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Gender, Media and development

The Role of the Media in the Cultural Struggle
of Gender Transformation in Tanzania

Doctoral thesis
for the degree of doctor rerum politicarum

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ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
AGSC'97	The Second Annual Studies Conference
BAWATA	Tanzania Women's Council
CBO	Community Based Organization
CCM	Chama Cha Mapinduzi
CEN	Cable Entertainment Network
CTN	Cable Television Network
CUF	Civic United Front
DSM	Dar es Salaam
DTV	Dar es Salaam Television
FemAct	Feminist Activists
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ITV	Independent Television
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GRAFCA	Grassroots Female Communicators Association
MCDWAC	Ministry of Community Development, Women's Affairs and Children
MOSTHE	Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NNGO	Northern Non-Governmental Organization
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PST	Members of Tanzanian Pharmacist Union
RTD	Radio Tanzania
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SERO	Women in Business
TAJA	Tanzania Journalist Association
TAMWA	Tanzania Media Women's Association
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TAWLA	Tanzania Women Lawyers' Association
TGNP	Tanzania Gender Networking Programme
Tsh.	Tanzanian shillings
UDSM	University of Dar es Salaam
UMATI	Family Planning Library, DSM
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UWT	Union of Tanzanian Women
VAT	Value Added Tax

WAD Women And Development
WID Women In Development
WHO World Health Organization

Map 1. Tanzania, East Africa



Source: Women in Development Southern African Awareness (WIDSAA): Beyond Inequalities. TGNP, SARDC 1997.

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PREFACE

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide insights on the role of the media in a symbolic struggle over the definition and status of women, and media's potential for socio-cultural change. It is my hope that this study brings us closer to an understanding of how gender ideas and notions are constructed, negotiated and contested against the backdrop of the political and economic changes that are underway in Tanzania. Much like several other African countries, Tanzania is opening to democratic and economic reforms as a result of external and internal pressures and the struggle to develop. This new social landscape has enabled a civil society to grow, which means new opportunities for women to organize and express themselves as well as take a greater part in society. A focus upon non-governmental organizations in development and civil society has also contributed to a mushrooming of NGOs, including women's/gender organizations.

The political and economic transformation facing Tanzania has also made it possible for private media to operate, contributing to a new media landscape, which is increasingly subjected to foreign influence and Western culture. The private commercial media and the introduction of commercial television have fueled public distress concerning the effects on Tanzanian culture and morality. The press and in particular the Swahili popular press have been criticized for their strong focus on sensationalized news reports that feature women as objects of male pleasure and violence, a focus that is commonly interpreted as resulting from newspaper commercialization and increased competition. Alternatively, the focus on women and sexuality can be seen as an expression of public anxiety as the country makes a transition from a socialist and traditional society to a modern, capitalistic, and open society.

A central idea in this study is that the movement from socialist to capitalist principles fosters conflicts between modern and traditional values and ways of life, which also affects gender ideas and notions. The new situation represents both opportunities and risks for women's liberation on both a collective and an individual level. On the one hand, women are gaining independence by entering the economy with a force that was unthinkable just two decades ago. On the other hand, there is a risk that women are blamed for 'everything' that goes wrong when traditional values clash with modern values and lifestyles. In this new landscape, the media is an important cultural agent and an arena for conflicts and contestation. A key issue is how the media comes to grips with these changes - the problems and tensions that arise in the process of modernization.

I have chosen to approach these issues by drawing upon critical cultural studies and feminist post-structuralism and empirical studies of cultural representations

of women and gender in the media. Cultural studies have become so dominant in the field of feminist media studies that we can talk about a “cultural feminist media studies project” (van Zoonen 1991). However, research carried out at the junction of cultural and feminist studies has been criticized for its narrow focus on popular culture and particularly on entertainment that is perceived as designed to appeal to women, such as soaps, women’s magazines, and romance novels. The research has also been criticized for being conducted by white women and limited to a particular kind of women, the traditional middle class housewife. This narrow focus has resulted in gender shortcomings in factual genres, such as news and other genres that are not seen to specifically address either sex; gender relations, in contrast to women, as manifested in narratives and other textual structures; and among different kinds of audiences. Last but not at least, there is a lack of feminist media studies from a development perspective. In general, development literature concerning the media has suffered from an inadequate consideration of media content as well as differences in use and perception of the media. Overall, the narrow focus is said to ignore whole areas of social and cultural practice, which limits the potential for articulating a comprehensive cultural critique.

I have tried to address some of these challenges by studying both public and popular discourses in an attempt to understand how gender is expressed and confronted in an urban African city, which is becoming part of a global world and where life has dramatically changed. I have chosen to focus upon how gender is constructed in the news in the printed press and in local television dramas also known as Swahili plays, which both are popular among women and men. The plays provide a useful entrance to cultural understandings, conflicts, and negotiations that arise in the urban context. The idea of including Swahili plays, which has become an important source of data in this research, first evolved when I was living with an indigenous family in Zanzibar at the beginning of my fieldwork. I stayed there for about three weeks to learn Swahili so as to involve myself in daily situations and conversations, which contributed to breaking down cultural barriers. However, living with this family I was stunned when I observed the kids and youngsters in the house and often their friends all gathered together in front of the television to watch Swahili plays. Even though I had a limited understanding of the verbal content, the plays seemed to be loaded with gender conflicts and exposing prevailing beliefs and norms of conduct, which soon after convinced me to include Swahili plays as part of my empirical analysis.

Doing fieldwork in a third world country is special in many respects, and there are a lot of circumstances that will influence data collection. Long periods of power outages, poorly developed communication systems such as phone and Internet as well as illness are some practical factors that I experienced. At the same time, most researchers have a limited time frame to carry out the fieldwork

and what cannot be accomplished during that time is going to be lost (unless there is funding to go back in a later phase). Following the principle that 'more is better', there is a temptation to dash about like crazy, collecting as much data as possible. As many others doing fieldwork I returned home with more data that I could analyze and soon realizing that I had to narrow my focus (cf. Devereux and Hoddinott 1993; 16). This is the dilemma of doing fieldwork. It is a constant process of weighing pros and cons of the kinds of data to collect and how to best collect those data.

There is no standard manual that explains how to do fieldwork, but at least an explorative research design gives flexibility so as to allow for adjustments and new insights as the research process evolves, which is of particular importance when researchers conduct fieldwork in non-resident communities or countries. I found it essential to have an open, flexible, and sensitive approach in order to make sense in a culture different from my own culture and to conduct and interpret the collection of data in a way that was closer to 'reality'. Rather than being overtly committed to specific theoretical constructs and arriving the research site with piles of pre-written questionnaire forms in order to 'prove' these ideas, a more sensible approach is to identify a general area of inquiry and to develop several tentative hypotheses (Devereux and Hoddinott 1993; 10). In any event, the precise methodological questions can only be resolved with local knowledge, which is rapidly accumulated from living in the community.

All in all, western researchers doing fieldwork in a third-world country are faced by uncertainties, compromises, and circumstances that one cannot plan for ahead, which make it difficult to implement a 'standard approach'. These uncertainties often force us to develop our own solutions. This also means that the distinction between methodological and other questions is blurred. As Devereux and Hoddinott (1993; 4) note; "Unless and until this contextual dimension of data collection is fully recognized – and accepted as integral to the process – fieldwork results risk being reported in a way which is misleadingly 'precise' and 'objective'".

The main research issues, aims, and purposes of this dissertation are introduced in **Chapter One**. It provides background to the research issues by putting the thesis into a broader theoretical, methodological, and societal framework. In the last part, I give an account of how the restructuring of the state has affected urban dwellers in their pursuit of a livelihood, which has resulted in new problems, tensions, and moral dilemmas as urban dwellers are pulled between modern and traditional values and ways of living.

The aim of **Chapter Two** is to review the development of feminist media research in order to reach a theoretical perspective that encompasses the contradictions in

the construction of gender in the media discourse. I argue for a cultural approach to the study of gender and media, and that a post-structural orientation can help to improve our understanding of how gender is articulated in the media discourse as well as consumption.

In Chapter Three, I present and discuss research design and methodology. I argue for an interpretative inquiry entailing qualitative methods, which is sensitive and open enough to capture contradictory cultural outlooks of sexual difference. Furthermore, this chapter provides information on field materials, the specific methods and techniques of data gathering and analysis.

Chapter Four elaborates on the societal context in which Tanzania has moved from socialism to capitalism as its course of development. I further discuss how political liberalization has opened new possibilities for a women's movement to emerge and for women's/gender NGOs to play a role in the cultural struggle of gender transformation. I end this chapter by exploring a micro-oriented perspective on gender transformation, empowerment, and development that links critical consciousness with action.

In Chapter Five, I am concerned with the development of the media against the backdrop of the political and economic reforms, which has not only allowed for private media to emerge but has opened the country to globalization and foreign influence. Central to the discussion is the impact of media globalization on gender identities and cultural transformation. The last part of the chapter focuses on issues related to media use. The analysis shows that media choice and reading strategies entail empowering elements depending on audiences' prior identifications and their material and symbolic resources.

In Chapter Six, I give an overview of how representations of women are manifested in the news discourse and the ways that the news media positions the female subject. I argue that the news discourse supports a feminist discourse by airing topics that are of concern to women's liberation. At the same time, the overriding positioning of women as victims of men's actions, passive receivers of development efforts or as a source of moral decay undercuts their power. Contesting these images are women who are successful in business as well as women's/gender NGOs working to improve the situation for women and children, all of which leaves an opening for redefining gender.

Chapter Seven is concerned with women's/gender NGOs as a source for gender transformation. The analysis consists of the news coverage of a groundbreaking event conducted by the Tanzania Media Women's Association in their efforts against gender-based violence and sexual abuse. It shows that TAMWA is able to use the media to create a space for women's empowerment by challenging

dominant cultural codes and representations; but as the event evolves women themselves are blamed for the increase of rape and sexual abuse due to immoral behavior. The strong focus upon moral decay can be seen as a sign of general distress, as Tanzania is becoming a part of a modern, capitalistic and open society.

In Chapter Eight, I direct my attention to gender representations in Swahili television drama. The plays can be seen as a continuous discourse of moral behaviors and dilemmas people face when pulled between traditional norms and values and modern urban life. I argue that the Swahili plays portray the world through gendered spectacles using women as a means to comprehend public anxieties. However, the complexity and ambiguity of the plots leave a space for redefining the meaning of gender and cultural identities. Also, the reception interviews show strong identification with oppressed positions, which triggers resistance against the prevailing gender ideology.

Finally, in Chapter Nine I round out this thesis with discussions and reflections on my work. I give a summary and discuss the analytical results against the backdrop of the main issues of this thesis, followed by a discussion of generalization of interpretations and suggestions for further research. I also discuss the implications of post-structuralism in feminist media research as a basis for articulating a comprehensive cultural critique. The thesis ends with specific suggestions for enabling a symbolic environment for gender transformation.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The media is commonly seen as a potential means of influence, control, and innovation in society. As a result, few significant social issues are addressed without some consideration of the role of the mass media. Gender issues are no exception, as illustrated by the following statement:

The media has a role to play in the struggle for gender transformation and in saluting the achievements of women in the society, in order to inspire others (Tanzania Gender Networking Programme 1997).

This dissertation aims at providing insights on the role of the mass media in the cultural struggle over gender transformation, which entails definitions and prescriptions of femininity against the backdrop of political and -economic reforms in Tanzania. The media landscape has been altered radically as a result of fundamental transformations in the country's political and economic systems. The media can be perceived as a major source of definitions and images of social reality. Thus, the media is also the place where the changing culture and values of societies and groups are constructed and most visibly expressed (McQuail 1994; 1). Tanzania has changed its course from African socialism and *ujamaa* as guidelines in the sixties, to a market economy in the mid-eighties, followed by the introduction of a multiparty system in 1992¹. The restructuring of the state has had dramatic consequences for the economic, social and cultural aspects of urban life. Central to this study is the idea that the movement from socialist to capitalist principles promotes conflicts between modern and traditional values and ways of life, which also affects gender ideas and notions. The biggest changes are felt in urban areas, which are thus the place where the conflicts and tensions that arise in the process of modernization are most visibly expressed. In this new landscape, the media is becoming an important cultural agent and an arena for conflicts and contestation. A key issue is how the media comes to grips with these changes.

When it was a socialist country, Tanzania had only one state-owned radio station and two daily newspapers, which were mostly concerned with party propaganda. With the liberalization of the economy in 1986, private radio and television stations have popped up and a large number of independent newspapers have been founded. For the first time, Tanzanians have access to television, can choose from well-stocked newspapers stalls, and can get views and

¹ Tanzania held its first multi party election in 1995.

commentaries from both the government and the opposition². Along with this development, the media is increasing its position in audiences' perception of the world, including how women are represented and femininity defined. However, the mass media is a highly urban phenomenon. I have therefore found it natural to limit this study to Dar es Salaam. My approach is first and foremost empirical, but there are significant theoretical influences that should be noted. The following pages contain approaches and concepts central to my project, along with essential issues and positions they entail.

1.1 Gender, media and development

Following in the wake of the political liberalization, women's advocacy organizations created a potential new space that didn't previously exist under the one-party system. These organizations spearheaded the struggle for women's liberation, which can be seen as the beginning of a women's movement. The significance of a women's movement is seen in terms of a cognitive space filled with the interaction between different groups, organizations, and institutions (Eyerman and Jamison 1991). This position falls into a broader category of recent research on culture and social movements influenced by post-structuralism and postmodernism, which extends the perspective of movement culture as a process in interaction with other institutions. It focuses on the new symbolic codes created by groups that challenge the status quo and are expressed through different forms of public discourse (Taylor and Whittier 1995). The mass media is only one arena for public discourse, but it is the central one for social movements because it is the only site that provides a potentially shared public discourse (Gamson 1995; 85). The mass media plays a crucial role for the wider dissemination of ideas, issues and actions, because it allows new ideas and issues to be discussed as part of the public agenda, as opposed to in more closed circles. In this way, the media helps redefine collective identities.

In contrast to the situation under the socialistic regime, under which all women's issues had to be addressed from the women's party wing, the Union of Tanzanian Women (UWT), women's/gender organizations are now mushrooming around the country. Compared to the UWT, the high-profile women's organizations today tend to be more 'aggressive', which is reflected in an ambivalent reaction towards them and their members. The members of these more aggressive women's groups are commonly identified as educated women belonging to the middle class, which might also be a source for hostility. The members of one of the most profiled women's NGOs, the Tanzania Media Women Association, were dismissed by many in the beginning, especially by male colleagues in the

² In Zanzibar, which is governed by a local government, television has been allowed for many years and is seen as the biggest mass medium on the island.

media, as frustrated old maids, divorcees, and lesbians (TAMWA material 1997). These assaults can be seen as attempts to ridicule these women as not 'real' women or as deviant elements in society. However, TAMWA has come a long way since it was officially registered in 1987. The organization is now one of the major non-governmental organizations in the country, and has influenced policies affecting women and the course of development as well as using the media for their cause of women's liberation.

In a cultural approach to social movements, women's/gender NGOs such as TAMWA can be seen to challenge established cultural codes in their attempts to redefine women's role and status in society. They represent moments of collective action and identity formation (Eyerman and Jamison 1991). Still, the identity or meaning of a women's movement is not solely defined by the organizations of which it consists. Rather, it is created in the interactions between a range of institutions, organizations, and actors. Central in this study is how gender is negotiated in the interactions between media institutions, women's/gender organizations, and the state, all of which represent different interests and ideologies. Instead of examining the deeper motives that underpin these organizations, news coverage of important events and issues tend to constitute the analysis. Media discourse is what is available to most people, and it is the audiences' interpretations that finally give meaning to an issue in relating it to their own lives, experiences, and situations. While the media is perceived as a significant arena for the struggle of gender transformation, women's/gender NGOs are at the forefront of this struggle. Hence, a central issue in this dissertation is whether the media contributes in empowering women by providing a space for alternative definitions that challenge the prevailing gender ideology.

Even though women's liberation is seen as a value in itself, it has wider implications for development, an observation which is supported by recent approaches to development that have focused more attention on human development, human rights, and grassroots participation. This entails a shift away from a centralized, top-down strategy, and from defining development primarily in quantitative economic terms, to a receiver-centered approach (Melkote 1991). Along with this movement follows an assumption that development cannot occur without integrating women, as subjects rather than objects of development efforts. An implicit goal is empowering women by giving them greater control over resources, as well as opportunities to participate in decision-making and the processes influencing their lives. In spite of political ideals based upon popular participation and a state policy that declared women and men as equals, the socialistic approach provided few opportunities for women to take an active part in the society and did not enable them to control their own lives. In general,

Tanzanian people became objects of a top-down form of development that allowed little participation from below.

