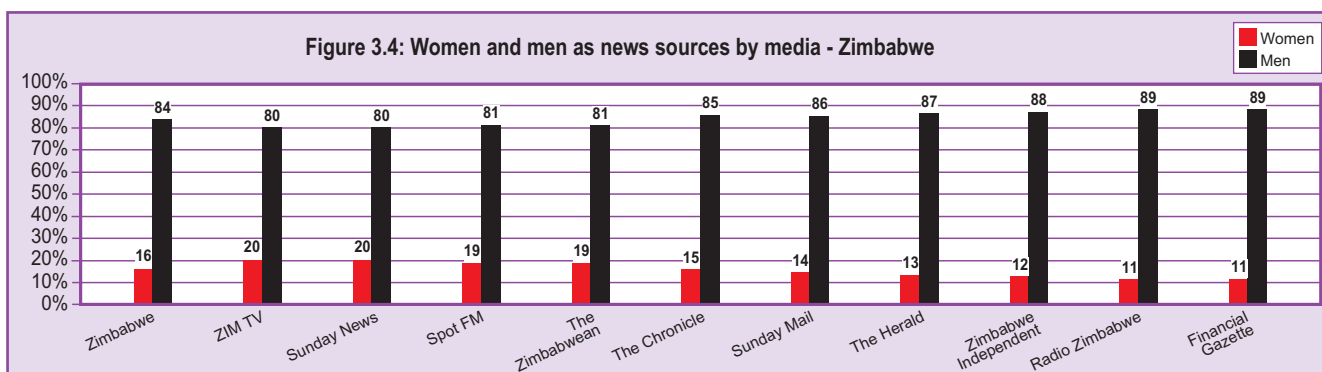


Figure 3.4 shows that there are variations across media houses ranging from ZTV and *Sunday News*, at 20% each, to Radio Zimbabwe and *Financial Gazette*, both at 11%.

Sources by sex per media house

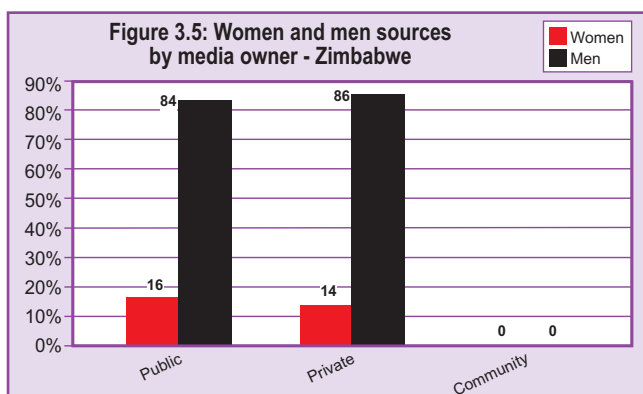
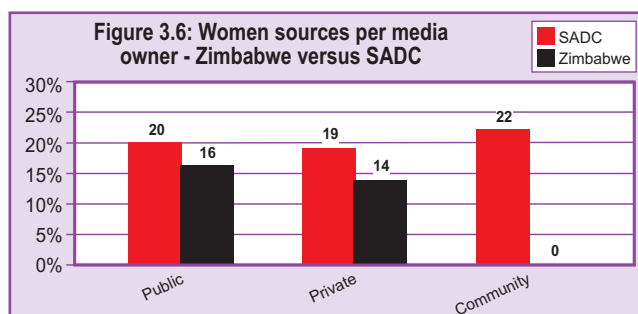


Figure 3.5 shows that there is very little difference in the representation of women across media ownership in Zimbabwe. The public media have a higher proportion of women sources in Zimbabwe,

at 16%, than do the private media, at 14%. Community media did not participate in GMPS.

Figure 3.6 shows that, in the region, the highest proportion of women sources is in the community media at 22%. The findings show that the presence of vibrant community media increases the proportion of women sources and point to the need for strong community media in Zimbabwe.



Who speaks on what?

