



Casandra , Times of Swaziland Assistant Editor, discusses key gender issues in the newsroom.

Photo: Saeanna Chingamuka

GENDER IN NEWSROOMS

The *Glass Ceilings Study* (2009) which explored the institutional composition of media houses in Southern Africa revealed that in Swaziland women make up 40% of the staff in media houses; 33% of those in top management and 29% of those in senior management. The study also showed that women are more likely to be assigned to soft beats rather than men.

To the extent that the GMPS monitored news content, it gives us a glimpse of those who create the news is so far as they are reflected in news content as reporters, presenters and writers. However, it is useful to cross reference the findings of the *Glass Ceilings* research with the GMPS. This chapter also makes important links between those who create the news and content, such as whether women journalists access more women sources, and whether having more women in management and as reporters makes a difference.

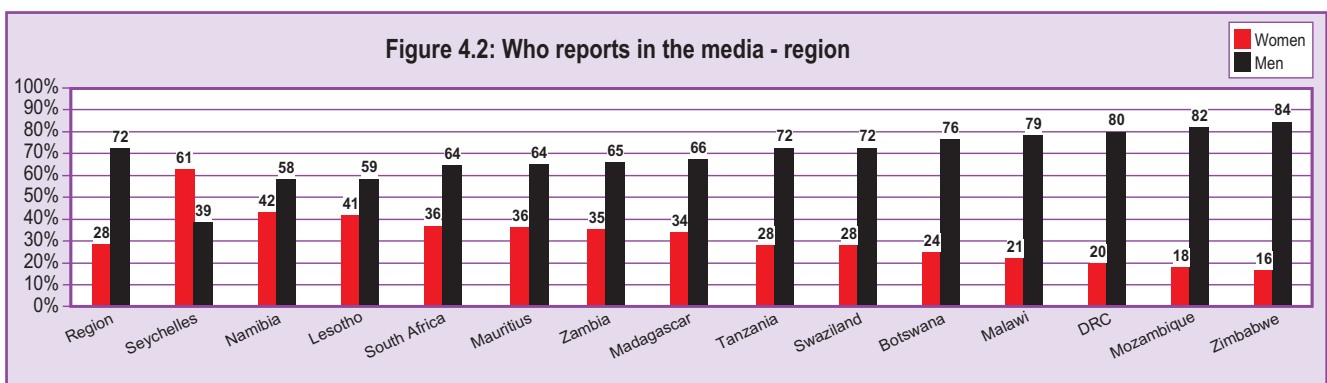
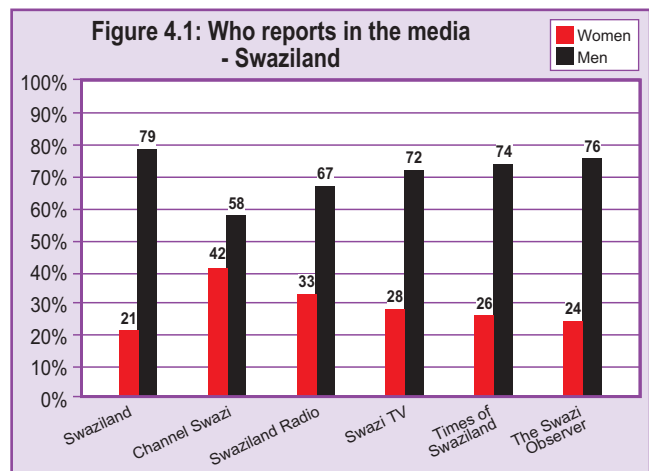


Swazi TV getting the news.

Photo: Trevor Davies

Reporters

The *Glass Ceilings* report that encompassed all media employees found that women constituted 40% of the total in Swaziland. As illustrated in figure 4.2 the GMPS, which only reflects journalists shows that across the region women constitute 28% of those who report and present the news. At 28%, Swaziland fares the same as the region. Seychelles is the only country in the region with more women than men reporters with 61% representation. Zimbabwe has the lowest proportion of women reporters with 16%. This figure is consistent with the *Glass Ceilings* that found that Zimbabwe had the lowest proportion of women employees.