The Women in Development approach (WID), which has prevailed throughout the African continent and elsewhere, entails an emphasis on the economic sphere while excluding cultural, psychological, and political elements. In spite of a dramatic change in women's contribution in the household economy, women still lack recognition in terms of both economic and social status. Many problems in development are culturally conditioned, such as a patriarchal attitude or system, which hinders women's participation in all areas important to development. Change will require gender transformation in the society, to replace traditional attitudes against women as subordinate and incapable creatures with gender notions that promote equality and positive attitudes towards women as capable of making a living, taking decisions, and participating in all areas of life and society. A critical issue is whether women are portrayed as subjects who are taking an active part in the society and able to influence their own life situation or whether women are portrayed as objects of other people's actions. Positioning women as passive receivers of development efforts inscribes a reader position of women to be coordinated and objectified, which is at odds with participatory development approaches. At stake is who benefits from a particular socio-cultural construction of gender, and how this construction may restrict and channel societal development.

The multiplicity of discourse

While representations of women always have been central to feminist media critique, feminist media studies have gone through considerable changes and critique since feminism took off in the early sixties. This entails a movement away from a monolithic view of women as unconditional victims of sexist media. Cultural studies associated with the Birmingham School have been an important influence in redefining the field of feminist media studies, as well as rethinking media influence in general. According to van Zoonen (1994), the most fruitful research has been carried out at the junction of cultural and feminist studies, which has given rise to inquiries that reach far deeper and wider than the original limited agenda of matters such as stereotypes and sex-role socialization.

In particular, Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model (1973) for the production of meaning has been an important influence in feminist media research, and has inspired some of the main issues in this thesis. The model makes clear that the construction of meaning is framed between its producers and audiences - based upon some form of negotiation. The tensions and contradictions in the production are acknowledged and reverberate in media texts, which can no longer be seen as a consistent entity carrying singular meaning. Texts are characterized as 'polysemic' (Morley 1989), that is, carrying contradictory,

divided and plural meanings, which in turn open the possibility of cultural resistance in the reception. The possibility of plural meanings raises the issue of whether the media discourse in Tanzania embodies an openness and complexity that invites to recognition of oppressed positions, and thereby triggers cultural resistance against the prevailing gender ideology that continues to suppress women.

An important element in the cultural studies tradition is that the construction and taking of meaning does not happen in a vacuum; rather, meaning production has to be understood as situated in a specific historical and social context embedded in existing power formations. This gives rise to the question of how constructions of gender in the media discourse can be related to the context in which they are produced – which might be political, economic, social, or cultural. The Tanzanian society can be seen to stand at a crossroad between two major ideologies - socialism versus capitalism – in which cultural production is pulled between different discourses. The media and its producers can therefore be seen to operate within different and sometimes contradicting discourses; feminist versus commercial; modern versus traditional; official versus popular discourses. A particular construction of gender triggers the question of which discourses the media draws upon and what are the ideological implications for gender? How do contradictions and tensions arising in the process of modernization reverberate in media texts?

Both cultural and feminist studies have had the ambition to produce a cultural critique that contributes to a better understanding of the relationships between power and exclusion. However, research carried out in the junction of cultural and feminist studies have been criticized for reconstructing the dominant gender discourse rather than analyzing its dynamics (van Zoonen 1994; 123). In order to grasp the complexity in the media discourse, which entails both dominant representations and alternative and perhaps challenging definitions of gender, I have found support in feminist post-structuralism. This approach provides a focus upon the media as a site for conflict and contestation in which the definition of gender is subjected to continuous discursive struggle and negotiation. The media, as it represents only one discourse and practice, is in itself a product of multiplicity, sometimes entailing contradictory cultural definitions of femininity, which positions the individual subject in heterogeneous, overlapping, and competing ways (Ang & Hermes 1996; 342).

A central element in post-structuralism is that the dominant discourse tends to produce its own opposition. The disciplinary power of discourse prescribing and restricting gender identities and experiences can therefore be resisted and subverted. Hence, I find that post-structuralism carries a strong liberal element, which is crucial in a cultural struggle of women's emancipation and in explaining

social change. From this perspective, women's/gender NGOs that are spearheading the struggle for women's liberation can be viewed as 'communities of discourse' engaged in the enunciation of new cultural codes that might contest dominant representations and prevailing notions of gender (Taylor and Whittier 1995; 181). Below, I give a summary of the main issues that have been generated by the theoretical positions and the particular context framing this research.

The main issues and aims

The primary issue in this dissertation is the role the mass media plays in the cultural struggle of gender transformation in Tanzania. Roughly, the media can be seen to symbolize a conservative social force that functions as a barrier in the cultural struggle of gender transformation or represents a progressive force that favors women's liberation by contesting the dominant discourse on gender. With this as background, several questions have been generated to illuminate this basic issue, which in turn can be divided into four main research topics:

The construction of gender, power, and exclusion

In order to grasp the 'bigger' issues addressed in this enquiry, it is necessary to start with the most tangible questions. How gender representations are manifested in the media discourse and in what ways do the media position the female subject and contribute to a particular construction of gender? At this level, I am also concerned with how ideas, values and beliefs embodied in narratives and news conventions contribute to a definition of femininity (and masculinity). What discourses do the media draw upon - feminist versus commercial, modern versus traditional, official versus popular - and what are the ideological implications for gender? It is my suggestion that these matters are vital elements in a cultural criticism and in determining how prevailing gender representations contribute to legitimize existing power formations and gender boundaries.

The media as a cultural arena for contestation

The next set of issues is related to the political and economic transformation of the society, which has entailed new opportunities as well as risks for women's emancipation. A distinct apprehension is that modernism and foreign influence have resulted in immoral behavior and moral decay in the Tanzanian society, which raises the issue of how the media handles public distress concerning Tanzanian culture and morality. How are the conflicts and negotiations that arise in the process of modernization embedded in the media discourse?

Development, empowerment and gender transformation

One of the main issues that needs to be addressed is how the construction of gender in the media discourse defines and prescribes women's role and status in society, and how this might restrict or channel development. Do the mass media contribute to empower women by providing a space for alternative gender

representations that promote equality and positive attitudes towards women as capable of making a living, taking decisions, and participating in all areas of life and society? In order for women to facilitate development it is vital that women be considered subjects, and not mere objects, of development.

Media use, empowerment and cultural transformation

Finally, issues related to audiences' media use and interpretation needs to be addressed. A central issue is how media choice and reading strategies entail empowering elements for women, which might facilitate gender transformation or development in general. Also the possibility of plural meanings brings to the surface the issue of whether media texts can be considered as empowering in so far as they offer female audiences an opportunity for symbolic acknowledgement of their own social subordination, and thereby open a path for resistance against the prevailing gender ideology.

Overall, the purpose of this dissertation is to explore the role of the media in the symbolic struggle over the definition and status of women, and its potential for socio-cultural change. My aim is to contribute to a better understanding of how gender ideas and notions are constructed, negotiated, and contested against the backdrop of the political and economic changes that Tanzania is undergoing. In the following, I briefly discuss how I have approached these issues empirically and in terms of methodology.

1.2 Research strategy and field materials

My study is best placed at the junction of feminist and cultural studies, from an analytical discourse perspective, which enables me to pay special attention to gender ideologies found in media texts. Discourse analysis can loosely be defined as a systematic and explicit study of the structures and social or cultural functions of media messages (van Dijk 1991; 108). The various levels of analysis constitute a complex network of different levels or dimensions that might form a consistent pattern of discursive features signaling various and even contradictory underlying meanings, opinions, and ideological positions. The British cultural studies tradition emphasizes a cultural dimension in which media and audiences are embedded. However, the focus has tended to be placed on the message or discourse of communication, which only implies reader positions, rather than their local, empirical procedures, and recipients (Jensen 1991; 28).

I have chosen a dual strategy of analysis, aiming at establishing a link between texts and audiences, and thereby paying attention to both discursive elements and social aspects of communication. Another major linkage is the intersection between media discourse and women's/gender NGO's discourse, to embrace the

flexibility of the media in providing alternative gender representations capable of contesting the dominant gender ideology. It is my suggestion that these connections can lead to valuable knowledge about the role of the media in the cultural struggle of gender transformation and its potential for socio-cultural change. This analytical design has led to multiple sources of information, often referred to as data triangulation (Østbye et al. 2001; 122). The three main sources of field materials aim to illuminate media's role in gender transformation from different perspectives in order to deepen and enrich the understanding of the main problem statement. First, the most elaborate material consists of three types of texts from the mass media, which constitute the discourse-textual analysis. Second, I have conducted a series of personal interviews with women, men, and youths to illuminate the social aspects of communication. The aim is to get a better understanding of the social problems facing urban dwellers; the importance of the media in urban Tanzanians' everyday life; and how they use the media in making sense of their changing environment. Finally, I have carried out reception interviews in the form of group discussions in order to account for actual textual interpretations, which complement the findings from the discourse analysis. While the personal interviews are used throughout this thesis for the purposes of illustration and elaboration, the reception interviews are limited to the Swahili drama (Chapter 8).

I have made a point of including media texts from different media channels (newspapers and television) and genres (news and Swahili plays), which should give a broad account of mainstream images of women as well as alternative voices fighting for women's rights, thereby illuminating how the media channels and restricts gender transformation. While news focuses upon the social and political course of events, which might generate themes of public interest and affect our attitudes towards the social world, Swahili plays engage audiences in the context of everyday life, which is important in the development of individual identities and in mediating between individuals and culture. The plays represent a useful entree to cultural understandings, conflicts, and negotiations that arise in the urban context. In order to understand how the symbolic constructions offered by these plays are interpreted in the particular context in which they are produced, I have chosen to use the Swahili plays as the basis for the reception interviews. Furthermore, I have chosen news coverage (newspapers) of one specific event conducted by a prominent women's organization, the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA), which might challenge prevailing definitions of women and reframe women's role and status in the society. The event is a Symposium on Gender Violence held in Dodoma (1997), which aimed at sensitizing Members of Parliament (MPs) to the magnitude of gender-based violence and child abuse in Tanzania. TAMWA stands out by their continuous efforts to put gender violence and sexual abuse on the political agenda, and has

demonstrated an effective media strategy resulting in media coverage other women's or gender NGOs yet have to experience (at the time of my field work).

Altogether, I have attempted to get a better understanding of the powerful spoken and unspoken cultural messages by addressing both themes and the structure in media texts, including narrative transmission and news conventions. Moreover, I argue for an interpretative research strategy entailing qualitative methods that is sensitive to contradictions and the ambiguous process in the construction of gender that arises in media texts as well as participants' own formulations and understandings in their sense-making of texts. A more elaborate discussion of methodological concerns, field materials, and techniques of data gathering is provided in Chapter 3.

1.3 Dar es Salaam: A city in transformation

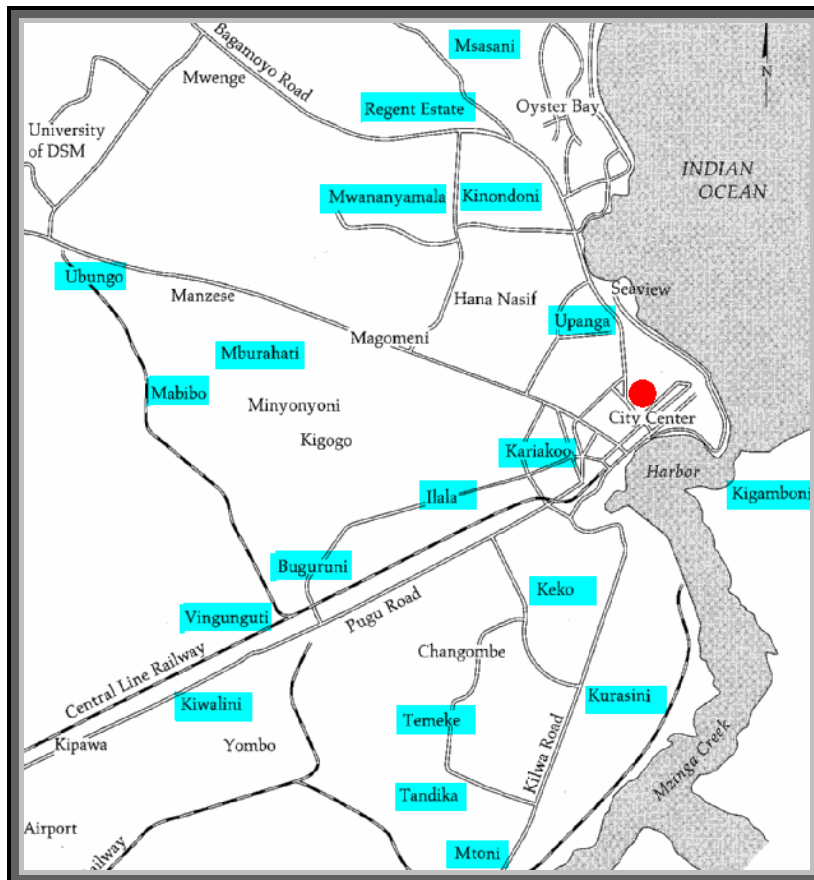
In this section, I describe how the political-economic transformation has altered urban life. I give an account of what is probably the most significant change affecting urban dwellers since the mid-1970s, which is related to a dramatic drop in real wages. The extreme economic conditions that people faced resulted in a remarkable increase in the informal sector in which women have taken upon a substantial role in the family economy. Thereafter, I describe different ways that these economic changes have resulted in new problems, tensions, and moral dilemmas as people are pulled between modern and traditional values and ways of living. But first I will give a brief outline of the history of Dar es Salaam.

Dar es Salaam – a short history

Dar es Salaam is the biggest city in Tanzania with approximately 4 million inhabitants. It is located on the east coast. Dar es Salaam's cultural heritage and mix makes it an interesting melting pot of people and culture. It is a Swahili city, but European, Arab, and Asian influences are all apparent in a colorful mix of Christians and Muslims. As such, Dar es Salaam is characterized by its heterogeneity, which brings together large numbers of Tanzania's 120 ethnic groups (Tripp 1997; 29). The majority belongs to one of the two main religions (33 percent each), but other religions are also represented. The city was originally founded in 1865 by Seyid Majid, sultan of Zanzibar, in order to support the flourishing trade at the time (Sutton 1970). Swahili towns were inhabited largely by Shirazi and Shomvi, people of mixed Arab and African descent, while the surrounding rural coastal areas were populated by the Saramo who lived in independently governed villages (Sporrek 1985). The sultan brought slaves, who came initially from the small coastal town Kilwa, and later from Zanzibar, for the construction of the town. Both Arab and Zanzibari Indian merchants were encouraged to settle in town. During the 1890s, Dar es Salaam

and the coastal areas north of it were sold to the Government of Germany, who made the city into the administrative, commercial, and communicative center of German East Africa (Tripp 1997; 30). Under British rule from 1919 to independence in 1961, the city continued to be the administrative center of the British-controlled territory. After independence, there have been attempts to move the capital to Dodoma in 1973 in order to develop the inner central part of Tanzania. However, Dar es Salaam is still the largest city and remains the heart of political and social activity, trade and commerce.

Map 2. Dar es Salaam, major wards (from Tripp 1997).



Places marked are all locations where the respondents in this thesis resided.

The Germans decided to divide Dar es Salaam into three racial building zones, which the British completed after the First World War. This division is evident today. The African zone was located just outside Kariakoo, which was separated from the Asian quarter by the Mnazi Mmoja Park. Kariakoo is a combined residential and business area. It houses the largest wholesale market of the city and is a bustling area with a number of shops and small restaurants as well as the starting point for up-country bus rides. It also holds the largest concentration of workers (Lange 2002; 24). The Asian quarter was and still is located in the

southern part of the city, and is characterized by older architecture, mosques, and more recently modern stores, hotels, and restaurants. It also houses a busy bus station for rides going north connecting Dar es Salaam to Arusha and Moshi. The Asian quarter separates the African area from the previous colonial administration that was centered northeast of the harbor and with white residential areas in Upanga and the Oyster Bay area along the Indian Ocean. Today the Oyster Bay houses prominent politicians, civil servants, and successful business people. The northern part of the city is home to the central business district characterized by modern high-rise buildings. This is also the place for the embassies and the main offices of international development organizations and some of the bigger NGOs. However, the majority of the residents live outside the city center, scattered around in planned and unplanned settlements in traditional Swahili housing. It is common for home owners to rent out one or more rooms. According to a survey conducted in 1989, 83 percent of the city dwellers were tenants (Kulaba 1989). In such housing arrangements it is common to find Muslims and Christians from diverse ethnic groups living together.