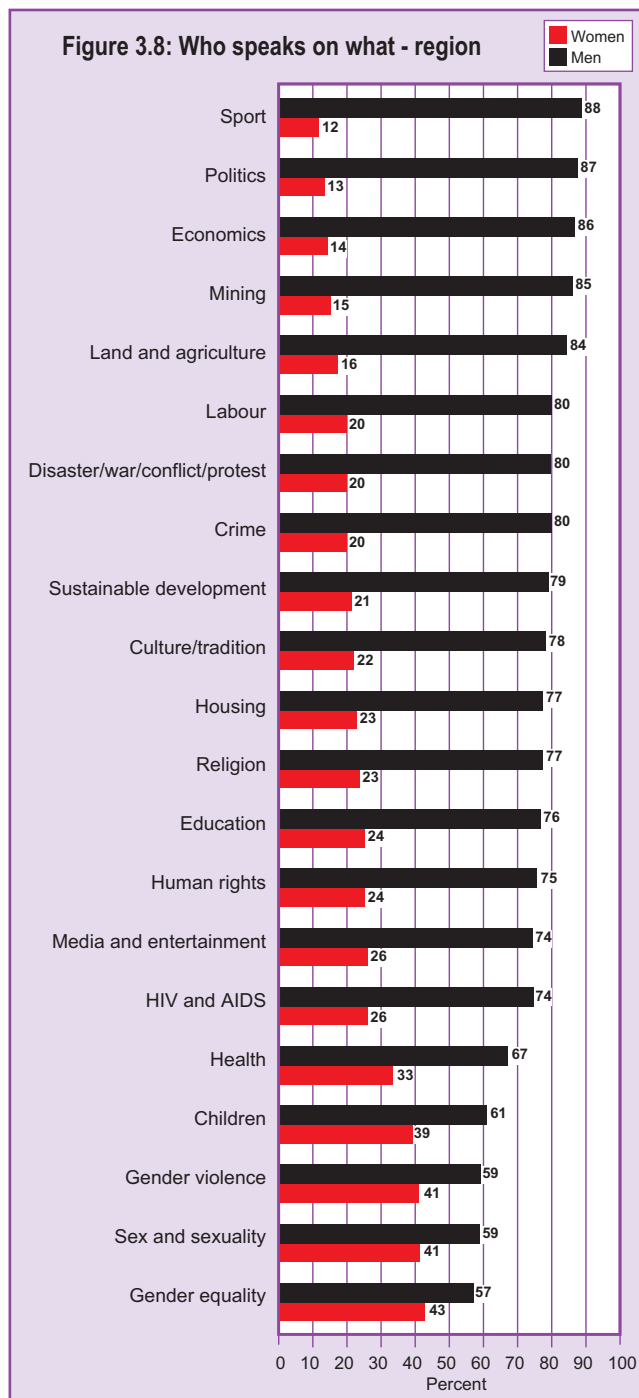
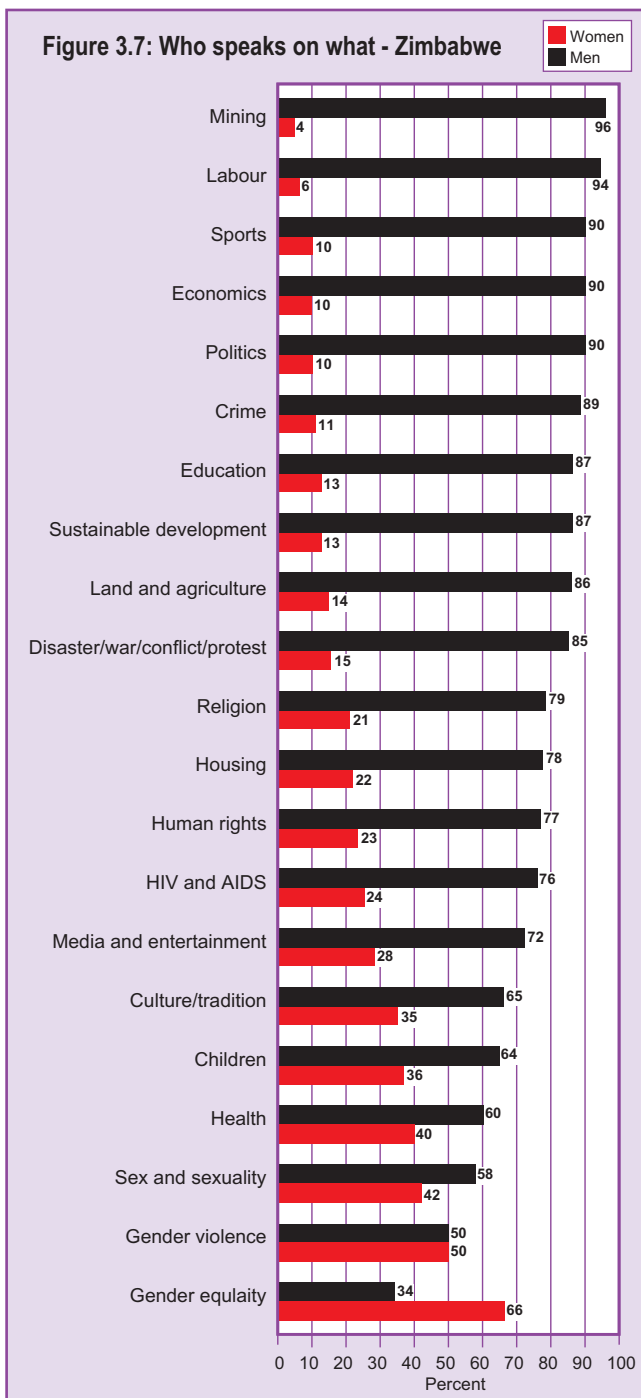
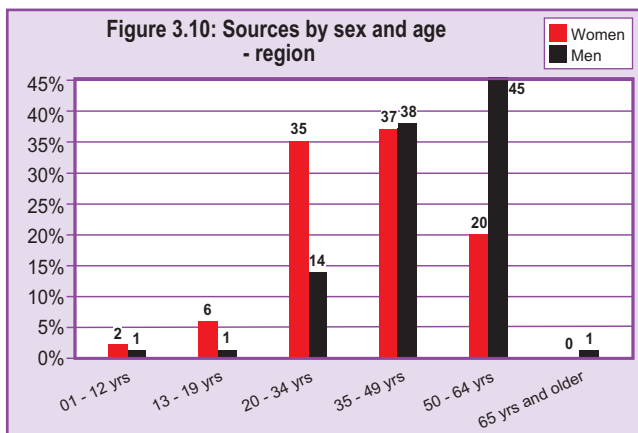
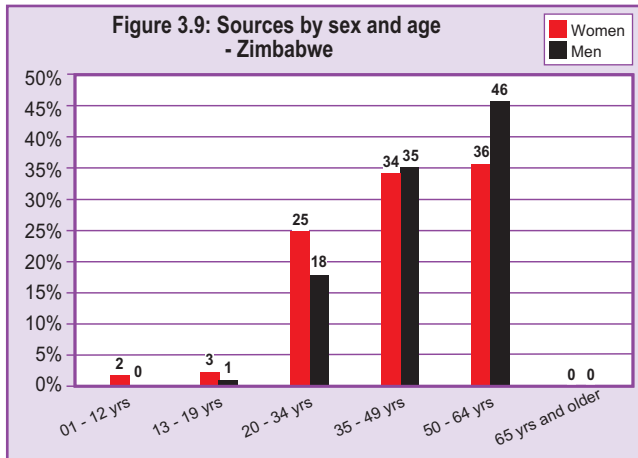


Figure 3.7 is a gender breakdown of sources by topic in Zimbabwe. Figure 3.8 shows comparable statistics for the region.