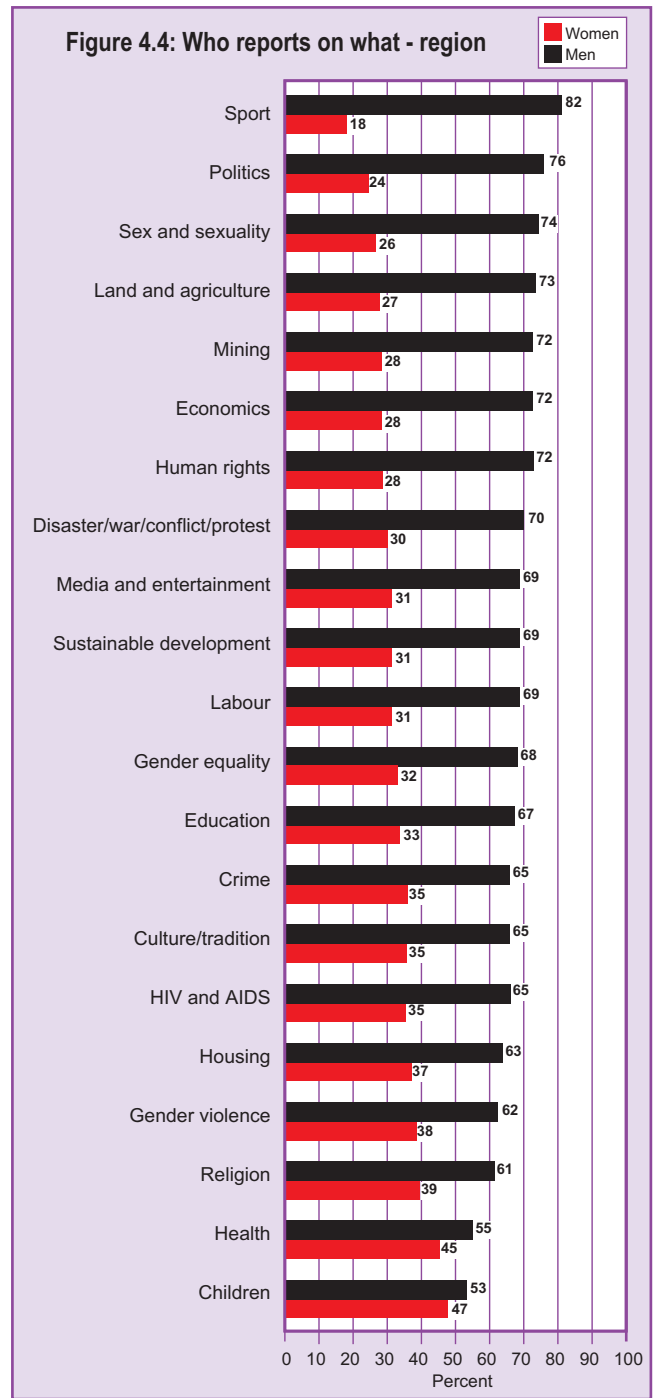