A fictionalized contrast between the city and the country was created by the colonists. While the city was associated with non-Africans, men, adults, wage employment, and civilization, the country was linked to Africans, women, children, subsistence, and bush (Mbilinyi 1990; 111). The right to settle in Dar es Salaam was restricted by the Township Ordinance; women, young men and boys were repatriated by the thousands by the district commissioner. After independence in 1961, the contrast between the city and the country continued in the political discourse; the authorities used popular culture to campaign for the *ujamaa* policy and socialism favoring rural areas and idealizing village life (Lange 2002; 22). The main policy of *ujamaa* focused on moving people into self-reliant communities through farming, which was seen as the backbone of the country's development. In spite of the *ujamaa* policy, which forced unemployed unmarried women and young men to return to the countryside, the state was unable to control migration to urban areas. During the 1970s, more women than men moved to urban areas to look for job opportunities or escape the oppressive constraints of the patriarchal structure in the countryside. By the year 2000, some 9.7 million people were projected to live in urban areas (TGNP 1993). In Dar es Salaam, the population grew from 128 742 to around one million from 1957 to 1980. In year 2000, it is believed to have reached 4 million (Lange 2002; 22). Neither the colonial administration nor the socialistic regime managed to set up enough planned settlements to meet the rapid urban growth. The greater part of the city has therefore sprung up in an unplanned fashion, often as extensions of existing Zaramo villages, which then slowly became urbanized (Sporrek 1985).

From wage employment to self-employment

The economic decline that hit the country in the 1970s had far reaching consequences for the urban population. Prior to the mid-1970s, the government was the largest employer in Dar es Salaam and the majority of the workforce was wage earners. The 1967 Arusha declaration paved the way for the nationalization of key industries and banks and an increase in parastatals. During the 1970s urban dwellers faced a critical drop in real wages resulting in a flight from wage employment. Between 1974 and 1988 real wages fell by 83 percent; at the end of 1980s the average worker's salary was sufficient to pay for roughly three days of his or her household's monthly food budget (Tripp 1997; 40, 44). The fact that there were no way urban people could survive on their salaries led to a dramatic increase in the pursuit of income-generating activities by workers and members of their households. Some workers would keep their formal jobs for security while they or family members would keep sideline businesses, which often would bring home many times more than the formal salary. Others would leave formal employment altogether and involved themselves full-time in informal income-generating projects or agricultural production.

According to Tripp (1997), people reacted in a noncompliant resistant way when realizing that they could no longer rely on the state even for the most basic services, which created an internal pressure on the state to liberalize their policies. During the 1980s, massive retrenchment in the public sector forced even more people into the informal sector. A 1991 labor force survey showed that wage earners only accounted for 36 percent of the workforce in Dar es Salaam, which is a 28 percent reduction since 1978 (Planning Commission and Ministry of Labour and Youth Development 1991). The majority left due to the low wages and went into self-employment or work in family-owned businesses in the informal sector (Tripp 1997; 30-31). These circumstances have created extraordinary hardships for the average resident of Dar es Salaam. With the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programs, which involve cost-sharing for education and hospital services, the economic situation for urban dwellers became even more acute. In this situation a family could no longer depend only on the husband to be the breadwinner. As I discuss below, the extreme conditions forced women into income-generating activities to an extent that was unthinkable only a decade earlier.

Women as an economic force

A significant difference between the 1970s and contemporary Dar es Salaam is that women have entered the workforce in great numbers and are contributing to the household economy in monetary terms at a far greater level than in the past (Tripp 1997; 42, 108). According to Tripp's survey, 69 percent of women in Dar es Salaam were self-employed by the end of the 1980s. Furthermore, she found that over half of married women were engaged in efforts that often accounted for

ten and twenty times that of her husband's salary. Women are commonly found making and selling simple food like buns and fried fish, firewood and kerosene, but also running more ambitious projects like shops, hair saloons, and taking part in export/import businesses. The way the economic crises undermined wage incomes has altered gender and social relations at the household level. While men were the indisputable breadwinners and heads of household in the 1970s, women are now important economic contributors, which give them a far higher level of autonomy and control within the household economy than before. This development is in line with other studies in Tanzania and elsewhere in East Africa claiming that women's involvement in small projects has enhanced their decision-making power with respect to household finances (Obbo 1980).

As compared to their male counterparts, women started their business later in life than men, and with less start-up capital, which is reflected in their relatively lower income. Men are likely to be involved in tailoring, carpeting, laundering, mechanics, and shoemaking, all of which are activities that require higher start-up capital. However, there are great variations, especially among low-income classes and middle- and upper income brackets. According to Tripp (1997; 51), women from the latter group made almost ten times more than low-income women made from their small projects, and on the average ten times their own formal salaries as professionals or semiprofessionals. During the 1980s, women were finding their way into more lucrative businesses such as tailoring, which had formerly been considered a male occupation. Other women managed to succeed in branching out into larger and more formal businesses like setting up shipping and receiving companies, secretarial services, private schools, textile factories, bakeries, flour mills, dry-cleaning businesses, prawn-exporting companies, and chick-importing businesses (Tripp 1997; 112-113). Generally speaking, people with middle- or upper-class incomes were not spared when the decline in wages caused incomes to fall below subsistence levels, but they had the right connections with which they could trade resources and exchange information that would advance their sideline projects.

Most women, however, operate with many constraints: limited capital and lack of access to credit and loans due to loan conditions (such as home ownership); lack of education and training; no information base or networks (contacts, resources and markets), and limitations imposed by their husbands. Especially among women and youth, the lack of capital keep them locked in low income-generating projects or from leaving the lowest paid jobs. Still, Tripp's analysis shows that women demonstrated considerable independence in their projects, and were able to find room to maneuver around many of the constraints and take control of their own lives. The independence women gained from their projects was reflected in their ability to do as they pleased with their income, ranging from daily expenditures, education for their children, building a house or different

forms of savings (Tripp 1997; 117; also M.-L. Swantz 1985, Bashemererwa 1986, Masaiganah 1986, Tungaraza 1986).

Even though jealousy and competition were present among the women in Tripp's survey, she found the cooperation and creation of relationships of mutual assistance to be pervasive business strategies. Trust and solidarity are vital elements in women's economic relations, which form the basis for women's saving clubs known as *upato* games. Although most women owned their own projects, most women also collaborate with others in informal arrangements, often another family member, relative, or friend. One consequence of women's increased economic activity is that they are creating new networks and meeting places, which stand in contrast to descriptions of urban African women's social and economic isolation and dependency on men (Little 1973, Pellow 1977, Sabot 1979, M.-L. Swantz 1985). As I return to in my own empirical analysis, the support, solidarity and trust among women in the economic sphere stand in sharp contrast to media images of women that often represent them as female rivals and selfish individuals.

New problems, tensions, and moral dilemmas

In a society marked by a ruthless decline in real wages, cut backs in the bureaucratic machinery and required workforce retirement, coupled with cost-of-living increases, school fees and hospital expenses, mean that new social problems and tensions are unavoidable. The difficult situation related to the economic strain most families are living under has its resonance in almost every aspect of life. It is commonly stated that frustrations as a result of falling incomes, unemployment and economic stress have led to conflicts in marriage and kinship relations and increased violence against women and children (Mbilinyi 1997; 5).

However, rather than looking at the reach of social problems I shall focus on what can be seen as a paradox. The same processes that have led to worsening living conditions in which women and girls are most vulnerable also offers an opportunity to redefine and renegotiate cultural codes of sexual difference. The economic situation, which calls upon both women and men to bring home an income, has forced many women to go outside the home to look for work or create small businesses. Also, the number of single mothers is rising due to a variety of circumstances (divorcees, widows, and teenage mothers), who have to find new ways to survive and bring home an income. Even though more autonomy in the economic sphere has not automatically led to autonomy in other spheres (political, social, or cultural), earning an income involves a higher degree of independence. Women are no longer totally dependent on men; this transition paves the way for more space for negotiation as male wage earners depend on the informal incomes of their wives and other household members.

While this political and economic transformation offers new opportunities for women to take a greater role in society, it also entails new risks for women. As women are moving into men's 'territory' they also challenge the boundaries between the male and female sphere of action and identity. By challenging men's position in the household economy, a position that is closely linked to men's status as breadwinners and heads of household, women also contest men's hegemony in the areas of decision-making, coordination, and resource allocation, a hegemony that until recently was taken for granted. Also, successful female entrepreneurs send the signal that women can be rational, smart, and capable, in contrast to emotional, submissive, and inferior. For men, women's increasing independence might be perceived as a subversion of themselves, a threat to their position as well as their manhood. Along with the economic pressure that men face, they must also cope with their own inability to be the sole breadwinner, which might cause frustrations among men who are stuck in traditional conceptualizations and identity perceptions. Men's feeling of disempowerment probably contributes to gender antagonism, which in its most brutal form takes shape as violence and sexual abuse against women and children.

Besides, in the tough economic situation women's sexuality is the only tool some women have at their disposal. Several authors have noted that women are likely to use their sexuality as an instrument. Talle and Helle-Valle (2000; 193) argue that women who choose to be 'free women' take control over the economic surplus that their sexuality generates. The institution of bride price and men's showering of gifts on their mistresses give women a sense of their sexual worth - something that they shouldn't give away without recompense (Lange 2002; 252). A perception of women's sexuality as more aggressive can be seen as a cultural provocation breeding hostility towards women. The question is how these tensions and contradictions reverberate in the media discourse and contribute to the construction and negotiation of gender. As I shall explain in my own empirical analysis, gender antagonism is recurrently expressed in cultural productions, as can be seen in both news and Swahili plays.

1.4 Conclusion

The primary aim of this dissertation is to provide insights of the role of the mass media in a symbolic struggle of gender transformation, which entails cultural definitions and prescriptions of femininity (and masculinity). The research issues illuminate how gender ideas and notions are constructed, negotiated, and contested in the media discourse against the backdrop of the political and economic changes in Tanzania. In refining the research issues, I have drawn upon the cultural studies tradition and feminist-post-structuralism, in which the

media is seen as an arena for conflict and contestation and the definition of gender is subjected to a continuous discursive struggle and negotiation. From this perspective, women's/gender NGOs can be viewed as 'communities of discourse', engaged in the enunciation of new cultural codes that might contest dominant representations and prevailing notions of gender. The possibility of plural meanings raises the issue of whether media texts can be considered empowering, in so far as they offer female audiences an opportunity for symbolic acknowledgement of their own social subordination, and thereby open a path for resistance against the prevailing gender ideology that continue to suppress women. Furthermore, development constitutes an important contextual framework. Even though development approaches have begun to acknowledge women as important contributors in development, the emphasis has been on the economic sphere; the consequent exclusion of cultural elements hinders women's participation in all areas significant to development. At stake is who benefits from a particular socio-cultural construction of gender, and how this restricts and channels societal development.

I have chosen a dual strategy of analysis aiming at establishing a link between texts and audiences, and thereby have paid attention to discursive elements inscribed in media texts as well as media use and actual local interpretations. Another major linkage is the intersection between media discourse and women's/gender NGO's discourse. By focusing on this intersection, I hope to embrace the flexibility of the media in providing alternative gender representations that can contest the dominant gender ideology. It is my suggestion that these connections can lead to valuable knowledge about the role of the media in the cultural struggle of gender transformation and its potential for socio-cultural change. My analytical design has led to multiple sources of information, which provides mainstream images of women as well as alternative voices fighting for women's rights, as found in newspapers and local drama productions. I have also conducted personal- and reception interviews counting for media use and local interpretations. Moreover, I argue for an interpretative research strategy entailing qualitative methods that is sensitive to contradictions and the ambiguous processes in the construction of gender arising in media texts as well as participants' own formulations and understandings in their sense-making of texts.

In the last section, I addressed the extreme economic conditions affecting urban dwellers since the mid-1970s, which forced women into income-generating activities to an extent that was unthinkable only a decade earlier. While men were the indisputable breadwinners and heads of household in the 1970s, women are now significant contributors, with a consequent a higher level of autonomy and control in the household economy. As a result, women are also creating new networks and meeting places, which stands in contrast to descriptions of urban

African women's social and economic isolation and dependency on men. On the one hand, the new situation paves the way for more space for negotiation as male wage earners depend on the informal incomes of their wives and other household members. On the other hand, women's increasing independence and the concomitant contesting of men's hegemony in producing income might cause gender antagonism, which in its most brutal form takes shape as violence and sexual abuse against women and children. Hence, an important question to be addressed is how tensions and contradictions associated with the process of modernization reverberate in the media discourse contributing to the construction and negotiation of gender.

CHAPTER TWO

A cultural approach to gender and media

Feminists have increasingly shown an interest in culture and representation, in which a cultural struggle is shaping the nature of femininity and masculinity (Michèle Barrett 1992; 204). Prevailing definitions of gender are being contested in both the symbolic realm of mass communication and at the more mundane level of everyday life, which is characterized by routine and ordinary activities, thoughts and feelings (van Zoonen 1994; 5). This renewed attention to culture is probably a consequence of both a general turn towards culture in the social sciences and the development of feminist post-structuralism with its focus on gender as a cultural construct constituted in social and cultural practices and discourses. In this chapter, I will review the development of feminist media research in order to reach a theoretical perspective that can recognize contradictions and ambiguity in the construction of gender in media discourses.

In the first section, I give a short review of feminist media studies in which stereotypes and socialization and ideology have been habitual themes (4.1). Common to these studies are that they are based upon a specific communication model that influences the nature of gender - the feminist transmission model - which has been subject to criticism, and subsequently revised. In this section, I also consider approaches to gender and media in Tanzania, which fall into the same paradigm. Thereafter, I discuss the contours of a new theoretical framework that have emerged as a result of the criticism of the transmission model of communication underlying early feminist media research (4.2). Stuart Hall's encoding/decoding model has been of particular importance in rethinking media influence in which 'negotiation' has become a key concept.

In the third section, I draw upon feminist post-structuralism in the field of mass communication, which allows analysis of the ways media constructs gender as discourse (4.3). Influenced by post-structuralism, discourse has become an important concept in media research. Finally, I place this thesis into a theoretical framework that reflects the ambiguity of meaning production.

2.1 A short review of feminist media studies

Feminist media studies have undergone considerable changes and critique since feminism took off in the early sixties. As Ien Ang and Joke Hermes (1996; 326) point out, early accounts of women's media consumption "are full of renditions reminiscent of the crude, hypodermic needle model of media effects." The perspectives and theoretical assumptions have moved from simple linear reflection models to more complex and ambiguous models involving a range of theories – such as cultural studies, psychoanalytical theory, semiotics, and post-structuralism. More sophisticated methods are also being used. Today the emphasis is tending towards the ways in which media representations and narratives construct multiplicity and more or less contradictory cultural definitions of femininity, rather than a monolithic view of women as unconditional victims of sexist media.

Research into stereotyped images of women in the media and the effects of these images on audiences can be traced back to the beginning of feminist studies in the communication field (i.e. Friedan 1963, Greer 1971, Tuchman 1978, Gallagher 1981). As summarized by Gallagher (1980, 1985), studies of woman stereotypes and gender socialization show depressing similarities between studies of western industrialized countries as compared to their eastern Communist, and southern developing counterparts: Women are underrepresented in the production as well as in the content; when women do appear they are portrayed in a negative and stereotyped manner as passive, submissive, and dependent on their relationship with their husband, father, son, or boss. As Rakow (1986) points out, one reason for the 'popularity' of stereotypes and socialization was that it fitted well into the empirical research paradigm of communication studies in general, which is a prerequisite for successful intervention in any discipline (Stacey and Thorne 1985). Another reason was the progression of women's movements, which contributed to a growing awareness about the stereotyping of women in media and society in general. As Tuchman (1978) notes, "before the advent of the woman movements these stereotypes seemed natural 'given' and few asked how they developed or were maintained."

The modest research that has been done on women and media in Tanzania falls into the paradigm of stereotypes and socialization, and focuses almost exclusively upon the lack of media coverage of women and women's issues, and how a biased portrayal of women reinforces stereotypes and negative imagery of women (Clarke 1987, Shariff 1991, Mtambalike 1986; 1996, Chupa 1996, Kayoke 1997, TGNP 1997). Similar to early feminist studies in the West, research on women and media in Tanzania has assumed that media messages with stereotypical images lead to stereotypical effects and traditional socialization patterns. The following statement illustrates this point:

As a socializing agent the media determines the kind of gender images and imposes the same on their audience be they negative or progressive. Children accessing the media will grow up adopting the conditionalized images and perpetuate them for better or for worse; adults may tend to regard the images as fixed, unchangeable and hand them down to the young generations through various cultural practices (Chupa 1996; 1).