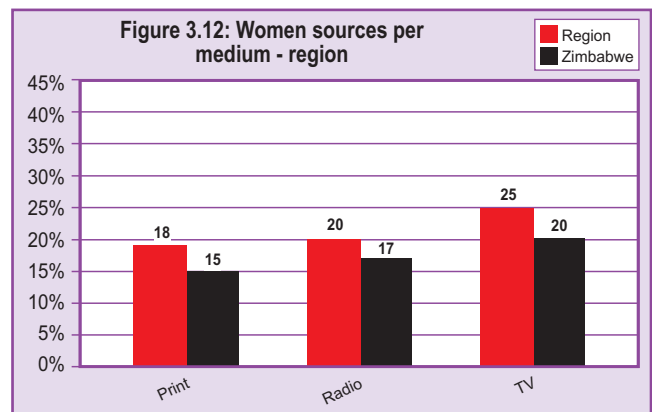
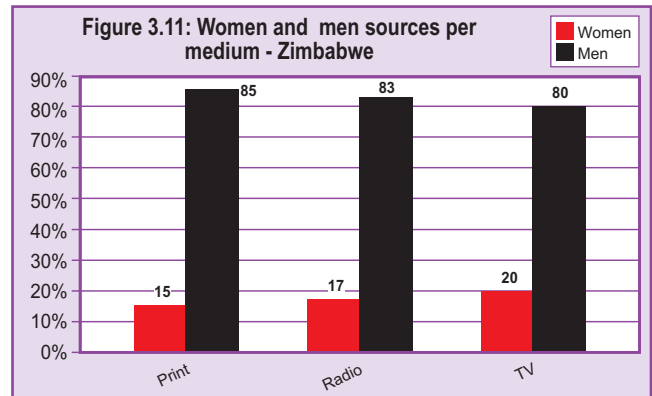
Figure 3.7 shows that women's voices in Zimbabwe are heard on topics that are generally regarded as

women's issues and soft beats, including gender equality (66%) and gender violence (50%). On the other hand, men predominate in hard beats, such as mining (96%), labour (94%), sport (90%), politics (90%) and economics (90%). Figure 3.8 shows comparable findings for the region.

Sources by gender and age



Zimbabwe and regionally leads to the conclusion that women may be valued for their physical rather than intellectual attributes.



Figures 3.9 and 3.10 concern the representation of women and men in different age categories in Zimbabwe and in the region, respectively. In both Zimbabwe and region, women and men aged 65 years and older are missing from the news. In both Zimbabwe and region, women as sources of news are in the age groups of 20-34 years, 34-49 years and 50-64 years.

Subtle stereotypes

Stereotypes are expressed in subtle and blatant ways. Subtle forms include the stories and ways in which the domestic and traditional “soft” roles of women are reflected and normalised in the media.

Who speaks where

Figure 3.11 illustrates that women's voices in Zimbabwe are best represented in TV at 20% (a visual medium) than in print (15%) and on radio (17%). Figure 3.12 illustrates a similar spread in the SADC region. However, in the region women are better represented on radio (20%) than in print (18%). The fact that women's voices are better represented on TV than on radio and in print in



Joyce Jenje Makwenda, Freelance journalist and writer.

Photo: Saeanna Chingamuka

Seen but not heard?

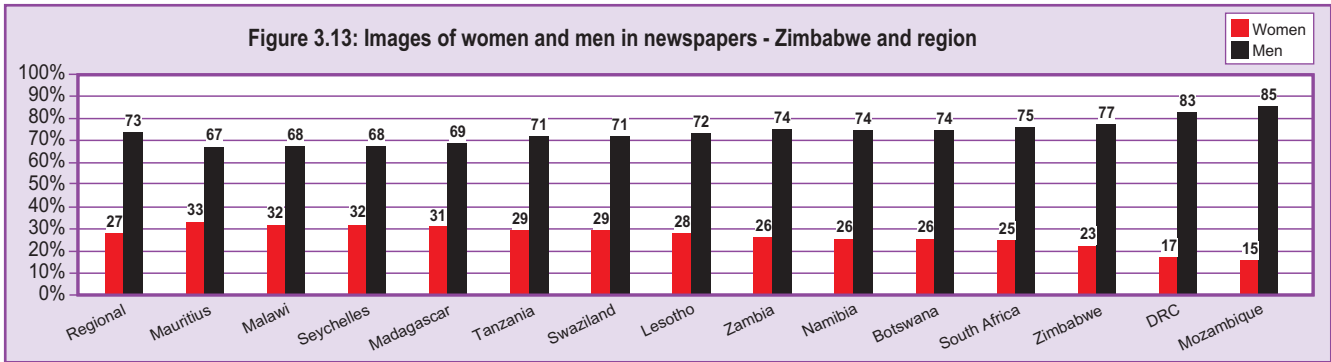
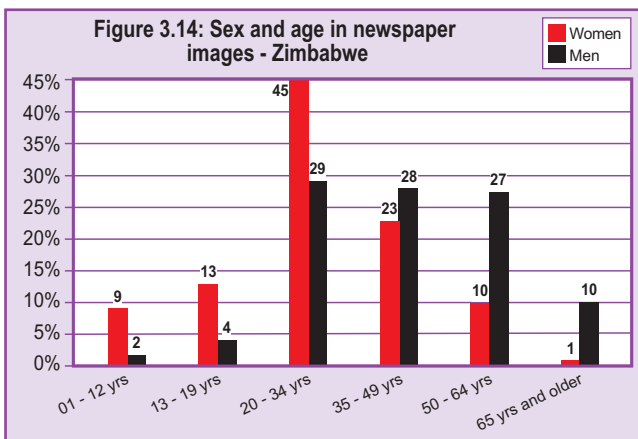


Figure 3.13 reflects the proportion of women and men images in the print media and shows that women are more likely to be seen than heard. It shows that, generally, there are more images of men than women in the regional media and in all countries. In Zimbabwe, women accounted for 23% of images and 16% of news sources. The regional average of women's images is 27%, compared with news sources at 19%.

Older women disappear



(23%) and 13-19 years (13%). They start disappearing in the age groups of 50-64 and 65 years and older. Women images are mainly used when they are younger.