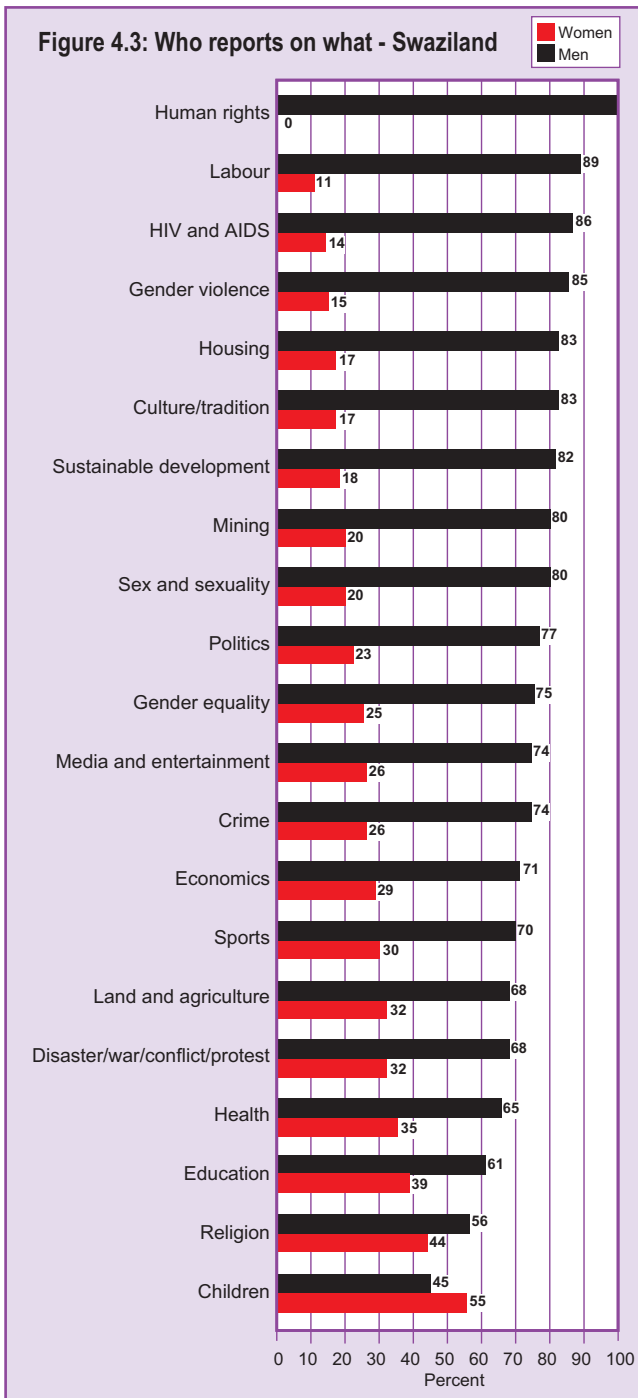
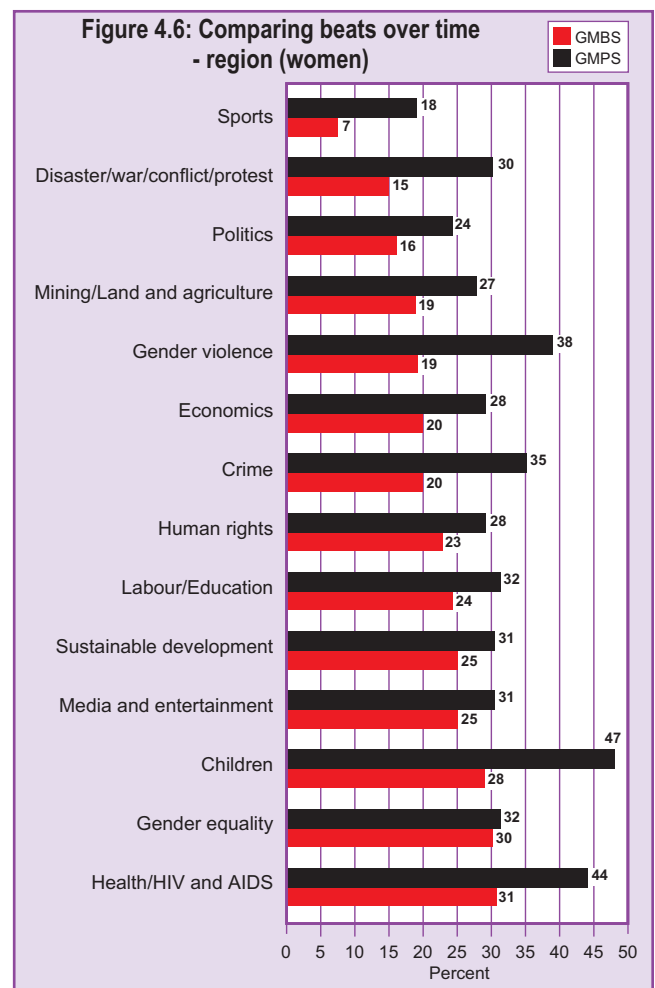