Common to these studies is that they operate within a traditional paradigm based on the linear transmission model of communication, where the transmission of messages is seen as the purpose of social control. This involves a distorted perspective of gender, which falls into an essentialist trap by trying to locate the true femininity as something that precedes culture and that lies outside ideology. This perspective denies the dynamic and contested nature of gender as part of an ongoing process, never finished, stable or true, framed by historical and cultural specificity and contradictions.

It is also common within this paradigm to point to the dominance of male broadcasters and journalists, whose gender socialization causes them to reproduce society's dominant values (i.e. Butler and Paisley 1980). This is also evident in feminist media research in Tanzania, where men's gender socialization and dominance as broadcasters and journalists is assumed to be the cause behind their reproduction of dominant values and by doing so, passing on the society's heritage. An underlying idea is that media content will change for the better if more women are involved in its production – an assumption that has been shown to be too simple and transparent. An increase in women's share as media professionals does not automatically lead to more gender-sensitive media content. Even female journalists carry on discriminating practices against women by being integrated into a male-dominated media culture and by their selection or delegation of news subjects. Perhaps more important than who is in charge of the news or entertainment are the underlying commonsense principles or structures of meaning constituting it. As I describe later in this chapter, this entails a view of power as a property of the system and as an all-pervasive cultural influence rather than intentional, imposed, and easily localized to individuals or certain groups.

Research into stereotypes and socialization is influenced by liberal feminism in which women strive for equality with men in the public sphere and production. Most studies of this kind have used quantitative content analysis. This has led to analyses of the media in terms of the kinds and frequency of female roles, often in a comparative perspective to determine to what extent female characters are representative of the female population in society (Kaplan 1992; 254). For instance, Tuchman (1978) stressed that an impressive social transformation had taken place with over half of the American women entering the labor force, while television showed hardly anything of the kind. In her view, television not only

tells us that women don't matter very much - except as housewives and mothers - but also it symbolically denigrates women by portraying them as incompetent, inferior, and always submissive to men. In turn, this symbolic annihilation of women will endanger social development since girls and mature women lack positive images on which to model their behavior. In other words, the mass media was seen as the major cause of reproduction of patriarchal or sexist relationships.

One explanation for the persistence of stereotypes and socialization as the main focus for the approach to gender and media studies in Tanzania might be the liberal framework these studies are based upon. Liberal feminism has the greatest impact on gender-related research on women in Tanzania as well as the Southern African region as a whole. Moreover, many of the contributions come from outside academic institutions, in particular from feminist activists and journalists, which have several implications on the research that has been conducted. The first is that when activists and journalists make contributions to this area, it is important to remember that research is not their main occupation. Second, they are occupied with empirical research rather than constructing theory, and often end up in traditional empirical epistemologies. Third, feminist activists and organizations operate to a large degree within a liberal feminist framework in which research on stereotypes and socialization have had their roots. The progression of a women's movement in Tanzania has contributed to a growing awareness about woman stereotyping in the media as well as in society in general.

Studies of stereotypes and socialization under a traditional paradigm have been heavily criticized. As Ang and Hermes (1996; 326) point out, these studies implicitly build upon two unwarranted assumptions. First, the mass media imagery is seen to "consist of transparent, unrealistic messages about women whose meanings are clear-cut and straightforward." Second, girls and women are seen to "passively and indiscriminately absorb these messages and meanings as (wrong) lessons about real life." The first assumption involves the idea that media has a univocal meaning and effect. The latter assumption envisions a rather passive mass audience that uncritically consumes media messages with stereotypical images resulting in stereotypical effects and traditional socialization patterns. These assumptions have been shown to be untenable in more recent audience-oriented research and within the cultural studies tradition.

Ideological analysis

Ideological analysis has its origins in Marxist theories of culture, and has become a key area of research in the critical domain in communication studies. However, a range of perspectives on culture and ideology have been developed within Marxism, and the particular approach varies with one's position as a Marxist.

Feminists' intervention in the theme of ideology, rooted in Marxist feminism, has resulted in a profound theoretical and political interest in connecting the capitalist mode of production to the oppression of women (van Zoonen 1994; 21). In relating Marxist feminism to media studies, a distinction can be made between what Kaplan terms pre-Althusserian Marxist feminism and neo-Marxist feminism. From a classic Marxist perspective, feminist researchers look at how the media's status as capitalist profit-making institutions affect the portrayal of women, and stress the media's need to sell objects along with providing entertainment. For example, the reliance on attracting a number of viewers as consumers results in female images that accommodate prevailing conceptions of women, particularly as these satisfy certain economic needs (Kaplan 1992; 257).

Angela McRobbie's (1982) examination of the British teenage magazine *Jackie* can serve as an example of a typical ideological analysis of popular culture for women (Van Zoonen 1994; 5). Drawing upon classical Marxist theory and semiology, McRobbie examines the 'connotative codes' present in *Jackie* versus the 'denotative codes'.¹ According to McRobbie, the magazine signals that the main task in life for girls is to get and keep a man and in this respect other women cannot be trusted. A girl's life is defined through emotions - jealousy, possessiveness, and devotion (van Zoonen, 1994; 25). Briefly stated, *Jackie* articulates the centrality of a personal life for girls (the code of personal/domestic life). It presents an all-embracing, suffocating totality of romance and emotion, stopping girls from doing or thinking about anything else (the code of romance). In her conclusions, McRobbie cautions against the idea that readers will swallow the ideological axioms without question. Still, she considers the discourse of *Jackie* to be immensely powerful, leaving the impression of an all-pervasive hegemonic process from which there is no escape. This gives way for a rather straightforward interpretation of the magazine as a monolithic construction of femininity, which restricts available meanings, ideas, or beliefs to those of the dominant class. Culture and ideology are seen as dependent and organized in accordance to the interests of the ruling class, and thus seen to maintain status quo. However, later research among the readers of *Jackie* showed a multiplicity of interpretations and reactions not necessarily in line with hegemony (Frazer 1987).

Within the classic view of Marxism, ideology has tended to be defined as *false consciousness*, which entails the ruling class propagating systems of meaning to promote its own interests in a generalized and taken-for-granted manner. In turn, the oppressed or subservient classes adopt the oppressors' ideas as their own and thereby participate in their own oppression (White 1992; 165). The mass audience exists in a state of false consciousness by failing to recognize how their

¹ 'Connotative codes' point to the implied or associative meanings of signs while 'denotative' codes refer to the literal meaning.

ideas and values are formed to serve the interests of others. Along the same line of thought, female audiences have been called 'cultural dupes' of ideology (Brown 1990). This perspective implies a distorted view of reality in which it is the Marxist analyst's job to expose hidden ideological meanings. Ideological analysis is empowering insofar as it helps lift the blinders of false consciousness and enables people to understand the way the system perpetuates their oppression (White 1992; 165).

Ideological analysis as discussed above has been heavily criticized for being limited and problematic, and subsequently revised. It involves a view of the media as a totally dependent system reflecting the ideology of the ruling class. The complexity of contradictions and interactions between the media and other institutions in society, as well as internal conflicting interests and negotiation, are not accounted for. The media are seen as a transparent transmission of the dominant ideology.

The feminist transmission model and the construction of gender

One problem underlying research on stereotypes and socialization as well as ideology is the specific communication model based on a linear transmission view of communication from sender to recipient. A main issue concerns the conceptualization of *communication*, in which it is presumed that the media more or less successfully and truthfully 'reflect' the reality, and the audience will more or less successfully be socialized in this picture in the act of either taking in or rejecting media messages. It assumes a rather straightforward sender - message - receiver model sequence. The role of the media in such a terminology is perceived to transmit sexist, patriarchal, or capitalist values about women and femininity to a wider public contributing to the maintenance of the social order (van Zoonen 1994; 27).

A central idea in the transmission model of communication is a simple reflection thesis in which the performance of the media is evaluated to the degree it represents a social reality existing 'out there'. This model generates a specific understanding of the nature of *gender* in which the concept of 'distortion' becomes central in feminists' approaches to the media (van Zoonen 1994; 30). The media are seen to distort the true image of women. Several authors have referred to a cultural lag in which the media are seen to lag behind the reality of women. In spite of changing societies in which women have taken on an important role in employment, education, and politics, the media hardly reflect these changes (i.e. Tuchman 1978, Cantor 1978, Lazier-Smith 1989). Instead, female figures tend to be depicted in the home and are rarely portrayed as rational, active, or decisive. This has made feminists call for more realistic images of women and definitions of femininity, which raises the question; what are realistic representations of women or what is the reality of women's social

position and nature? Is it a (negative) distortion to represent women as housewives and mothers when this is a reality for many women? It would be an impossible project, not to mention universalistic, ethnocentric and culturally insensitive to claim a univocal and uncontroversial definition of women's reality, which is necessary in order to demand more realistic images of women in the media.

The distortion perspective falls into an essentialist trap by trying to locate true femininity as something that precedes culture and lies outside ideology. It involves a conceptualization of gender as a more or less stable and easy identifiable distinction between women and men, which ought to be represented correctly by offering easily available alternative images. Understanding gender this way denies the dynamic and contested nature of gender as an ongoing process without an exact beginning or end, and framed by historical and cultural specificity and contradictions.

An acknowledgment of the historical specificity of current dominant beliefs about women and men opens up new ways of thinking about gender as constructed. In such approaches distortion would be an empty concept, since there is no reference point as to what the true human, male or female identity consists of, and hence there are no criteria as to what exactly the media should represent. Human identity and gender are thought to be socially constructed, in other words products of circumstances, opportunities and limitations (van Zoonen 1992; 31).

Viewing gender as a social construction, the media can be seen as a part of the struggle of defining gender or as a discourse in which dominant and alternative representations compete. This perspective represents an anti-essentialist view of gender as constructed rather than an essentialist view in which gender is seen as a biological distinction between males and females. It is not a question of locating the true femininity, but an attempt to understand the processes through which female (and male) subjectivity is constituted in culture. The feminine or masculine is not something outside ideology, but integral to it. In this view, gender is seen as an open construct in which oppression can be viewed as a limited situation that can be transformed.

2.2 A cultural approach to gender and media

Out of the criticism of the transmission model of communication, from feminists and other communication scholars, the contours of an alternative approach to media effects has emerged. In this approach, which can be termed 'social constructivist' (Gamson and Modigliani 1989), the most significant media effects are the construction of meanings and the offering of these constructs in a systematic manner to an audience. Audiences incorporate these into personal meaning structures or resist them on the basis of some kind of *negotiation*, often shaped by prior collective identifications. Many authors will argue that we have

witnessed a new paradigm shift in media studies, in which meaning is understood as constructed out of the historically and socially situated negotiation between institutional producers of meaning and audiences as producers of meaning². Permeating the whole area of communication research, this approach involves important changes in viewing media institutions, the character of texts, and the audiences concerned. In the new paradigm, tensions and contradictions between individuals with different professional values and personal opinions and between conflicting organizational demands, such as creativity versus commercial needs, have to be taken into consideration. Texts are seen as open systems, which allow for negotiations and different interpretations in interaction with the symbolic constructions offered by the media. Audiences produce their own related similar or alternative meanings, not necessarily the same meaning as intended by media institutions. This view embodies a general shift in audience research from seeing the recipients as passive to active, whereby creative recipients are involved in the actual construction of meaning of the texts concerned (i.e. Jensen & Rosengren 1990, Morley 1989).

The British cultural studies tradition has been an important influence in rethinking media influence. The Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham has been so central to the development of the cultural studies approach, particularly during the 1970s, that the 'Birmingham School' has subsequently been identified as the main locus of the approach (McQuail 1994; 100). The cultural studies tradition has grown out of critical theory, as expressed in Marxist theories of culture and ideology, and literary criticism. However, contemporary cultural theory has returned some optimism to the study of mass media and culture, and in effect 're-empowered' the audience. As McQuail (1994; 100) notes: "Critical cultural theory has now extended well beyond its early concerns with ideological domination, although in one way or another the study of ideology in media culture remains central, as does the significance of media culture for the experience of particular groups in society such as youth, working class, ethnic minorities and other marginal categories." The development of cultural studies has led to a wider view of the social and cultural influences that mediate media experiences such as ethnicity, gender, and everyday life. As a consequence the cultural studies tradition has influenced many feminist scholars and studies.

Introduced by Stuart Hall (1973³) in his influential work on the encoding/decoding model, negotiation has become a key concept in mass media theory and research. The central element in the encoding/decoding model is that the construction of meaning takes place at the different moments in the mass

² Not everybody in the field of communication research will agree with this idea of a paradigm shift, i.e. Curran 1990.

³ Stuart Hall's Encoding/decoding model is reprinted in Simon During (ed.): *The Cultural Studies Reader*, 1993.

communication process. The media text is located between its producers, who frame meaning in a certain way, and its audiences, who decode the meaning according to their rather different social situations and frames of interpretation. The basic mechanism is a continuous negotiation between media and audiences, empowering both sides. The tensions and contradictions in the production of meaning are acknowledged and reverberate in media texts, which can no longer be seen as a consistent entity carrying singular meaning. Rather texts are characterized as 'polysemic' (Morley 1989); that is, carrying contradictory, divided, and plural meanings. As a result, more attention has been given to textual mechanisms, their symbolic forms and textual negotiations in the form of contending elements, and possible meanings responsible for engendering spectator identifications. The simple model recognizes that ideology as sent is not the same as ideology as taken, which has proved a considerable stimulus in rethinking the theory of ideology and false consciousness and research on the potential for differential decoding (McQuail 1994; 101).

Hall's encoding/decoding model has been the inspiration for some important issues in feminist theory and research. It raises questions concerned with how gender discourse is negotiated and how meaningful discourses are constructed in the moments of production, text, and reception. For instance, which preferred and alternative meanings of gender are available in media texts and from which discourses do they draw upon? (van Zoonen 1994; 42). However, the range of meanings a text offers is not seen as infinite. According to Hall, "encoding will have the effect of constructing some of the limits and parameters within which decoding will operate" (Hall et. al. 1980; 135). In this sense most texts offer a 'preferred' meaning, which given the economic and ideological location of most media, will tend to reconstruct dominant values. An underlying assumption is that media institutions and audiences produce meaning at the same time as a social process, embedded in existing power and discursive formations.

The new theoretical framework has changed the face of contemporary feminist media studies. Media production can no longer be seen as a straightforward, simple black box that transmits the patriarchal, sexist, or capitalist values of its producers, owners, or media professionals. Gradually, the monolithic reproduction of sexism and patriarchy has faded, and made way for a view in which audience's relationship to texts is seen as negotiable. This represents a more optimistic view of woman audiences than earlier ideas like 'false consciousnesses' indicates. As Brown (1990) points out: "They are no longer seen as 'cultural dupes', as passive victims of inexorable sexist media; on the contrary, media consumption can even be considered as empowering (although never unproblematic), in so far as it offers audiences an opportunity for symbolic acknowledgment of their own social subordination" (in Ang & Hermes 1996; 329). A gender-based approach raises the question of whether media choice and

interpretation can provide some level of change or element of resistance for women in a social situation still generally structured by inequality (McQuail 1994; 102).

Ideology revised

The emergence of a new theoretical framework of communication has enabled the development of alternative interpretations and revisions of the theory of ideology, which to different degrees stress the contradictions and interactions within society, inside media institutions, as well as individual social subjects. As a consequence of the tensions in the encoding process, monolithic reproductions of gender ideologies are outdated, and replaced by a view of media texts as open ideological systems carrying multiple ideological positions. This development has opened up the opportunity for competing ideological positions in media discourses, and in the ways individuals take up positions in relation to the media or the world at large (White 1992; 166).

An influential contribution to the revision of ideology is the French Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser (1971). He argues that the social formation consists of different spheres of human activity that coexist as arenas exerting mutual influence and pressure on one another. In this respect, economy, politics, and ideology are all key arenas in which individuals find their identity in the social formation. Social identity, then, is a complex construction and may include different sets of interests (White 1992; 169). The relative autonomy given to political and ideological practices allows seeing them as arenas for contestation and ideological battlegrounds that portray contradictions and tensions within a dominant ideology. As such, Althusser's basic ideas of ideology have been influential in media and cultural studies, which signal the importance of studying individual modes of representations (White 1992; 169).

While Althusser ignores gender issues, Marxist feminists inspired by him will claim that gender is a crucial component of ideology (van Zoonen 1994; 23). Even though class is used as a crucial distinction in economic practice, it doesn't prevent other terms from emerging within the context of political or ideological practice. Subjectivity then may be defined and positioned by a variety of other categories, such as gender, race, ethnicity, age, and profession (White 1992; 169). A reasonable interpretation of Althusser's theory of ideology is that systems of representation in the media are somehow dominated and restricted by males or male perspectives, which might intersect with the dominant class (mostly males). In turn, this limits the understanding and experience of self as woman or man, as well as our social surroundings, to a particular perspective in favor of men and the prevailing class.