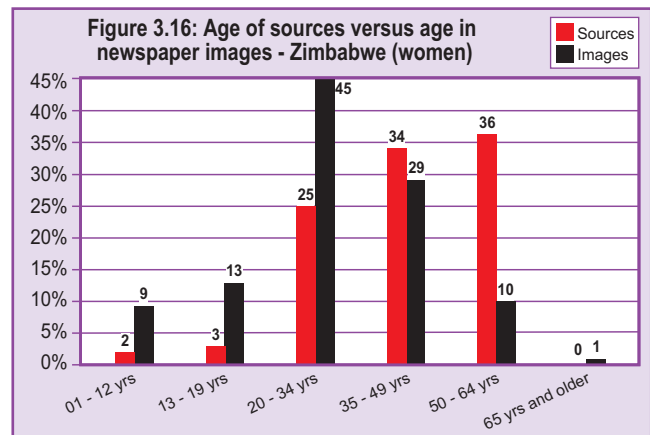
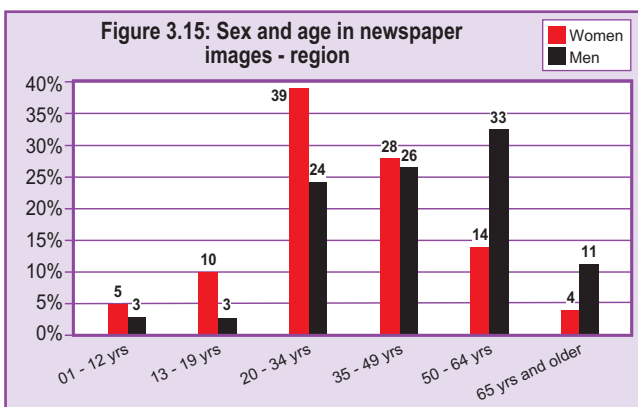


Figure 3.14 (Zimbabwe) and figure 3.15 (region) show that the prevalence of images of older women in the media are significantly lower than those of younger women. Most women appear in images in the age groups of 20-34 years (45%), 35-49 years

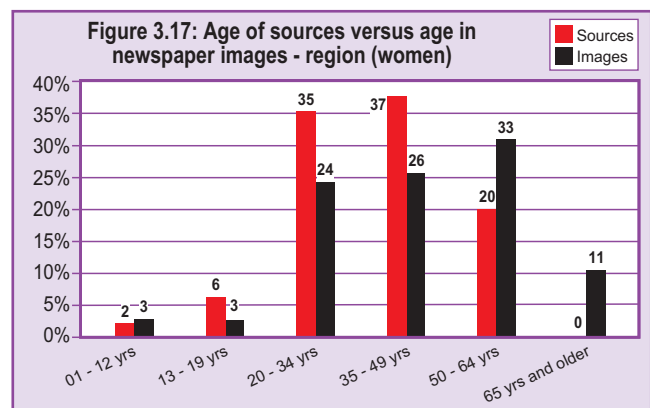


Figure 3.16 compares women sources in different age groups in Zimbabwe with women images, while figure 3.17 does the same for the region. Newspapers in Zimbabwe prefer women sources in the age groups of 20-34 and 50-64 years. Newspapers prefer older women as sources and prefer images of younger women. The regional findings are similar, except that in the category of 65 years and older, women's images appear in the regional media (11%), yet they are missing in Zimbabwe.

Function

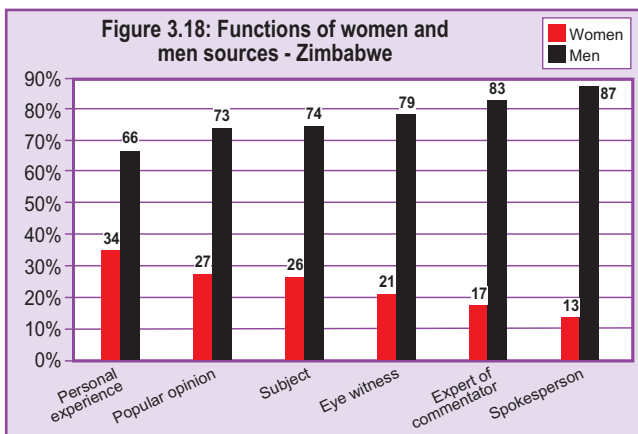
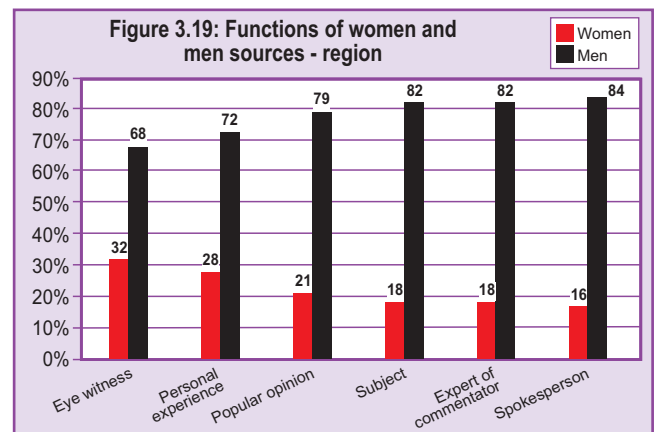


Figure 3.18 disaggregates the function of sources by gender in Zimbabwe, while figure 3.19 does the same for the region. In Zimbabwe women are

best represented for their personal experience, in popular opinion and in the subject category. Regional findings are similar with women best represented as eyewitnesses. In most cases when the media refer to spokespersons and experts, they will refer to men.

During the consultative workshop, participants noted that there were a number of women experts across sectors like economics, politics, sports and mining, but that the media tend to ignore them. In this regard, participants called on the media to develop and implement gender policies that could be used to shape editorial policies. For example, the policies should include requirements, such as that for every three experts contacted, there should be at least one a woman source.



Tafadzwa Muropa from the Women's Coalition.