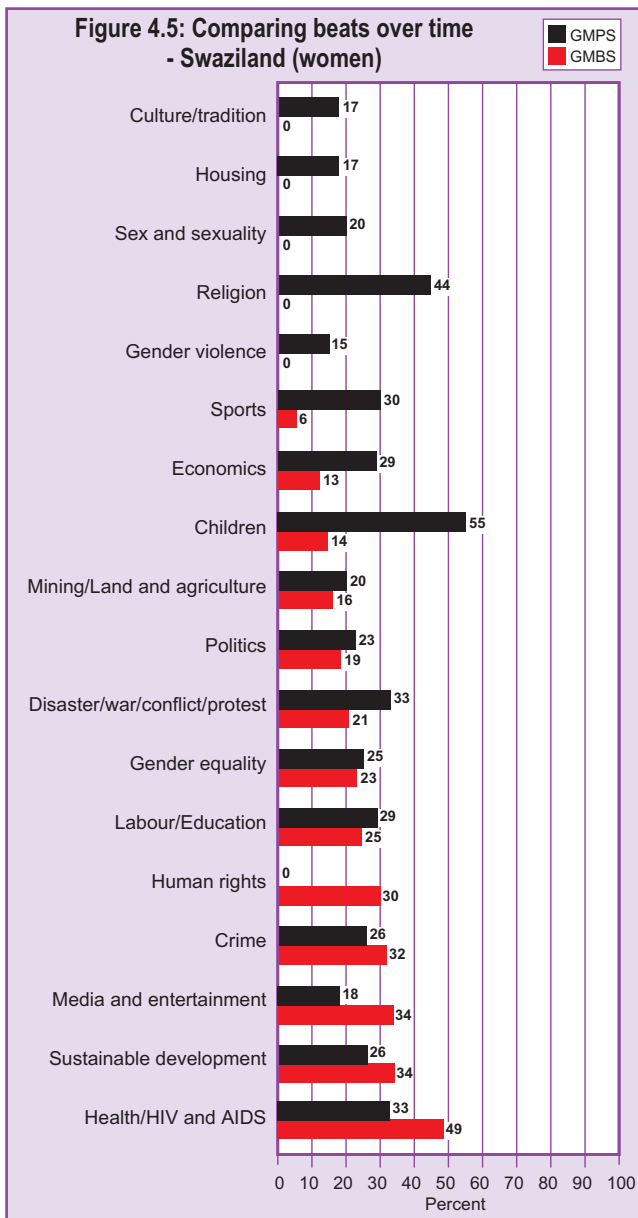