Another contributor providing an important addition to the concept of ideology is the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1971). He used the notion hegemony to refer to the process by which general consent is actively sought for the interpretations of the ruling class. Hegemony describes the general predominance of a particular class in terms of political and ideological interests in a given society (White 1992; 167). It refers to a loosely interrelated set of ruling ideas permeating a society, but in such a way as to make the established order of power and values appear natural, taken-for-granted and common sense. Like Althusser, Gramsci sees society as composed of varied and conflicting interests. Social and cultural conflicts are expressed through a struggle for hegemony. The ruling class exercises hegemony insofar as its interests are recognized and accepted as the prevailing, commonsense view of the majority of people (van Zoonen 1994; 24). Even though hegemony appears to be natural, it is the historical result of the prestige enjoyed by the ruling class, by virtue of their position and function in the sphere of production.

This development in Marxist-oriented theories of ideology reflects a shift in focus and understanding of power from being intentional and imposed and easily localized to an all-pervasive cultural influence, accomplished at the unconscious as well as the conscious level. In effect, hegemony is a constantly reasserted definition of a social situation by way of discourse rather than political and economic power (Hall 1982). This entails a view of power as a property of the system of relations involved, rather than as the overt and intentional biases of individuals (Hall 1982; 95). The tools for analyzing these processes have been provided by developments in semiology and structural analysis that offer methods for exposing covert and underlying structures of meaning (McQuail 1994; 100). The notion of hegemony allows a view of media as producers of a range of positions and ideas in contrast to a singular and monolithic ideology. This gives room for negotiating hegemony; however, dominant interests will prevail most of the time and may even restrict the range of competing voices and views (White 1992; 168).

Much like Althusser, Gramsci doesn't pay attention to gender, but feminists inspired by him have taken the concept of hegemony and used it to challenge male hegemony in the production of knowledge. The media can be seen as the contemporary mediator of hegemony or as an ideological institution, translating and naturalizing the concepts and ideas of male hegemony into the ordinary language and experiences of women (and men). As such, the media contribute in maintaining a patriarchal and male-dominated society. The question is how particular ideological constructions of femininity and masculinity are produced in media discourses and to whose benefit.

In sum, ideological developments have led to an ideological criticism that takes into account contradictions and instabilities in culture. Contemporary ideological criticism is concerned with the ways in which cultural practices and artifacts (here media) produce knowledge and positions for its users (here media audiences). Cultural artifacts are seen as produced in a specific social and historical context, and thereby express and promote values, beliefs, and ideas in relation to the context in which they are created. Ideological analysis aims to understand how a cultural text embodies and enacts particular sets of values, beliefs, and ideas (White 1992; 163). An important consequence of Gramsci's and Althusser's work is that it opens up for analyzing culture as a set of practices rather than seeing cultural artifacts as fixed entities with fixed and hidden ideological meanings waiting to be exposed by the Marxist analyst. It is the very system of representations and the commonsense principles and structures that endow the system with meaning for those who participate in it (White 1992; 170). As such, contemporary ideological criticism steers clear of the essentialist path of previous Marxist theory by seeing systems of representation and our experience of them within, and not outside, culture and ideology. As an arena of representational practice, ideology can be seen as a site of struggle and contestation, including tensions and contradictions within dominant ideology. In turn, this opens up multiple ideological positions rather than a monolithic and homogeneous ideological position in media texts and in text-viewer relations.

2.3 Post-structuralism: From ideology to discourse

Influenced by post-structuralism, discourse has become a key concept in media research. Similar to the theory of hegemony, power is understood as an all-pervasive cultural influence rather than something that some groups have and others have not. A major impact on post-structuralist media research has resulted from the work of Michel Foucault. According to Foucault, power operates in culture through discourse, and the discursive construction of sexuality and the policing of desire are understood through dominant discourses. His theories of "how objects of knowledge are constituted in the very processes of their articulation," and "how knowledge is organized discursively have changed the face of television criticism" (Kaplan 1992; 262). Feminist media criticism draws upon the concept of discourse in analyzing the ways media texts construct cultural discourses that become pervasive and function as power. Scholars working along these lines might focus on problems of enunciation, that is, the person who speaks the words in a text and the person to whom it is addressed; the role of TV in domestic life; or the ideology embedded in the form of production and reception (Kaplan 1992; 264).

Post-structuralist feminism influenced by Foucault's concept of the discursive allows a view of gender as a particular discourse or as constructed in discursive

practices (i.e. media) within already existing power formations. From this perspective, discourses are seen as sites of conflict and contestation in which gender will never be univocal or total, but part of an ongoing process by which subjects are constituted often in contradictory, ambiguous, and fragmented ways. In other words, the definition of gender is subjected to a continuous discursive struggle and negotiation. Along these lines van Zoonen (1994; 4) has provided a useful definition of gender discourse as: “a set of overlapping and often contradictory cultural descriptions and prescriptions referring to sexual difference which arises from and regulates particular economic, social, political, technological and other non-discursive contexts.” Within this definition there will be contradictory cultural outlooks, not just from one nation to another, but between rural and urban, women and men, gender activist and non-activist, and even within one person. Moreover, gender discourse also influences the development of the society as a whole. At stake is whose interests are benefiting from a particular socio-cultural construction of gender and how this restricts and channels the development of society.

Central to post-structuralist theory is the idea that dominant discourse tends to produce its own opposition, which allows for different reactions and interpretations and opens up the discourse for negotiation. The disciplinary power of discourse in its prescribing and restricting of gender identities and experiences can therefore be resisted and subverted. The mass media will be only one arena for contestation that interacts with other discourses in an overall gender discourse in society. Nevertheless, the media will also be a particular discourse in itself that accommodates, modifies, reconstructs, as well as disciplines contradictory cultural outlooks of sexual difference. The conflicts involved in both the symbolic and material level produce a challenge to dominant codes in society. However, access to the media and the power to engage in the processes of defining reality is not equally distributed, but intricately linked to variables such as gender, class, ethnicity, political-economic and international relations. Discourse is also itself a form of power, since both the process of discourse (the symbolic interaction) and the product of discourse (i.e. gender definitions) limit the possibilities of interpretation and privilege certain meanings above others. As van Zoonen (1994; 40) points out, the power of discourse lies not only in its capacity to define what is a social problem, but also in its prescriptions of how an issue should be understood, the legitimate views on it, the legitimacy and deviance of the actors involved, and the appropriateness of certain acts.

Charlotte Brunson's (1981) analysis of the British soap opera *Crossroads*, which relies implicitly on Foucaultian discourse theory and the Althusserian concept of ideology, can serve as an example of the ways media discourse constructs disciplinary cultural outlooks of life that then become pervasive. She tries to identify what values *Crossroads* has helped to shape, and discovers that

these values are concerned with the ideology of 'personal life'. There is an endless unsettling discussion and resettling of acceptable modes of behavior within the sphere of personal relationships. The structure of the soap opera inscribes the viewer with a particular ideological and moral position regarding the family. The serial takes place within a very circumscribed set of values that provides the norms for everyone's lives, and even as people violate those norms, they are nonetheless constrained by them and have to learn to adjust or suffer the consequences (Kaplan 1992; 266). Brunsdon's analysis reflects to a certain extent the idea that discourse is a site of conflict and contestation. Yet, it does not allow a view that the disciplinary power of discourse in prescribing and restricting gender identities and experiences can be resisted and subverted.

Important influences on feminist post-structuralism, especially in the late 1970s and the 1980s, are French psychoanalysis, semiotics, deconstruction, and Althusserian Marxism (Kaplan 1992; 261). As with Althusser's theory of ideology, feminist post-structuralism draws upon Lacan's theory of subjectivity in which the subject or gender identity is constituted through the acquisition of language or symbolic order. From childhood, boys and girls find themselves in vastly different positions vis-à-vis the dominant order once they enter into the realm of the Symbolic (Kaplan 1992; 263). Lacan's theory builds upon a reinterpretation of Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex and the unconscious in the context of structural linguistics. He stresses the importance of language in the child's movement out of pre-oedipal unity with the mother through the acquisition of language. The moment of linguistic capability (the ability to speak and distinguish a speaking self) is the moment of one's insertion into a social realm. We learn to think, feel, and express ourselves in the language and customs of our particular culture. "Thus language and its historical and culturally specific semantic and thematic combination in discourses set limits to our experiences of ourselves, others and our surroundings; language speaks us" (van Zoonen 1994; 32). In line with this argument, a particular difference between human beings as woman versus man occurs when we are born, labeled by gender, and integrated into societies, where we think of ourselves in terms of gender. This involves an anti-essentialist position, which "frees us from the tyranny of the biological," and opens up for seeing gender as a social construct in contrast to previous forms of feminism linking gender to 'nature' (Kaplan 1992; 262).

An important element in post-structuralist feminism, as expressed in the work of Foucault and the feminist film theory of Theresa de Lauretis, is that subjectivity is produced in and through the intersection of a multitude of social discourses and practices. Gender discourse therefore doesn't exhaust human identity, but coexists along with other intervening discourses such as race, ethnicity, and class (Ang & Hermes, 1996; 332-334). The post-structuralist speaks of multiple

discourses that are contradictory between and within itself. Following Foucault, de Laetis claims that (1987; 2):

The subject (is) constituted in language, to be sure, though not by sexual difference alone, but rather across languages and cultural representations; a subject engendered in the experience of race and class, as well as sexual relations; a subject therefore not unified but rather multiple, and not so much divided as contradicted.

The media represents only one discourse and practice is itself a product of multiplicity; it sometimes produces contradictory cultural definitions of femininity, which position the individual subject in heterogeneous, overlaying, and competing ways (Ang & Hermes 1996; 342). This view allows for a multiplicity of subject positions taken up by the person in question or by multiple identities, not only among different groups of women but also in women. The importance of social position has led several feminist researchers to call for a differentiation among female audiences. A common distinction in social or ideological analysis is between working class versus middle class women. Post-structuralism feminist theory goes further than this sociological differentiation by adopting a more profound sense of gender skepticism, and thereby eradicating any pre-given guarantee for female unity. According to Ang and Hermes (1996; 342), social determinism would not only lead to the positing of fixed differences between working-class and middle-class women, but also the projection of unity and coherence in the responses of the two groups. Such a distinction would preclude recognition of multiplicity and transgression in the way women belonging to both groups can make sense of media.

2.4 Conclusion

This thesis falls into a feminist critical-cultural tradition influenced by British cultural studies, which breaks with the transmission model of communication by seeing media production as a complex process of negotiation, processing, and reconstruction. Thus, the media is seen in a much broader perspective, not only in reflecting reality but also in the construction and reconstruction of reality in particular ways. As opposed to the idea that media distort the true nature of gender, this view provides a conceptualization of gender as a social construction, which opens up for difference and variety. In line with this perspective, gender can be seen as socially constructed in discourses that reflect and produce power, based upon negotiation situated in specific cultural and historical settings and within existing power formations.

Informed by contemporary ideological criticism, I am concerned with the ways media produces positions for its audiences and how media texts embody and enact particular sets of values, beliefs, and ideas. I view media texts as open

ideological systems carrying multiple ideological positions, rather than monolithic reproductions of gender ideologies, which affect the ways in which individuals take up positions inscribed in the media discourse. This conditions a communication model that sees texts as 'polysemic', whereby active and creative recipients are involved in the actual construction of meaning of the texts concerned. A central issue is the negotiation over meanings and values that inform whole ways of life. This is not to say that material conditions for women do not matter, but at the heart of the matter is the struggle over the meaning of gender. Still, in order to highlight the role of the media in the ongoing construction of gender discourse, it is necessary to take into consideration the media's location in economic structures and characteristics of the media and genres in question (van Zoonen 1994; 41).

A third major influence in this thesis is feminist post-structuralism, which provides a perspective on gender as a non-unitary, multiple and ongoing process. Within the field of mass communication, the view of women as a unified category with a uniform identity has already been replaced by a gradual acknowledgment of differences between different groups of women positioned in different relations of social class, race-ethnicity, generation, and regionally (imperial relations). Feminist post-structuralism has moved beyond this sociological differentiation by adopting a more profound sense of gender skepticism and thereby eradicating any pre-given guarantee for female unity. This view opens up for a multiplicity of subject positions taken up by the person in question or multiple identities (Ang & Hermes 1996; 342). As such, feminist post-structuralism can be seen a critical reaction to the normative and moralist absolutism in earlier feminist traditions and approaches. Post-structuralism also provides a stronger focus on media as a site of conflict and contestation in which the definition of gender is subjected to a continuous discursive struggle and negotiation. Central to post-structuralist theory is that the dominant discourse tends to produce its own opposition. The disciplinary power of discourse in prescribing and restricting gender identities and experiences can therefore be resisted and subverted. Hence, I find post-structuralism to be more powerful in explaining social change, which is crucial in a cultural struggle for women's liberation. Along with Ang and Hermes and van Zoonen, I argue that a post-structuralist orientation in feminist media research can help to improve conceptualizing how gender might be articulated in media discourse as well as consumption.

In sum, by combining insights from cultural studies, ideological criticism, and post-structuralism, I aim to illuminate the ways media construct gender as discourse responsible for engendering positions for its audiences, which might encourage or limit the possibilities of interpretations.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology and fieldwork

This chapter presents a discussion of the research design and methodology used for this thesis (3.1). My focus has been on finding a methodological approach that is sensitive enough to detect how gender is manifested in the media discourse and consumption, while able to account for contradictions and the ambiguous process of meaning production. I have found methodological support in interpretative forms of inquiry that entail qualitative methods, an approach used by several feminist researchers before me (Jankowski and Wester 1991; 57). Also, from a development perspective, I find it critical to apply a methodology that is able to validate women's experiences and viewpoints. My ideas and concepts are inevitably to some degree distinguished by a western way of thinking. In order to make sense in a culture different from one's own, and to conduct and interpret the collection of data closer to 'reality', it is critical to have an open, flexible, and sensitive research strategy.

This chapter also provides information and a discussion of field materials and their collection. In Chapter 3.2, I describe how the media texts were selected, which is discussed on the backdrop of genre. Furthermore, I address gender and identity in media consumption, and discuss the following issues: The choice between individual versus group interviews; selection of the participants; conducting the group discussions; analysis and presentation; and pros and cons in using research assistants. Issues regarding the researcher-respondent relationship inevitably influence the whole research process, and I have therefore chosen to not treat these issues separately but as integral components of the other segments.

In the next section, I discuss discourse-analysis as an analytical approach, followed by a model that will be applied in analyzing the media texts (3.3). I draw upon narrative analysis to provide me with a conceptual framework, which I use as a tool in a broader ideological analysis. The model gives rise to a series of tentative hypotheses. Finally, I will round off the chapter with some conclusions (3.4).

3.1 Research design and methodology

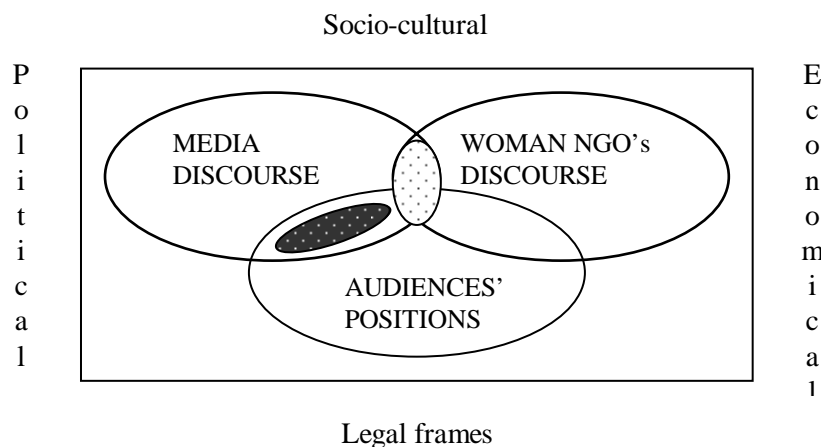
This research project is distinguished by its explorative character, as there are few if any previous studies with a similar objective to build upon. This has led to an open problem statement, which needs to be illuminated through different perspectives and partial understandings, entailing a range of research questions (c.f. Chapter 1.2). An explorative research design is distinguished by flexibility so as to allow for adjustments, unexpected events, and new insights as the research process evolves (Grønhaug 1985; 12). I have operated with a predefined problem area or statement, but not a predefined understanding of how the problem statement is constituted. As previously stated, the overall aim is to contribute to a better understanding of the role of the media in the cultural struggle of gender transformation and its potential for socio-cultural change. The rather broad aim of this dissertation calls for a procedural process in which the researcher's understanding of the problem statement and the relevant data that illuminate and allow for its analysis often have a changing character (Østbye et al. 2001; 125). Even though this enquiry is first and foremost empirical in purpose, the research process is characterized by a continuous interaction between empirical observations and theoretical assumptions. As such, the research process is characterized by a hermeneutic process, in which the ultimate understanding expands through the different elements, and where these partial understandings develop through a greater understanding of the problem statement (Østbye et al. 2001; 110).