Photo: Saeanna Chingamuka

Occupation

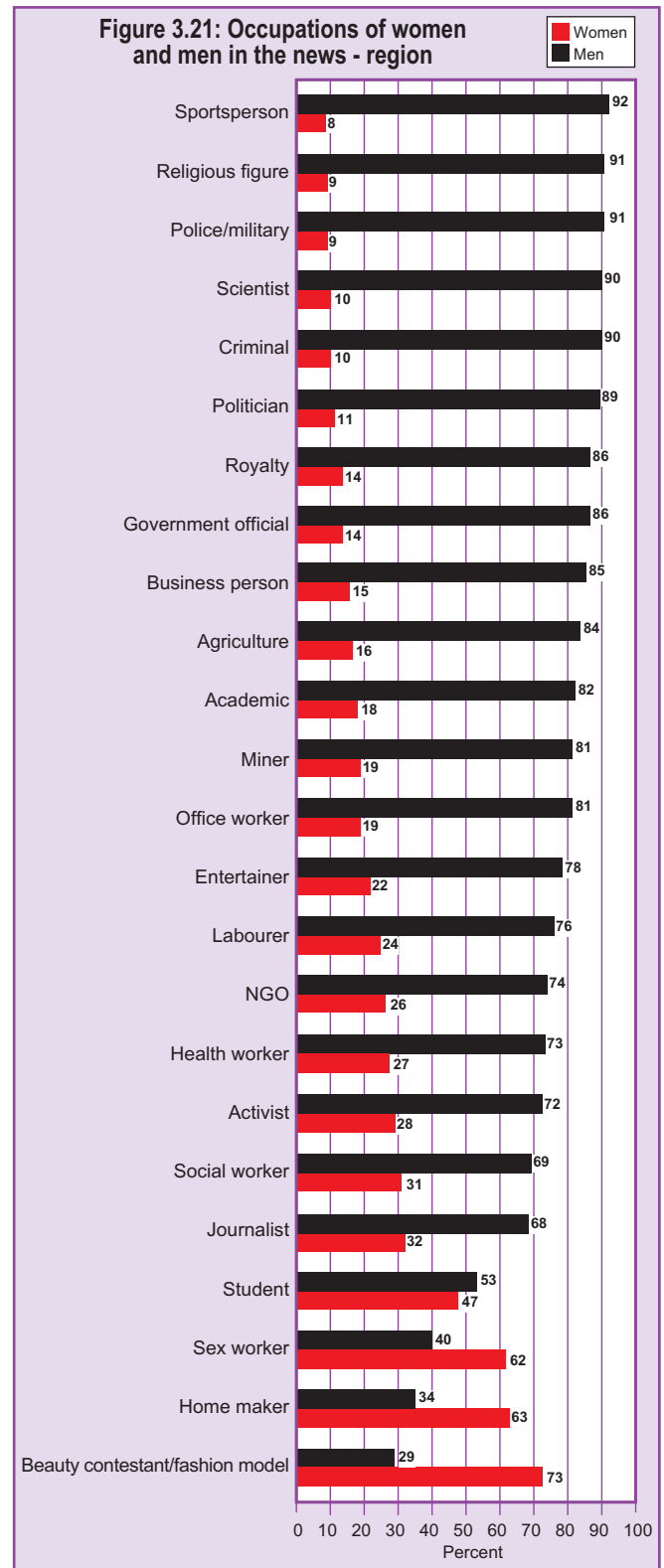
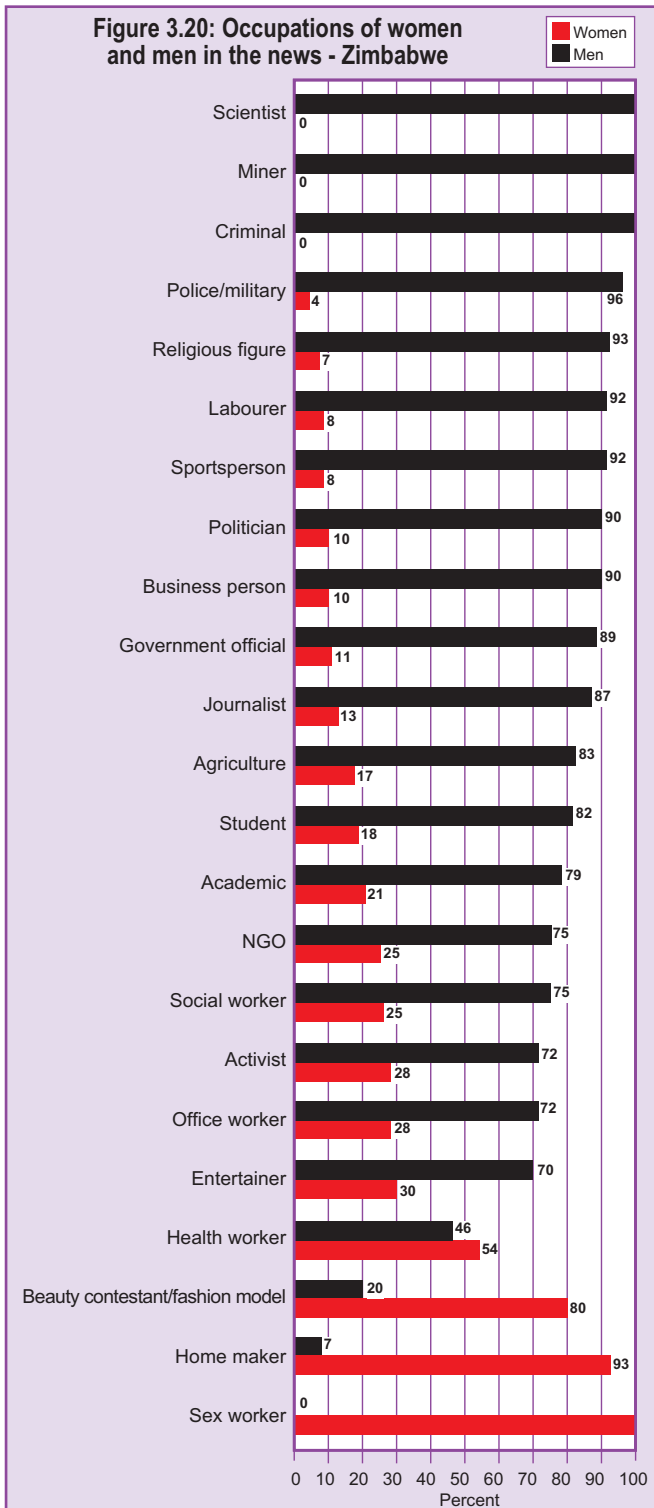


Figure 3.20 illustrates the occupational categories of women and men sources in Zimbabwe, while figure 3.21 shows the comparative data from the region. The findings show that women continue to be portrayed in narrow range of roles. Women are portrayed as sex worker, homemaker and beauty contestant. In Zimbabwe women are

absent as scientists and miners. The findings do not reflect the fact that women in Zimbabwe have penetrated the male-dominated fields, such as mining and science and that, on the other hand, more men have gone into fields previously regarded as women's, such as nursing and modelling.