Figure 4.3 concerns the stories covered by women and men in Swaziland and figure 4.4 gives comparative data for the region. Women report the most on children (55%), religion (44%) and education (39%) they are however absent in reporting on human rights which is a decrease from the 36% observed in the Glass Ceilings study. Men dominate even in the coverage of what could be considered soft beats like in gender violence (85%), gender equality (25%).

In the region there is a clear gender division of labour as men report more on what is regarded as hard beats while women feature in the soft beats. This suggests a lack of improvement in the roles assigned to women and men in media houses and gender imbalances on who has to do what in the newsrooms. Gender-related issues are still mostly left to women and so creating the stereotype that gender is a women's issue to be dealt with by women alone.

Beats over time



sports has increased from 7% to 18%. These changes are beginning to break down the gender division of labour in newsrooms.

Reporters and presenters

Figure 4.5 shows that there has been a shift in the beats that women cover in Swaziland. Women have made progress in covering beats that were usually men's preserve. More women now cover stories on mining/land and agriculture (20%), politics (23%), disaster/war and conflict (33%) and sports 30%

They however still dominate in covering soft beats with housing accounting for 100%, gender equality 67% gender violence 63%. They have also not made any progress in covering politics where they remained at 20% and children 25%.

Figure 4.6 shows that the proportion of women reporters has increased across all beats in the region. In particular the proportion of women covering

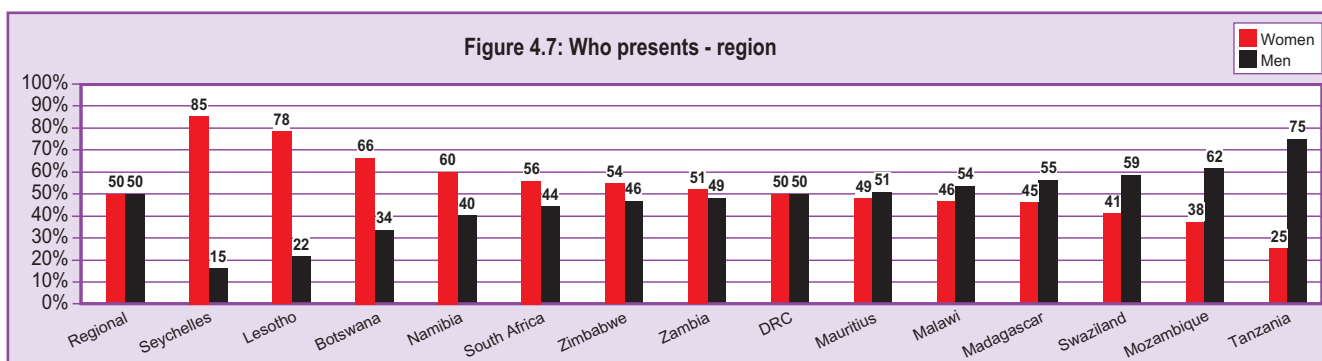
Table eight: Breakdown of women reporters and presenters - Swaziland and region

Category	% Swaziland	% Region
TV presenters	33	58
Radio presenters	53	41
TV reporters	36	42
Radio reporters	33	30
Print reporters	25	25

Table eight gives a breakdown of the number of women television, radio and print reporters as well as presenters in Swaziland and the region. The highest proportions of women in Swaziland are as radio presenters (53%) followed by TV reporters (36%). In the region they however predominate as

TV presenters (58%) followed by TV reporters at 42%. They are least represented as print reporters in Swaziland and the region with 25% for both.

Who presents



As in the case of the Global Media Monitoring project (GMMP) which found that women constitute 52% of presenters, the GMPS found that there are equal proportions of women and men presenters in the region (see figure 4.7). In

Swaziland, women account for 41% of presenters versus men at 59%. At 85%, Seychelles has the highest proportion of women presenters followed by Lesotho with 78% and Botswana with 66%. Tanzania has the lowest figure (25%).

Making a difference?

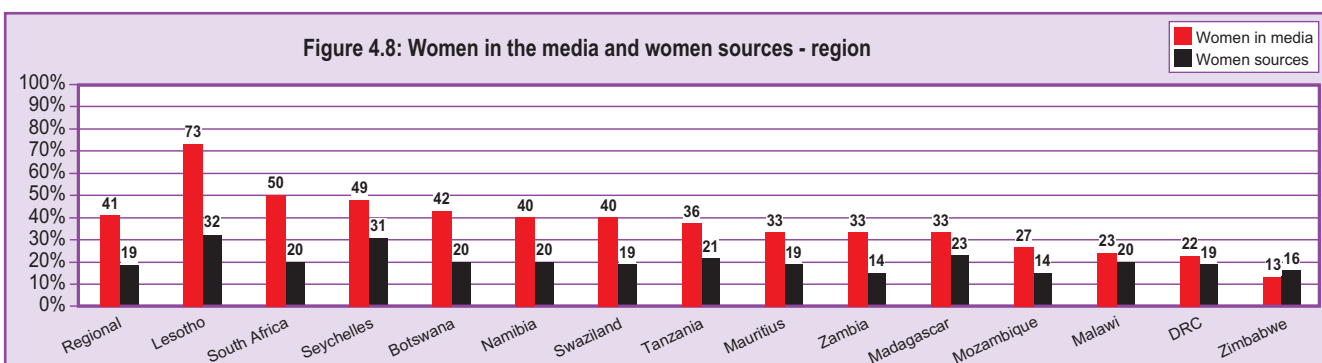


Figure 4.8 compares the data in the *Glass Ceilings* on the overall presence of women in media houses with the proportion of women sources for each country. This shows that having more women in the media does not necessarily result in a higher proportion of women sources. While the proportion of women in the media in the region is 41%, women constitute 19% of sources. Swaziland has 40% women in media and 19% women sources. The presence of women in media is not an end in itself. There is need to raise the gender awareness mindsets of the women and men who work in the region. There is also a need for gender policies to ensure gender parity in the region.