I have explicitly placed my study at the junction of feminist and cultural studies with an analytical discourse angle, which also influences research design and methods. In particular, the British cultural studies tradition has been an important inspiration in developing a research design, because it emphasizes a cultural dimension in which media and audiences are embedded. Within the discipline of cultural studies, special attention is given to ideologies inscribed in media texts, usually by employing textual analysis using qualitative techniques. In order to examine the construction of gender as discourse, media messages are essential in this study. It is through the texts that the media has the power to define events and identities and influence our attitudes and opinions, which have given media messages their centrality within media science (c.f. Østbye et al. 2001; 62). Media texts can be seen as both a product and a source of social and cultural practices. Within cultural studies, the focus has tended to be placed on the message or discourse of communication, only implying reader positions rather than their local empirical procedures and recipients (Jensen 1991; 28). Still, an important theoretical assumption in British cultural studies is that the construction of meaning is framed between its producers and audiences – based upon some form of negotiation (c.f. Chapter 2.2). This has led to a wider view of the social and cultural influences that mediate media experiences, such as gender,

ethnicity, and everyday life. Hence, exploring text-viewer relations can give valuable insights into the main problem area of this thesis. In order to identify how media texts are interpreted and received by readers in historical and social situations I have also found it important to access actor-oriented understandings and meanings.

This aim of establishing a link between texts and audiences has led to a dual strategy of analysis, in which attention is paid to both discursive elements and social aspects of communication. While the discursive work of the media is largely seen as a macro-foundation of gender, by capturing cultural elements of meaning production, the audiences' interpretations link culture to micro-processes of identity formation. The common denominator connecting these two perspectives is the social production of meaning. Figure 3.1 below illustrates the research design in this thesis:

Figure 3.1 Gender as a discursive construction and the positioning of audiences



The figure above constitutes the three main objects of study in this thesis. The first and most important constituent is the media discourse, which entails media texts as the central unit of analysis. Important issues are how gender representations are manifested in the media discourse and the ways that the media positioning of the female subject contribute to particular constructions of gender. How are gender notions, values, and norms embedded in the symbolic constructions of gender, and what are the ideological implications for gender transformation? The construction of gender in the media discourse may represent both dominant and alternative definitions of women and gender relations by drawing upon other discourses in society.

The second element in the figure represents women's/gender NGOs discourse, which in this project is viewed as a potential oppositional or alternative discourse

that might challenge dominant definitions of gender (c.f. Chapter 4). Instead of going inside the organizations, the news coverage of important events constitutes the analysis. The light dotted area in the figure illustrates the point of intersection between media discourse and women's/gender NGOs discourse (media/WNGOs nexus). A central issue to be addressed is whether the media contributes in empowering women by providing a space for alternative images, ideas, and identities that contest dominant cultural codes of femininity, which in turn can channel development in the interest of women. In other words, I am concerned with not only how the media discourse has disciplinary and regulatory effects on gender, but also the possibilities for oppositional discourses to develop and thereby resist the disciplinary power of dominant discourse (c.f. Chapter 2.3).

The last component in the figure illustrates audiences' use and interpretations of media messages, which are not necessarily the same meaning as intended by the media institutions. The dark dotted mark in the figure illustrates a linkage between gender, as expressed in the media discourse, and gender as articulated in the act of media consumption (media/audience nexus). A characteristic of reception analysis is that it accounts for both texts and recipients as complementary elements of one area of inquiry (Jensen 1991; 135). Findings from the discourse analysis of selected media texts represent a starting point for analyzing audiences' reception. Information garnered during analysis of the group discussions can also point to discursive details that deserve closer attention, which in turn might direct attention to new clues in reinterpreting informants' statements. The link between media discourse and recipients might reveal whether the themes, issues, or conflicts exposed in the media are relevant for the equivalent real-life social and emotional subjects that dominate the lives of female and male audiences (c.f. Radway 1984). A central element in the cultural studies tradition is that texts are open systems, which allow for negotiations and different interpretations in the interaction with symbolic constructions offered by the media. Hence, an important issue to be addressed is whether audiences negotiate or even resist dominant definitions of gender so as to have an empowering impact on women.

Finally, Figure 3.1 illustrates that the political, economic, social and cultural frames, and the law, create a framework within which the media as well as women's/gender NGOs operate, but they can also try to influence that framework to adapt to their own needs and concerns. The wider societal frames or extra-textual framework constitutes important points of reference in explaining constructions and negotiations of gender in the media discourse. In line with the cultural studies tradition, the construction and taking of meaning has to be understood as situated in a specific historical and social context embedded in existing power formations. Central in this dissertation is gaining an understanding of how gender is constructed, reconstructed, and contested in the

media discourse against the backdrop of a political and economic transformation. However, the framework does not need to be consistent or coherent: The political and economic reforms represent new opportunities for women to organize and express themselves and to take a greater role in society and the family economy, which can contribute in redefining gender and spearheading the struggle for female emancipation. It also represents new risks in which women become the object of gender hostility, sexual harassment, and sensational news reporting that might undercut a feminist discourse. Also, legal frames are important for women's liberation, for example, the protection of women regarding sexual harassment or inheritance rights with a bearing on gender notions, while socio-cultural frames as embedded in customary law or the patriarchal system might undercut political or legal efforts to liberate and secure women's rights, dignity and integrity.

The Tanzanian society can be seen to stand at a crossroads between two major ideologies - socialism versus capitalism - in which cultural production is pulled between different discourses. The media and its producers can therefore be seen to operate within different and sometimes contradicting discourses; feminist versus commercial; modern versus traditional, official versus popular discourses. The movement from socialist to capitalist principles also promotes conflicts between modern and traditional values, with an important bearing on gender ideas and notions in which the media is becoming an important cultural agent and an arena for conflict and contestation. An important issue to be addressed is how the mass media comes to grips with conflicts and negotiations arising during the process of modernization. How do contradictions and tensions arising in the process of modernization reverberate in media texts? Moreover, Dar es Salaam is an urban African city that is increasingly becoming a part of a global and commercial culture, which gives rise to questions in regard to how the media handles public distress concerning Tanzanian culture and morals.

My analytical design has led to multiple sources of information often referred to as data triangulation (Østbye et al. 2001; 122). The three main sources of field materials aim to illuminate the media's role in gender transformation from different perspectives in order to deepen and enrich the understanding of the main problem statement. The most elaborate material consists of three types of texts from the mass media, which constitute the **discourse-textual analysis**. I have chosen to focus upon how gender is constructed in both public and popular discourses, entailing both dominant and challenging definitions of gender. Thus, to facilitate the discourse analysis, I have concentrated on news in the printed press and on local Tanzanian television productions known as Swahili plays. Furthermore, I have chosen news coverage (newspaper articles) of one specific event conducted by a prominent woman organization, the Tanzania Media

Women's Association in order to understand the intersection between the media's and WNGOs' discourse.

In order to account for actual textual interpretations, I have conducted **reception interviews** in the form of focus groups, which complement the findings from the discourse analysis. The strength of reception analysis stems from their ability to demonstrate that subject positions inscribed in texts are not uniformly and mechanically adopted by socially and culturally situated readers.¹ This allows for empirical variations and heterogeneity among women's responses (Ang/Hermes 1996; 329). Morley (1980) showed in his influential study of *The Nationwide Audience*, that not only could messages be read differently than intended, but the interpretations would also vary among differently constituted social and cultural groups. Moreover, the juxtaposition of textual analysis and reception analysis makes clear that female audiences actively negotiate with textual constructions and subject positions embedded in media texts. The meanings given to texts, and the positions taken by the readers, depend on women's social and subjective experiences. In the selection of participants I have therefore aimed at including a range of different groups of women, men and youths.

Women as a media audience have two dimensions; social uses (structural) and interpretation (identity), both of which require different methods and data. Focus groups are not a good source of data on group behavior or attitudes, since intra-group variations will be underreported (Bloor 2001; 19). I have therefore conducted **personal interviews** with the participants prior to the focus group discussions, which provided me with individual information. The personal interviews have helped to illuminate social aspects of communication and to develop a contextualized understanding of the research issues. The aim is to get a better understanding of the social problems and tensions facing urban dwellers; how they perceive women's situation in the society and relations between the genders; the importance of the media in urban Tanzanians everyday life; and how they use the media in making sense of the changing environment.

In qualitative interviews it is inevitable that the researcher's presence somehow influences the interview situation, which might weaken the validity of the research if the material is not giving an accurate picture of the informants'

¹ A main distinction can be made between traditions drawing upon symbolic interactions and ethnography. Reception analysis within the ethnographic approach addresses the uses of media in different contexts in which the research should be carried out in the natural context of media use by using participant observation as a mean of data gathering (Morely 1986, Lull 1988, Lindlof 1987). Reception analysis with roots in symbolic interactions emphasis the reception of particular media discourses, which normally involves interviewing (Morley 1980, Radway 1984, Modleski 1984, de Lauretis 1984). My own study falls into the latter position in which I focus on gender as a specific discourse arising within particular media and genres employing focus group discussions.

understandings, opinions, or conduct. Low validity will also certainly affect the ability to generalize the findings. However, if the researcher is not in the field it is hard to collect data relevant for the problem area and thereby conduct relevant analyses. The triangulation of data, which also involves different qualitative techniques of data gathering and analysis, might strengthen the research project's validity (Østbye et al. 2001; 122). Generally speaking, validity refers to the extent to which the research design and operationalization provide relevant insights with regard to the main problem statement in a research project. Robert K. Yin claims in his contribution to case studies that "... the most important advantage presented by using multiple sources of evidence is the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation... Thus, any finding or conclusion in a case study is likely to be more convincing if it is based on several sources of information, following a corroboratory mode" (Yin 2003; 98). Still, triangulation doesn't automatically lead to validity. For instance, there is always a danger that each source of data is not valid, and putting together separate data that are not valid will not increase the validity of the research project. The selection of texts as well as participants and how the interviews were conducted are major topics addressed later in this chapter.

The research areas often scrutinized by feminist researchers, such as the conscious or unconscious construction of meaning, which are often taken for granted and situated in the ordinary, are only 'exposed' by methods sensitive enough to detect the cues of common behavior and experiences. Therefore, many feminist researchers wanting to highlight everyday life have found methodological support in interpretative forms of inquiry entailing qualitative methods (Jensen and Jankowski 1991; 57). An interpretative approach can loosely be defined as all research traditions that start from the way human beings experience, define, organize, and appropriate 'reality'. It addresses the desire of feminist researchers to avoid new or at least minimize the inequalities between the researcher and the researched, and presumes that data gathering follows the definitions and interpretative schemes of informants. Feminists with a critical orientation tend to employ qualitative research methods, while those with a traditional social science background often use quantitative ones.

Moreover, the notion of gender in this study is influenced by feminist post-structuralism, as unstable and contradictory, and constructed in social and cultural practices and discourses, which calls for a research strategy that is open for participants' own formulations and understandings in their making sense of texts. It requires a methodological approach that can account for the unpredictability and the ambiguous processes involved in the construction of meaning. An interpretative research strategy is sensitive to human interactions as well as to the structure of meaning arising from texts (van Zoonen 1994; 131). A fixed questionnaire (audience) or a codebook (media texts) with a fixed set of

problems, issues, and categories can not grasp something that is variable, unstable, and contradictory, often unconscious and taken for granted in everyday life or implicitly embedded in the structure of texts.

In the area of mass media research, discourse analysis has grown as an alternative to the classical content analysis (c.f. Krippendorff 1980), but the number of systematic discourse studies is still limited (Van Dijk 1991; 109). Discourse analysis can loosely be defined as a systematic and explicit study of the structures and social or cultural functions of media messages, understood as specific types of text and talk (van Dijk 1991; 108). Scholars working with this kind of analysis suggest that stories and arguments draw on a relatively fixed repertoire of linguistic strategies, combining premises and conclusions, assertions and substantiation, scenes, actors, and themes (Coulthard and Montgomery 1981). The task of the analyst is to bring out the whole range of possible meanings, which might encourage or limit the possibilities of interpretations or privilege certain meanings above others (e.g. gender definitions). Moreover, as a researcher, it is my task to understand the processes behind the possible meanings. For instance, a particular construction of gender might draw upon a commercial or feminist discourse, or reflect contradictions in the production as well as outside changes and pressures (politically, economically, and culturally). Finally, it is the job of the researcher to discover the ideological implications that arise from these interpretations in the context of development.

All in all, it is my suggestion that the intersection between media's discourse and women's/gender NGOs' discourse and the media-audience nexus can lead to valuable knowledge about the role of the media in the cultural struggle of gender transformation and potential for socio-cultural change. An interactive analysis of texts cum audiences may lead to theoretical insights regarding the socio-cultural functions of media texts in development by linking macro-discursive foundations to micro-processes of interpretation and identity formation. Moreover, I have chosen an interpretative research strategy that employs qualitative methods, which allows for making women's lives visible and their voices heard. It is less authoritative and top-down, more participatory and bottom-up, valuing women as agents of knowledge. This is important in a development setting in order to confront imperialistic relations, and is more in tune with ideas in receiver-centered approaches to development than a quantitative survey with fixed categories and answers would be (c.f. Chapter 4.2). However, the researcher still has control over most of the research process; the initial questions, interpretation, and presentation of the results. Furthermore, the researcher is part of the interview situation, which probably affects the respondents and their answers, which I shall return to at several points in this chapter.

3.2 Field materials

An important assumption in this thesis is that the construction of meaning is framed between its producers and audiences – based upon some form of negotiation (c.f. Chapter 2.2). Hence, I have found it important to account for both different media texts and audiences' use and interpretation. I have conducted a series of personal interviews with women, men, and youths to illuminate the social aspects of communication; and subsequently, I carried out reception interviews to account for actual interpretations. The biggest advantage of groups versus individual interviews is that human interaction between the group participants is an important stimulus for discussion, reflection and putting thoughts into words. In everyday life, the normative order underlying behaviors and opinions are rarely articulated. It is part of our assumed stock of knowledge, which forms the basis of social action (Schutz 1964; Berger and Luckmann 1966). The very force of these normative influences on the collectivity may lie partly in their unexamined character (Bourdieu 1977). A focus group situation may provide the occasion and the stimulus for collective members to articulate those normally unarticulated normative assumptions. As argued by Bloor et al. (2001; 6): "The group is a socially legitimated occasion for participants to engage in 'retrospective introspection' to attempt collectively to tease out previously taken for granted assumptions. This teasing out may... yield up as much rich data on group norms as long periods of ethnographic fieldwork." It also makes clear that the cultural norms or rules of conduct are essentially conditional and defeasible.

In the next pages, I discuss the selection of media texts and participants, which applies to both the personal interviews and the focus groups, before I return to how I carried out the group discussions.

Selecting media texts and genre conventions

The strategy behind the selection of texts may be termed as purposeful selection. I have aimed at finding sets of texts where the defining of femininity, norms of behavior, and women's role and status in society are central. Furthermore, I have chosen texts that readers are likely to interpret in light of their own lives or that will generate themes of public interest that can provoke some reactions, emotions, or attitudes towards women or gender. The political-economic sphere and marital-kinship organization constitute important contextual frameworks that influence cultural notions of gender. Thus, I have chosen two different genres, news and Swahili plays, which involve two different media - newspapers and television, respectively. While news plays an important role in the public sphere, Swahili plays can be characterized as everyday drama taking place within the domestic or private sphere. The basic setting of the plays has generated a set of themes and relationship,

typically relating to different aspects of marriage and kinship. According to Ortner and Whitehead (1981; 10) marriage and kinship organization stand out as one of the most important contexts in which gender ideology is produced and reproduced. Both news and Swahili plays are popular genres among Tanzanians and meet the criteria for relevance and interest (c.f. Chapter 5.3).

News and Swahili plays generate different expectations as to how to find meaning in them, and what sorts of enjoyment and kinds of knowledge to expect from them. From audiences' point of view, news is probably the genre that is most connected to reality - a window on the world. According to Höijer (1996; 9-11) news is expected to be interpretable as meaningful reports about reality, about ongoing events in the world, all of which are perceived as facts (things that have happened). The power of news lies in its perception, because even when news is considered as biased, it is perceived as a representation of reality. The reality status of a genre seems to increase the emotional involvement; for instance, strong feelings can be evoked by violent news such as gender violence and child abuse. News is oriented towards the argumentative or pragmatic mode of thinking in which facts and figures, propositions, and arguments are common. In the interpretation of news we refer to understandings about public persons or social and political phenomena in the public sphere, generalize, draw conclusions, and build opinions (Höijer 1996; 15).