Progress over time

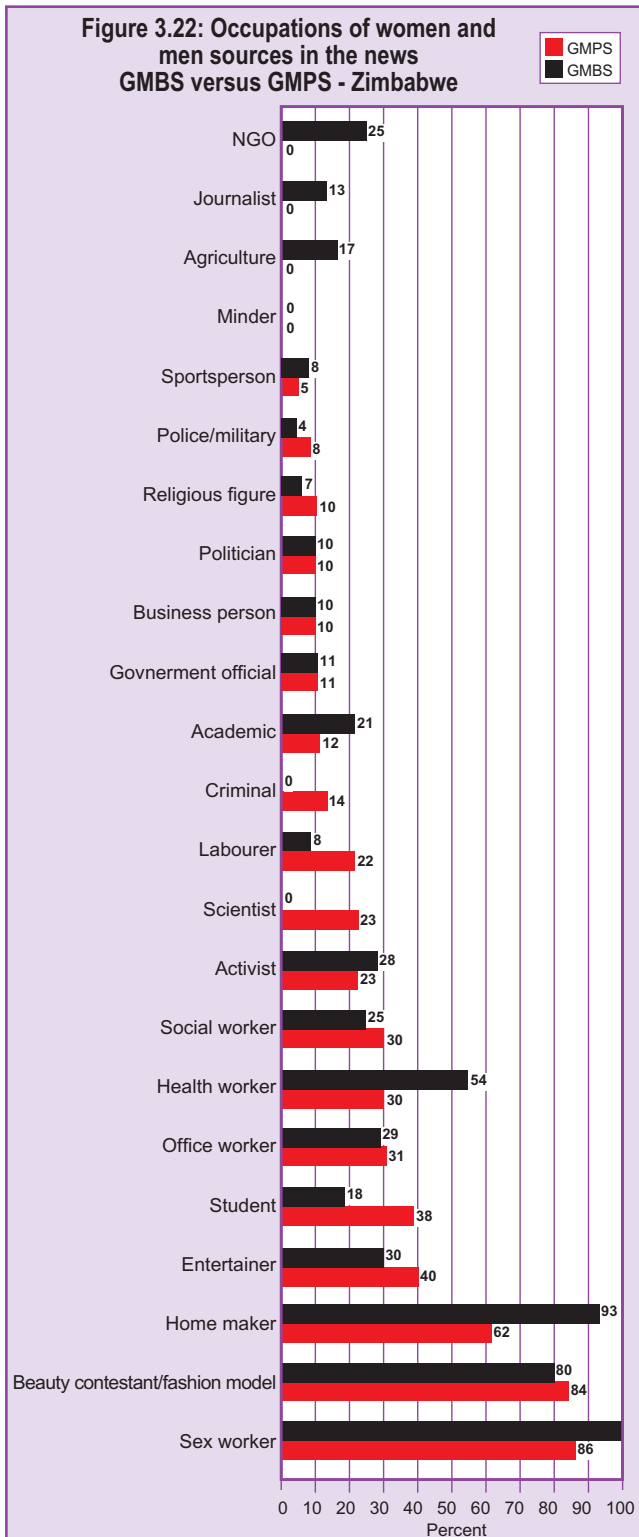
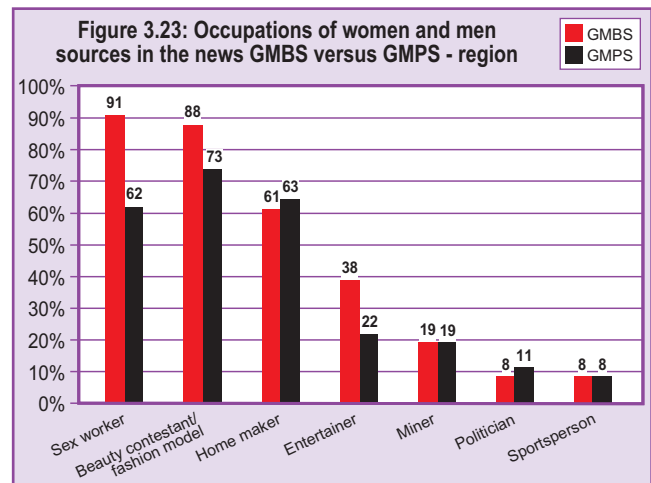


Figure 3.22 illustrates that women still dominate the sex worker, homemaker and beautify-contestant categories in Zimbabwe. However, women have made inroads in occupations

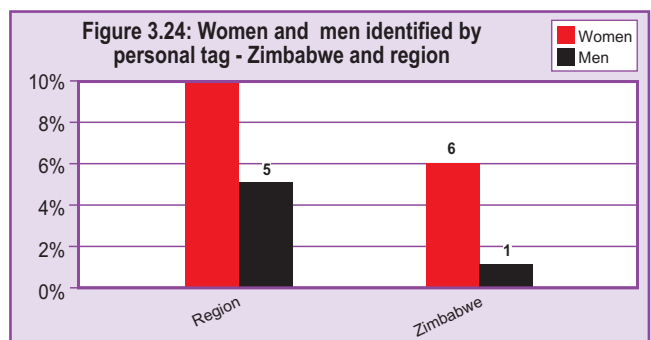
previously the preserves of men which include academic, sportsperson, and activists.