Nomile Hlatshwayo discussing the challenges of being a female manager.

Photo: Bheki Maseko

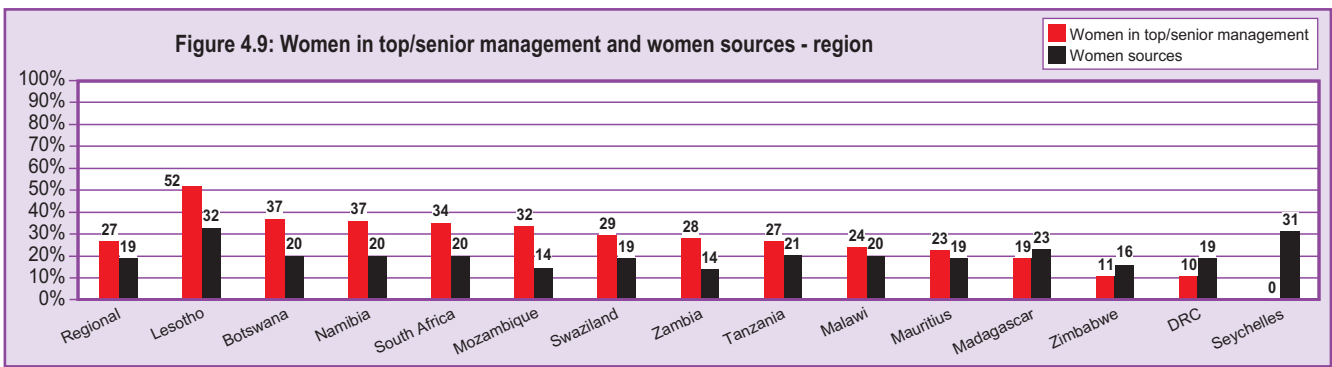


Figure 4.9 compares the proportion of women in top/senior and management positions in the Glass Ceilings to the proportion of women sources and also finds that there is no direct correlation. Across the region, women constitute 27% of decision-makers but only 19% of women sources. Seychelles has no women in top/senior management positions but still has the second highest proportion of women sources. In Swaziland women make up 29% of those in decision making position but only 19% women sources.



In one of the most important revelations of this study, however, figure 4.9 shows that women reporters are more likely to access women sources more than men. A measure designed by the GMMP and used in the regional study for the first time, the research found that across the region women sources account for 31% of the total in stories reported by women as opposed to 15% in the case of men. The comparative figures globally are 26% for women and 19% for men. In Swaziland the figures are 22% for women and 19% for men.

Conclusions

Women in newsrooms are given supportive roles because the media is yet to come to terms with the changing nature of roles and responsibilities in Swazi society. The imbalances that exist outside the newsroom have tended to influence the way gender is treated in media. For example men reporters are more likely to be assigned to hard beats like disaster/war and conflict because women are

considered softies. They therefore cover soft issues like health and community reporting.

Whilst participants agreed on the need for a critical mass of women, they said women can only make a difference if they are gender conscious. Hleziphi Vilane of Swaziland Redcross highlighted the need to capacitate women journalists so that their presence in media can translate to qualitative changes.

Sexual harassment in newsrooms is one key issue that participants feel is being left out of media coverage. Promise Dlamini, a journalist with *Ingwazi* noted that this is a problem in the media. Female journalists often find themselves giving in to sexual demands as a way of securing their jobs. Other participants agreed that this practise should be dealt with as it destroys the good name of journalism. Andrew Moyo a theatre artist also emphasised the need for concrete action to deal with sexual harassment in newsrooms.