Swahili plays can be divided into two sub-genres; comedy (*vichekesho*) and drama (*maigizo*). I have chosen to concentrate on Swahili plays in the mode of what can be identified as social-realistic drama. Social-realistic fiction is typically characterized by expectations that are based on what is believed to be plausible in different socio-cultural contexts in the real world. According to Höijer (1996; 8) audiences expect that fiction in a social-realistic mode will be meaningful as imaginary, but also as materialized accounts of some reality (things that could happen). In contrast to news, television drama provides a narration of the world in which human destinies are depicted in concrete space- and time-bound situations (Höijer 1996; 5). Frames of reference used to interpret the social-realistic genre are likely to emanate from the viewer's cultural and personal experiences and understandings from everyday life. The narrative form is a basic mental mode of the mind that we use daily in encounters with others. In both personal and mass mediated communication, the narrative form is important in our identity building and our never-ending interpretation and understanding of the world. Swahili plays operating within the social-realistic mode are likely to entail a high degree of involvement and generalization, through identification, recognition, and personal memories. They have a strong potential to play an important part in an audience's personal identity building. The plays can be described as a genre that invites spectators to learn something about being a

human being or as an individual in a culture. By interpreting others and taking part in how they solve their dilemmas we may enrich our own lives.

In short, news and Swahili plays can be seen to contribute to the construction of a gender discourse in different ways, both of which are important in the cultural struggle over defining and prescribing the meaning of gender. While news generates themes of public interest or activates our attitudes towards the social world, Swahili plays are more important in the development of individual identities or mediate between the individual and culture. Below, I describe the material in more detail.

Media texts 1: Representations of women in the news discourse

In order to obtain a general picture of how representations of women are manifested in the news discourse, I have chosen to cover a wide range of newspapers over a two-week period. Newspapers have an important role to play in the political discourse of the country, for business news, and development policy in general. This is a sphere that to a large extent has been dominated by men and male ideas. On the one hand, newspapers can represent a conservative social force by legitimizing men's position in this sphere and by excluding women or drawing boundaries between women's and men's spheres of action. On the other hand, newspapers can be at the forefront of the struggle for gender transformation by challenging dominant discourse by providing space for alternative representations of women. For instance, newspapers can give coverage to women who are acting for the social good or as social coordinators in the public sphere; in roles as politicians, administrators, businesswomen, activists, and so on.

I have included both English and Swahili newspapers. In general, English newspapers appear to play an important role in the serious press, with the goal of being a major institution in political and social life (e.g. the *Guardian*, *Business Times*, and *Daily News*). The serious press is expected to contain high quality information that informs, educates, and promotes democratic values. There is also more coverage of non-governmental organizations in the English newspapers than in the Swahili press (Lange et al. 2000). Most of the Swahili newspapers can be classified as part of the commercial press, which operates mainly for profit, and are known to be lighter, more sensational and entertaining, focusing upon scandals and stories of human interest (e.g. *Kasheshe*, *Sanifu*, and *Heko*). Still, there are also examples of Swahili papers that are more serious and ideologically oriented (e.g. *Majira*, *Nipashe*, and *Mtanzania*) and English papers that are more oriented towards entertainment (e.g. the *Express*). The Swahili press has a much wider readership and is more likely to reach and be understood by the grassroots (c.f. Chapter 5.3). Nonetheless, many feminists have attacked the Swahili press for turning women into objects of male pleasure and violence, in an attempt to increase their sales (c.f. Chapter 5.1).

In total I have covered 14 newspapers, including Sunday editions, which I systematically followed during a two-week period, from September 8th - 21st 1997. Nine newspapers are Swahili papers and five are English papers². All of the newspapers were commonly found in newspaper stands in Dar es Salaam. The selection includes the most popular English and Swahili newspapers – the *Guardian* and the *Daily News*, and *Majira*, *Nipashe* and *Mtanzania*, respectively (c.f. Chapter 5.3). The selection of newspapers represents the government and the opposition, the serious press, and the commercial press that specialized in entertainment news and fan events. The most extreme entertainment papers like *Kashese* and *Sanifu* have not been included. The newspapers were screened for content concerning women or stories concerning relationships between women and men, counting totally for 415 articles. Due to the large number of articles, I have classified them by theme: society, gender-based violence and sexual offenses, love/sex relationships (mostly fiction stories), and extraordinary women (Princess Diana and Mother Theresa). From this categorization, I have selected the first two groups for further analysis, which again are divided into sub-categories (c.f. Chapter 6). The number of articles calls for a more superficial analysis than what is required with the other sets of texts included in this research. Even though the analysis is of qualitative nature it also carries quantitative elements. The model used in my analysis of the media texts is presented in Chapter 3.3.

I chose the two-week period in September because of an event that I wanted to follow: The Second Annual Gender Studies Conference'97 (AGSC'97), organized by the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP). The event took place at the University of Dar es Salaam. One advantage of choosing this period is that it forms a basis for assessing the amount of media coverage that this kind of events constitutes in the overall news picture. During the two-week-period, five newspapers covered the AGSC'97 events, totaling 15 articles³.

An issue to be addressed is whether the two weeks in September 1997 are representative of the portrayal of women in newspapers. An alternative would have been to construct one week from a random sample of newspaper copies; for example, from a pool of 14 newspapers equivalent to a year (14 newspapers x 7 days = 98 newspapers). This would have been very time-consuming, not at least because I would had to go back in time to collect selected papers at different newspaper companies. My fieldwork was scheduled to last for eight months including one month in Zanzibar for language education⁴. At the time, I had had some experience with collecting previous editions from newspaper companies,

² See Appendix B for further details.

³ In addition, radio and television stations in both news bulletins and other current affair programs covered the conference. See Appendix C for complete inventory listings.

⁴ Due to different circumstances I was later able to extend the fieldwork period to 10 months.

which had proven to be both time-consuming and partly unsuccessful. Hence, I decided to systematically cover 14 newspapers over the two-week period, which enabled me to cover the AGSC'97 event and to get a general picture of the portrayal of women in the newspapers. I believe that the advantages of this choice, seen in light of the goals of this thesis, outweigh the disadvantages. An overall goal of my thesis is to get a better understanding of the role of the media in the construction of gender, and a random sample could break up the totality and hinder a holistic understanding. Still, it is important to note that two unexpected and exceptional events did occur in this period; the death of Princess Diana and Mother Theresa. I have, therefore, separated these events as extraordinary events (c.f. Chapter 6).

Media texts 2: Gender-based violence and sexual offences

It is a goal of this thesis to embrace the possibility that oppositional or alternative discourses might develop and challenge prevailing definitions of gender in addition to dominant representations of women. I have therefore chosen the newspaper coverage of one specific event conducted by a prominent women's NGO with close ties to the media. The material consists of one major event: the Tanzanian Media Women's Association's (TAMWA) Symposium on Gender Violence held for Members of Parliament (MPs) in Dodoma in July 1997. TAMWA is at the forefront of women's struggle for liberation and the most visible women's non-governmental organization in Tanzania. The Symposium has been described as historic due to the large number of MPs participating in a 'private' debate. The Symposium aimed to sensitize MPs about the magnitude of gender-based violence and child abuse in the country. The event was part of a broader program, "Sensitization, Advocacy and Lobbying to break free of gender violence 1997-1999" initiated by TAMWA with the objective of eradicating violent acts by sensitizing and providing information on gender-based violence.

Gender violence, rape, and sexual abuse against women and children have become daily stories in the newspapers in which women are often portrayed as victims. An issue is whether TAMWA's efforts to put gender violence on the political agenda provide alternative representations of women fighting for their rights that might challenge dominant definitions of women as passive and victimized. TAMWA characteristically uses the mass media for sensitizing purposes. At the time of my fieldwork, the TAMWA Symposium received more media coverage than any previous event initiated by a women's/gender NGO. During a two-week period, from 15th to 31st of July 1997, 12 newspapers covered the event with a total of 35 articles, plus some pictures and cartoons⁵. TAMWA provided me with the articles.

⁵ The TAMWA Symposium also benefited from frequent reports and programming in radio and television. See Appendix D for inventory listing.

Both TAMWA and TGNP represent a force in producing and redefining definitions of gender and interpreting women's status in the society. The events included in this research are seen as significant moments in a women's movement in Tanzania. Both organizations have the same overall goal of liberating women from all kinds of oppression, but the two groups have focused on different topics and use different means to achieve their goals. While TAMWA has concentrated their efforts on gender violence; TGNP has concentrated their efforts on gender in resource allocation, especially in health, education, and land. TGNP stands out because of their ability to cooperate across different women's/gender NGOs and other institutions. TAMWA is in a unique position in their relation to the mass media, since their members are journalists working in different media. This is reflected in a more extensive media strategy as well as more intense media coverage of their activities. Also, I followed the work of TAMWA and TGNP for nearly a year, and participated in several meetings and activities so as to get a solid understanding of their work, issues, and ideas.

Media texts 3: Gender representations in TV drama: Marriage and kinship

The fall of socialism allowed for the introduction of television in mainland Tanzania, and as such constitutes a new aspect of the symbolic environment. Swahili plays are popular, especially among women at the grassroots level (c.f. Chapter 5.3). The plays can be seen as a continuation of the live cultural drama as developed by commercial cultural groups in the late 1980s. The privately owned cultural groups defined and developed existing genres to escape political control and to deal with issues that were of concern to urban people during times of modernization and restructuring of the state. With the introduction of television, Swahili plays reached new audiences and have gradually adapted to middle class tastes.

Dar es Salaam Television (DTV) was apparently the first station to produce Swahili plays in 1994. The plays proved to be very popular and soon all the stations featured weekly episodes. The distinction between *vichekesho* (comedy) and *maigizo* (drama) from live variety shows has been continued in the new media and each of the four channels produced a weekly comedy and drama (Lange 2002; 144). While the established live cultural groups and actors were welcomed by television stations in the beginning, because they brought experience from live performances, a new generation is increasingly taking over. The new groups consist of actors that are younger, educated, and more sophisticated and more aligned with middle class tastes and the directors' preferences. In contrast, actors from the live groups have little or no formal education, but have years of experience from the live popular theatre in which they took pride in educating people and 'giving lessons from life'. While artists with their background in the live theatre tend to have more success with

comedies (*King Majuto*, *Mzee Small*, and *Bracco*), the newer groups exclusively produce drama (*maigizo*). One thing they all have in common is that the actors continue the tradition from the live theatre in using the same personal stage name in all the plays. As a rule the groups write the plays themselves, under the control of the director of the television company, which explains the continuance of themes that are found in the live plays.

Table 3.1 Selection of Swahili plays

Title	Theme	TV-channel	Cultural group
The Telegram Marriage (Ndoya ya Telegram)*	Arranged vs. love marriages	CTN, 8 January 1998	Splendid Theatre
Christmas Day (Kristmas Day)	Infidelity	CTN; Kitendawili (Are You Listening?) 25 December 1997	Tanza Theatre
Greed (Tamaa)	Gold-digger girl - lesson learned	ITV; Mambo Haya (Those Matters), 20 December 1997.	4 for You
How Do You Raise the Child? (Mtoto Umleavyo)*	Upbringing	CTN; Kitendawili 23 September 1997	Tanza Theatre
The Domestic Servant (Mtumishi wa Ndani)*	Urban/traditional tensions	ITV, Mambo Haya 29 November 1997	4 for You

* Plays marked with a star have appeared in different versions in 1997/98 with a different ending.

The material includes five plays produced by Cable Television Network (CTN) and Independent Television (ITV), which are both privately owned commercial television channels based in Dar es Salaam (see table above). The plays are all in the genre of drama and have been produced by the newer groups; Tanza Theatre (2), Splendid Theatre Troupe (1), and 4 for You (2). 4 for You is the most popular and well-known of the newer groups. However, in 1999, when the group had been with ITV for two years it was decided to transform *Mambo Haya* into a soap format using the same actors. The program was renamed *Nyota* (Star) and ITV hired a Kenyan expert to direct it, as no Tanzanian had experience with this kind of production. With this development, Swahili television drama has become further removed from the live theatre tradition (Lange 2002; 164).

The limited number of plays enables me to go relatively deeply into the structure and narrative transmission of the texts, and to contextualize the interpretations by using reception interviews for the same plays. A question to be addressed is whether the plays challenge audiences to re-examine dominant values and thereby trigger cultural resistance against the prevailing beliefs, oppressive structures and attitudes towards women. In order to counterbalance issues of representation, I have included themes that are recurrent topics for the Swahili

genre, which are concerned with the dialectic between modern and traditional notions of marriage, lovers and unfaithfulness, and issues surrounding the upbringing and situations concerning girls, such as pregnant teenagers and lack of education. Conflicts and tensions between the country and the city permeate several of the plays. A characteristic of the Swahili plays is that variations on the same themes and storylines are 'played' over and over again - sometimes with different outcomes even when the play is produced by the same group. Moreover, I will use Lange's (2002) analysis of the Swahili plays as a basis for comparison, because she conducted her fieldwork during the same period. This should enable me to assess whether my findings are representative for the genre in question.

All in all, the three sets of texts should provide a substantial account of mainstream images of women as well as alternative voices in the fight for women's rights, thereby providing a picture of how the media channel and restrict gender transformation. I have included media texts from different media channels (newspapers and television) and genres (news versus fiction). The different type of texts represents various dimensions or elements in an overall gender discourse in the media.

Selecting participants

A distinct feature of this thesis, one having a significant bearing on the selection of participants, is its combination of personal- and focus group interviews. I attempted to use the same participants for both kinds of interviews in order to get a holistic understanding and to ease the process of recruitment and access to the informants. Hence, I emphasized the creation of group compositions in the selection of interviewees from the start. The alternative would have been to operate with two different sets of interviewees, which would have doubled the work burden. It is not common to select participants for focus groups by means of systematic random sampling, as the success of the group depends on the dynamic between the group members (c.f. Bloor et al. 2001). The objective of the reception interviews was to facilitate a discussion so as to allow ideas, thoughts, emotions, and frames of reference to evolve as we went along in the process of reception. A key issue in the composition of the groups, therefore, is interaction between the participants. So as to create successful groups where the participants would feel comfortable interacting and able to have an in-depth discussion of topics, I chose to use pre-existing groups. Prior knowledge of the other participants of the group makes participation appear a less daunting task than gathering in a group of strangers. In an African context, I think this point is of particular importance, because the small social group is the basic unit of social arrangement, not at least among women who in general participate in fewer networks than men. A random sample of interviewees would have been an obstacle to obtaining a natural composition of the groups. One consequence of

this approach is that the group agenda determines a cluster approach to both kinds of interviews.

To make group discussions work, there is a range of issues to consider in regard to participant characteristics with respect to the topic of discussion, as well as recruitment strategies and access (Bloor et al. 2001; 19). In identifying and delimiting the groups, I have combined two strategies. First, I picked clusters of people who I thought could give me insight into my research issues. Second, I tried to compose the groups so they would mirror some factors in the urban population, as a way to provide a 'realistic' picture and reduce systematic biases in the selection of participants. In urban centers, the majority of women are found in the informal sector engaged in minor trading or in the service sector as nurses, teachers, and secretaries. This is reflected in my choice of participants. Furthermore, I have included both women and men, although not in equal numbers, because in the context of my thesis, women's experiences are more important than men's experiences. I also stressed the inclusion of different age groups, including youths, people in their 30s and 40s, and people over 50.

Moreover, I emphasized internal homogeneity so as to reduce the risk of conflicts and distress and to avoid silencing group members (c.f. Bloor et al. 2001; 20). Findings from previous studies show that consistency in terms of social status is an important criterion for creating successful groups (e.g. Michell 1999). Common characteristics that are considered in composing homogeneous and productive groups are sex, ethnicity or race, religion, age, and background in shared experiences. People who share many of the same experiences, interests, and forms of discourse often share a common framework for making sense of the media as well. Also, the homogeneity of the groups allows for a comparison of group opinions and interpretations. I have applied as far as possible the following criteria: sex, age, education, occupation, and material status⁶. Segregating the groups in terms of gender is an absolute criterion. Nonetheless, focus groups are a socially dynamic situation and thus to some extent will be unpredictable.