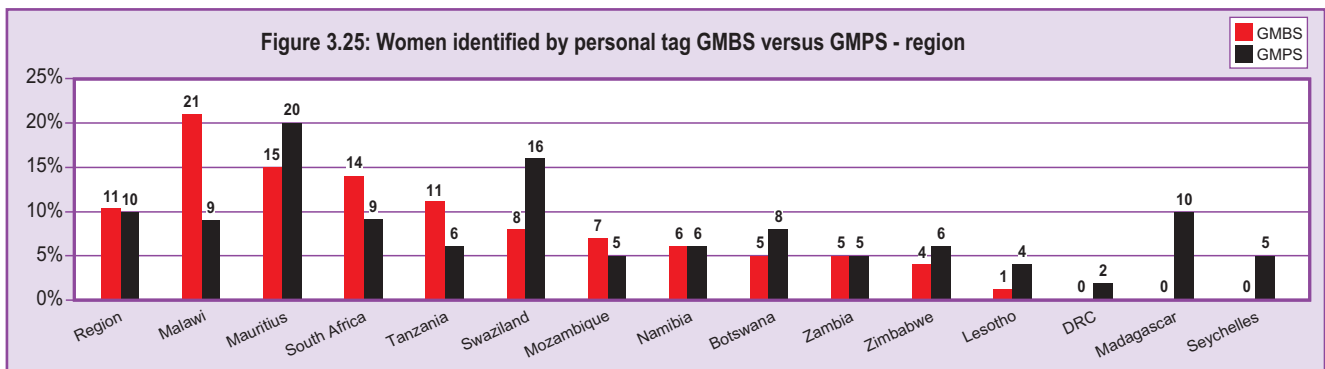


The regional findings in figure 3.23 show that women are not quite as dominant as previously in the categories of sex worker, beauty contestant and entertainer. The proportion of women politicians in the media has increased by 3%. However, the proportion of homemakers has remained virtually the same. Women also still constitute only 8% of those in sport. Likewise, their representation as miners has remained at 19%. The conclusion is that while there is some gender transformation, the traditional roles of women and men in society are changing very slowly in Southern Africa.

The regional findings in figure 3.23 show a decrease in women being presented as sex workers (from 91% to 62%) and fashion models (88% to 73%). They have however increased slightly in home making by two percentage points, to 63%.

Personal tags





When referring to women, the media tend to assign tags which detach them from being identified as individuals and cast them as entities within a certain context. The tags include mother, daughter, wife, etc.

Figure 3.24 shows that 6% of women sources in Zimbabwe are identified by the media by their personal tags. In the region the incidence is at 10%. However, more men (5%) in the regional findings are identified by their tags compared with the 1% of men in Zimbabwe.

Figure 3.25 shows that over the past seven years there has been an increase in the number of women identified by personal tags in Zimbabwe from 4% in GMBS to 6% in GMPS, while in the region there has been a decrease from 11% to 10%. The drop was drastic in the case of Malawi, from 21% to 9%.

Blatant stereotypes



Blatant stereotypes still continue to exist in the media. Unlike subtle stereotypes, blatant stereotypes are unrepentant in their perpetuation of rigid views about the role roles of women and men in society.

An example of blatant stereotyping is the cartoon titled "Sunday Smile" published by the *Sunday News* of 25-31 October 2009.

The cartoon is based on a previous story in the press where a woman had been beaten up by her husband while cooling off in the sun naked. In this cartoon, a woman in a bikini suit is shown sun basking inside her yard to the amusement of male neighbours who are shown peeping over the wall with their tongues out. The woman's husband is shown looking at her in anger and ready to pounce on her. Below is the caption, "Sekamfana (father of my son), how about asking neighbours to watch me - after all they will not take anything."

This is blatant stereotyping which objectifies women and presents them as sex objects. The way the neighbours are looking at the woman does not show any respect for her as a person. They are just drooling and lusting over her curvy body. The fact that the cartoonist can make fun of an incident of domestic violence shows that there is no respect for women's feelings and freedom of choice.

The language used objectifies women. She tells her husband to ask neighbours to pay to watch her naked. This in itself equates the woman to a sex worker who has men pay for sexual pleasure. This is an example of sexual stereotyping in the media where women's scanty dressing is taken to mean that they are available for men's pleasure. She is not doing it for her own comfort, but rather to please men.

The woman in the cartoon goes on to say that, "after all they will not take anything". This represents women as sexual teases and insinuates moral decrepitude.

The cartoon is on page 4 of the newspaper along with the newspaper's comment and letters to the editor.

Subtle stereotypes

DAPP making positive living easier

BY ROSEMARY WALKER

AT the peak of her "career", Jane Kanyongatise was among the most popular women in Nyamapanda, a small town on the Zimbabwe-Mozambique border in the north-east. The demand for her services among truck drivers was always very high. But as she grew older, the number of clients continued to decline.

"She would go for days and at times work without getting clients. This was not normal for someone who had grown accustomed to always with her 'men' that is, men in one night" and almost the same number during the day.

"The heaviest with you, I do not wish know how many times I would sleep with in one day," said Kanyongatise, a 56-year-old mother of four who is now living positively with HIV.

"I never had any other job, I got into prostitution at a tender age and while I lasted, I thought this was the best way to go. But as I grew older, the number of my clients started dwindling. Things became difficult. It was worse when I got tested and was diagnosed HIV-positive. After discovering she was HIV-positive, Kanyongatise ran out of clients. She could not parade herself before truck drivers anymore because she knew that would not work. It was then that she established

self with other people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWAs) in her village. She and other women in the Mozambique Tashinga Support Group (MSTSG) have 35 members, 12 of whom are women," added Ms. Kanyongatise.

"It set up a nutritional garden where we gather as PLWAs and share ideas of positive living. "There is a lot we can do to improve our lives and the same community."

With the assistance of the British Embassy and Development Aid from People to People (DAPP), a non-governmental organisation, PLWAs in Nyamapanda have undertaken a number of self-help projects.

"They use the projects to fight stigma, enhance self-sustenance and restore hope among PLWAs. On Tuesday, the British Embassy commissioned two of the projects, Disinfectant-making from Jane Kanyongatise and Sewing Club. Commencing the projects, the secretary for political affairs, Catherine Carr said the initiative would create growing and work with HIV/AIDS projects. These projects demonstrate that there are alternative and safer means of earning income than prostitution. Carr said, "I hope so much that they will lead to other projects in the future." Carr said, "I know that many of the courageous women involved in these projects have also done and con-

tinued to do so. I am able to support myself even better than I used to when I was still a commercial sex worker. I now make my own clothes as well as my children's school uniforms." She, the founder of Tashinga Sewing Club, an increasing number of women has expressed interest in the project, driving the need to look for larger projects.

"Through the self-help projects, the community in Nyamapanda has managed to demystify the subjects of HIV/AIDS and commercial sex work, as people now open by talk about the issues."

CHAIRPERSON of Tashinga Support Group, Tafara Jangwa (left), explaining their activities to British Embassy Second Secretary for Political Affairs, Catherine Carr (left) and officials from DAPP.



The article "DAPP making positive living easier" published by *The Standard* of 15-21 November, 2009 is a good example of a subtle stereotype. The story is about how the British Embassy and Development Aid from People to People (DAPP) are assisting people living with HIV in rural Zimbabwe cope with the virus. DAPP has established a number of self-help projects to make living positive easier.

The story profiles Jane Kanyongatise, a 56-year-old woman living with HIV, who is also involved in self-help projects in her village of Nyamapanda. They use the projects to fight stigma, enhance self-sustenance and restore hope among people living with AIDS (PLWS). Jane is a reformed former sex worker on the Nyamapanda route to the Mozambique border post. When she tested HIV positive and could not remain in the sex trade, she joined other people living with AIDS to form the Muzezuru Tashinga Support Group.

The story, while seemingly bringing out how people living with HIV have managed to live positively, is an example of subtle stereotyping. First the story starts by giving the readers Jane Kanyongatise's biography to explain how she contracted the disease. This does not add any serious value in a story that should be profiling how DAPP is making living positive easier. The story also perpetuates the stereotype that the plight of most women living with HIV are a result of reckless sexual behaviour. The story does not

profile a man who has contracted the disease as a result of living recklessly.

The presentation of sewing as one of the projects that the women are engaged in is a further example of subtle stereotyping that would have women take softer jobs, while men take on more challenging professions.

There are four sources in the story, three of them women and one a man. First, it is Kanyongatise, who is the main subject of the story. Her role in the story is to highlight how her sexual behaviour led to her getting the virus and how she started losing clients as she grew older. This shows that women are usually valued by society when they are at the prime of their beauty.

Other sources are two other women living with AIDS. Men living with HIV are not quoted in the story, despite one of the sources revealing that there are eight men in the support group.

The chairperson of the Muzezuru Tashinga Support Group is male and he talks about how the group is working. Notably men speak in positions of authority even in support groups such as these, while women speak in their capacity as people living with AIDS.

The other man source in the story is founder of Tafara Sewing Club. This man speaks in his capacity as a founder, while women in the story speak for people living with HIV. Interestingly, Peter Karikuimba says a number of women have expressed interest in the project. Readers are therefore left wondering if there are no men interested in the sewing club or this is a project targeting women only.

Language used in the story perpetuates stereotypes in a subtle way. For example it is said that Jane "could not parade herself in front of truck drivers anymore". The word parade is demeaning. The language also highlights that, as women grow older their sex appeal also diminishes. This in itself attaches value to women based on their sex appeal.

Gender-aware reporting

The monitoring also yielded a number of instances of gender-aware reporting. For example, the article "Zimbabwe Local Government Association working on gender equality in decision-making" broadcast by ZTV on 15 November, 2009. The association's gender desk is calling for a comprehensive policy framework

to address gender issues in rural and urban councils. While population figures show there are more women than men, women's participation in local government remains low - now at 8.5%. The Gender Desk calls for 50/50 representation in all decision-making in local government by 2010 and is excited about the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which says it gives them the impetus to move forward. Gender Links Executive Director, Colleen Lowe Morna explains that the focus is on council because her organisation believes it is the starting point to empower women.

The article shows that the numerical advantage that women have has not led to an automatic increase in representation in local government. Men still dominate decision-making processes in councils, thereby compromising gender issues and rights. There is a need for positive use of gender aware experts/NGOs as sources.

The thrust of this well-researched feature is that underrepresentation of women in decision-making processes contributes to their marginalisation. It highlights the fact that while local governance has a bearing on women's livelihoods, women stand to lose because they occupy a tiny fraction of positions of power.

It reveals that the majority of women are relegated to doing menial tasks within government, while men occupy key positions of power and are hence able to influence policy-making and implementation.

The feature exposes challenges women face in local government and maps plans to rectify the problem. Gender experts and NGOs such as GL launch their views from this platform. The report contextualises gender issues within the region, highlights the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and assesses women's participation within this framework.

Sources used are relevant, diverse and gender aware. The editorial has transformational power and has the capacity to create sufficient discomfort by focusing on the roots of unequal power relations. The programme engages audiences to review systems and processes in a bid to fast-track gender advancement, empowerment and participation at grass-root level.

The report is gender aware as it shows close-up images of both men and women attending the workshop. It also shows a file picture of a women drawing water from a well to support some of the issues raised in the story.

Conclusion

There has not been any significant increase in the proportion of women as news sources in Zimbabwe. Although blatant and subtle gender stereotypes in the media are not as common as they used to be, they continue to exist.



Lifaqane Nare from the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists makes a point during the GMPS consultative workshop in Bulawayo while Linda Mpofu from Bulawayo Agenda follows proceedings.

Photo: Gender Links

During the consultative workshop Lifaqane Nare from the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists noted that while having more women in the newsrooms does not translate to more women sources, it helps to challenge gender stereotypes in media content. In Zimbabwe, there are few women editors and executive producers in the case of TV and radio.

Participants also noted that polarisation of the media in Zimbabwe along political party lines and political violence that prevailed during the monitoring period might have scared away potential women sources. Others felt that lack of women sources is a societal problem where women are always "willing to be spoken for".

Patricia Made, a board member with GL observed that changing the structures of media organisations will not result in change in media content. She called on the media to develop gender policies.