Textbooks typically advise that focus groups with between six and eight participants are an optimum size for discussions. However, groups have been reported to range in size from as little as three to as many as fourteen participants

⁶ Initially, I also thought of religion as a variable to create group consistency as well as segregating them externally. However, I found that this was not a natural criterion, because Muslims and Christians live and work side by side (c.f. Chapter 1.3). For instance, among the secretaries working for the same employer there were two Christians, one Baptist, and one Muslim. I therefore discarded this as criteria. In the urban population as a whole it is recon that Christians and Muslims constitute 33 percent each. In my material, Christians are somewhat overrepresented (39 percent) while Muslims (31 percent) are underrepresented, and even more so among the women. This might be explained by that more Christian women work outside the home while Muslim customs hinder many Muslim women of any activity outside the house and thereby are underrepresented among working women (employment and self-employment).

(e.g. Pugsley 1996, Thomas 1999). Decisions concerning both group size and number of groups have to be made in regard to the research issues and objective of the discussions as well as within the context of practical constraints. I planned for small social groups in order to stimulate human interaction between the group participants, which I hoped would allow the participants to go relatively deeply into the topics as the process of reception was evolving. As part of a small group, female respondents can feel free to express their opinions and at the same time feel secure in their anonymity. Additionally, there are also some practical considerations in regard to venue and transport, which I shall return to below.

Table 3.2 Group characteristics, recruitment approach and use of intermediaries

Groups	Recruitment approach	Connection	Personal interview	Reception interview
House girls	Individual	Same building	My home	My home
Barmaids	Intermediary	Work place	My home	My home
Nursery school teachers (f)	Intermediary	Work place/ organization	Work place	-
Secretaries (f)	Intermediary	Work place	Work place	My home
Female petty traders*	Intermediary	Organization	Organization	My home
Female youths; incl. teenage mothers	Intermediary	Organization	Organization	-
Male youths	Intermediary	Organization	Organization	-
Male petty traders	Individual	Same street	My home	My home
Tourist coach agents (m)	Individual	Same locality	My home**	My home
Bankers (m)	Intermediary	Work place	Work place	My home
Female activists	Individual	NGO community	Organization	-
Male activists	Individual	NGO community	Organization	-

* Female petty traders/small-scale business women include one group ages 36-39 and one group 50-59.

** The interviews with the tourist coach workers were conducted in my hotel room located nearby their work place, prior to the time when I rented a room in Gerezani.

At the same as it has been important to keep group consistency, it has been of no less importance for the aims of the research issues to explore a range of views and interpretations among different segments in the Dar es Salaam society. As already pointed out, the construction of meaning and subject positions taken depend on the social, cultural, and subjective experiences of the audiences involved. Using small social groups has enabled me to include clusters of people from all walks of life, and thus to gain access to diversity. In total, I have conducted 51 personal interviews (32 females and 19 males) including male and female youths, teenage mothers, barmaids, house girls, nursery school teachers, female and male petty traders, tourist coach workers, secretaries, bankers, and female and male gender activists⁷. Moreover, I have conducted eight group

⁷ See Appendix I for list of people interviewed.

discussions consisting of 3-4 participants in each group (see Table 3.2 above). The range of participants reflects my interest in covering diverse groups of women and men with different economic and social status as well as with widely divergent affiliations with the NGO community. The interviewees resided in different locations of Dar es Salaam, living in more than 19 residential areas, including planned and unplanned, first to third class neighborhoods (see Map 2, p. 10).⁸ They also had their roots in different parts of Tanzania, from north to south, and west to east, covering 14 out of 19 regions.

Kitzinger and Barbour (1999) note that the degree of control researchers have over the relevant characteristics of individuals in their groups and of the exact composition of the groups reflect circumstances as well as planning. By recruiting members from pre-existing groups, there will always be some variations in age, educational background, occupation, and marital status, which is also the case in this study. Then again, some diversity in the group can be healthy for encouraging discussions. Also, I attempted to include four participants in each group, but due to different circumstances this was not possible for the house girls and tourist coach agents.

Recruitment strategies and getting access

I managed to create a natural composition of the groups by deciding on an institutional connection such as women's organizations, other associations, or a joint workplace. This also enabled me to approach many of the group members collectively via an intermediary, which saved time in an otherwise very labor-intensive research design including several sources of data. In general, an intermediary is an eligible individual at a chosen recruitment site who is willing to recruit suitable members of their own existing network to take part in the research, which has proven to be particularly successful for the recruitment of groups (Bloor 2001; 31). I got in touch with the small-scale business women, mostly petty traders in the informal sector, through SERO Women in Business, which is an NGO offering business training and loans for women. I contacted youths, including teenage mothers, through Temeke Youth Center run by UMATI (an NGO concerned with health issues, family planning and child care), and finally I found nursery school teachers through Young Women Catholic Association (which runs schools, nursery, and hostels). In approaching these organizations, with which I had had no prior contact, I used a formal approach where I addressed and got consent from people in leading positions in the organizations.

In approaching some of the other groups, I used my own existing network (see also Madriz 1998). Secretaries, bankers, and tourist coach workers were located in the city center, working in companies I previously had had some contact with.

⁸ See also Sporrek 1985; 72 for classification of neighbourhoods in Dar es Salaam.

Other groups were identified in my neighborhood, Kariakoo/Gerezani, which is a typically Swahili neighborhood. The male petty traders (carpentry), the barmaids, and the house girls were all located there. For the secretaries, bankers, and barmaids, I used their boss as a contact point, which also allowed for the interviewees to participate in the research during work time without losing pay. The house girls (working in the same building), male petty traders (located in the same street), and the tourist couch agents (located at the same bus station) I had to approach individually as they had no common contact person. In addressing the gender activists (males and females) I went through their respective organizations, but I approached them on an individual basis as I wanted members from different organizations. I started with activists/NGOs I already knew and they helped me expand my contacts to other eligible persons in other NGOs. These individuals did not all belong to women's/gender NGOs, but they all dealt with gender activist issues (involving in total six organizations).

Some scholars argue that difficulties in recruitment are the most common source of failure in focus group research (Morgan 1995). With this in mind, I found that using my own existing network (in which I would be less of a stranger) and using established and serious organizations and companies with eligible intermediaries worked well for this research. All the recruits who resulted from collective efforts that I made came through, and with one exception they stayed the course to the end. The barmaids 'quit' after the personal interviews, because they were unhappy with the little compensation they were promised after the group discussion was conducted. I should add that I didn't have a prior relationship with the intermediary for this group, which probably influenced his efforts. After this group failed to attend the group discussion, I arranged for a new group of barmaids from another bar in the same neighborhood. In general, it was harder to motivate people individually to participate in the research, especially groups that had no prior connection with the women's movement. It took more work and more follow-up efforts to ensure their attendance. These were also the most informal arrangements.

What I found of particular value with the pre-existing groups that I reached via an intermediary was the efforts that the participants showed in both the personal interview and the group discussion. It was a task they all appeared to take very seriously and it produced good results in terms of the debates and discussions that followed. The use of an intermediary who had more authority than the participants might have also given participants a feeling that they were obligated to attend; however, I was never under the impression that any of the participants were ever pressured into participating. The only group that seemed somewhat uncomfortable with the task was the house girls, whom I approached one by one. For this group I found it particularly important to bring my local assistant at all stages and to do whatever we could to make it less frightening.

Moreover, participation in a research project raises the question of economic compensation. While payment is usually not considered in qualitative research out of fear that this will introduce a bias, some scholars argue that the dangers of making payments can be outweighed by the gains in compensating for power differentials between the researcher and researched (Thompson 1998). In the Southern African region, it is not uncommon to pay interviewees, and certainly to cover any expenses related to the interview. As noted by others, it can be hard to motivate people to participate without compensation if the culture does not encourage voluntary work (Lange 2000; 21). The question of money also depends on how time-consuming the participation is; in my research, participation typically entailed approximately one hour for the individual interview and two hours for the group discussion. Under these circumstances, providing remuneration to the participants can help them to avoid feeling that they have wasted their time, or that they are being used; it furthermore makes them feel that their time and efforts are valued. In turn, this can have positive effects for the interviewing process in terms of the efforts made. Yet, participants who are in it exclusively for the money can have a negative effect on the research process in terms of providing answers they think the researcher wants to hear or by being disinterested and inattentive. In order to balance these pros and cons, as well as what was possible within the limits of my budget, I decided to give the participants minor compensation in form of traveling money after completing the group discussions. Overall, it was not hard to convince people to accept the arrangement, and it is my impression that people answered truthfully and understood that what I wanted was their experiences and opinions and not polite or politically correct answers.

Venues and getting there

When possible I used existing meeting times and venues in order to facilitate a dialog that was as natural as possible and to minimize the researcher's influence. This also meant that participants didn't have to leave their work place or organization and thus involved less efforts traveling. It not only saved for them, but also for me. For instance, I held all the personal interviews with the small scale business women in SERO's locale at a time the women would be there anyway. Over the course of 3-4 hours my female assistant and I were able to conduct eight interviews. For the house girls, barmaids, and male petty traders it was not possible to find a suitable room on their locations, so I arranged for these groups to come to my home (room) in Gerezani. However, this didn't represent any logistical problems as they were all located in my neighborhood.

For the reception interviews, it was more difficult to accomplish the discussions at the participants' respective work place or organizational connection due to the technical equipment (television and video) and the need for quiet and space. Hence, these interviews were carried out in my home. In order to ease logistical

problems and to keep the attrition rate low, I organized transport for the groups who had to travel to come to the location. I would meet them at an arranged time at their work place or organization and brought them to the venue by taxi. Using pre-existing groups was a great benefit, because I could gather the participants collectively and not one by one. Getting back home they had to take public transport, but then again I had given them transport money. For all the groups, I also made a last reminder either by phone call or by stopping by their work place or organization depending on their location. In the African setting, I preferred and often had no choice than making the extra effort to contact people in person. Even though this involved a lot of leg work and trips on hot and sometimes overcrowded buses, it was more effective.

Conducting the interviews

This section addresses the techniques I used in the conduct of the reception interviews, which resulted from their special nature. First, however, I will give a brief outline of the personal interviews. The interviews had a semi-structure allowing for the participants to formulate their experiences in their own words. A semi-structured interview is characterized by the fact that the topics are pre-defined; and normally an interview guide is employed⁹. An advantage of this interview form is that it gives the researcher flexibility and the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, and request clarifications and elaborations (Østbye et al. 2002; 102). Also, I attempted to avoid imposing gender as a theme in the first part of the interviews. I started the conversation by asking concrete questions related to media access and media use so as to help the informants open up and feel comfortable with the interview situation. Subsequently, I asked them to tell me about problems or concerns that the participants were facing in their everyday life and issues that they found important in the society. As the interviews proceeded more reflective or critical questions were pushed to the foreground, where I directed the attention to women/girls versus men/boys situation in the society as well as their perception of the media's portrayal of women (if not already done so by the interviewees). Then, I concluded the interviews with personal background information. In addition, the interviews with gender activists include sections concerned with NGOs' position in the women's movement; NGOs' relationship to the media; and men's position in a women's movement.

The group discussions were carried out on the basis of the Swahili plays. This decision was based on the importance of engendering interpretations of the plays in the context in which they are produced and consumed. In contrast to news, this genre is specific to African culture and a product of Tanzania's history. As such, the plays can be seen as a symbol of the transformation of the society from African socialism to capitalism, often entailing ambivalent cultural meanings.

⁹ See Appendix G for interview guide – personal interview.

Gender relations are typically used in the Swahili plays to express condensed urban tensions and problems that arise between modern and traditional norms, values, and ways of life. Hence, this genre touches on a core issue in this thesis: how the media comes to grips with conflicts and negotiations that arise in the process of modernization. The reception interviews allow for the exploration of text-viewer relations, how these plays are understood by different groups of women and men, and how they might reveal group norms and meanings underlying the topics evolving in the new social and economic situation. In selecting the particular texts, I emphasized factors that were likely to stimulate discussions among the participants in light of their own cultural and personal experiences and understandings from everyday life. In line with this, I varied the plays in regard to group characteristics and expected interests.¹⁰ The plays engaged the participants in lively discussions and provoked emotions within the context of Tanzanians everyday life.

I applied a semi-structured arrangement for these interviews, moving from open-ended questions to more focused and projected questions. The thinking behind this arrangement was that the group participants would themselves generate themes perceived as important rather than having the researcher impose an immediate focus on gender.¹¹ After a brief introduction of my project, I started the reception interviews by viewing a sequence from one of the selected plays. I followed up by asking open questions related to the sequence, such as: “What is your impression of what I just showed you? What was it about?” After showing the same scene again, I moved on to more specific questions concerning gender in an attempt to understand how gender serves as a reference for interpretation. I asked questions such as: “What do you think of the relations between the woman and the man portrayed in the picture? Is it a typical situation for a woman (man) to be in?” During the third round, I did not show them the sequence again, but went on to highlight the personal experience of the participants. I asked participants if they or anyone they you knew had had similar experiences, and whether the situation was familiar. I tried to formulate the questions in this sequence in form of projected questions. For example, I approached an issue by using earlier statements from the participants or just ‘some people’ claim that this situation is common for a woman to be in.

During the reception interviews, the group dynamics probably contributed to toning down the researcher-respondent relationship so that it became horizontal and de-emphasized my role as a white western researcher. I tried to present my role more as a facilitator than an interviewer. My Tanzanian assistant handled the technical and practical side of the group discussions, which also eased the

¹⁰ See Appendix F for list over the Swahili plays and group exposure.

¹¹ See Appendix H for interview guide for the group discussions. The structure of the interview guide is largely based upon Birgitta Höijer, 1992, 1996.

interview situation. As Bloor et al. (2001;49) argue, the focus group facilitator is not a marginal figure in the group, as an ethnographer might be, but the ideal position of a facilitator is to be a background figure more than a foreground figure. Group interaction of certain groups may be distorted by too much external control. Still, it was important to steer the focus of discussion in wanted direction, and to allow for a diversity of views and experiences, as well as to pull everybody into the debates that evolved.

For the participants to express themselves freely and to feel comfortable, I also let them choose what language to speak, even though some of them would speak English fairly well. In groups where language represented a barrier, my assistant carried out the discussions (and personal interviews) and I was the technical facilitator. In addition, I served sodas and snacks to make the discussions into a small social ‘happening’ and to make the participants feel welcome. Furthermore, I tried to make the relationship between the researcher and researched less work-supervisor oriented by positioning myself as the student who needed to learn and who wanted them to share their experiences with me. I stressed that all views would be equally important. Also, I tried to tone down the gender aspect in introducing my project in order to not scare anybody away and to avoid getting answers in which the respondents were ‘trying to say the right thing’.

Analysis and presentation

I used audio recording with both personal interviews and group discussions. Subsequently, all recordings were transcribed and when needed, translated into English, which later formed the basis for the analyses. The main benefit of audio recordings and transcription is that it avoids pitfalls of inaccurate and selective manual recording and recall by the facilitator or interviewer, and thus helps to increase the reliability of the data (Bloor et al. 2001; 42, Ryen 2002; 181). I stressed the importance of ‘unedited’ transcriptions; these not only showed the verbal conversations word-by-word, but also indicated hesitations, silences, interruptions and unfinished sentences, as a way to help me recall how the interviews and discussions worked out. The accuracy of the transcripts has been priceless, especially as these were not analyzed until long after they were conducted. Below, I describe how I approached and made sense of these data as well as how they have been applied in this dissertation, starting with the personal interviews and subsequently the focus group discussions.

Data extracts of the personal interviews are used throughout this thesis for the purpose of illustration and elaboration, to support arguments, demonstrate tendencies, and add to the contextual understanding of the research issues. For instance, in chapters 4 and 5, data extracts from the interviews contribute to enrich the background of the research area in the form of individual testimonies. The segments are embedded in the text or separated by indenting the extracts in

form of verbal statements typically following an argument and a discursive commentary.¹² The main mechanism for the selection of these extracts has been purposive, although there are moments in which I use the interview material in a more systematic manner, especially when there is little literature to build the arguments upon (e.g. Chapter 4.3). Also, data extracts carry analytical aspects as I view statements within a wider social context or analytical framework, sometimes comparing them with other interview statements or commenting whether they are typical, or recur among special groups of interviewees, or are deviant. In addition, I have used interviewee statements in discussing the findings from the textual analyses (Chapter 6 and 7). I have chosen to restrict the use of data extracts from the interviews to the last sections of these chapters due to structural reasons and due to the nature of these statements. The participants' comments do not point directly to issues in the texts included in the analyses, but are interesting as emerging themes converge with the ones in the discourse analyses.

The most systematic analysis of the personal interviews is to be found in Chapter 5.3 in which parts of the interviews form the basis for an analysis of media use, choice and reading strategies, and then are juxtaposed to the extent the participants are aware of gender issues and cultural attitudes towards women. The most important question in this analysis is whether media choice and readings strategies may entail empowering elements for women (and men) that can be the seeds for change in the cultural struggle of gender transformation. In looking for patterns in the material, I have found it productive to keep the original group compositions. Also, sex and to some extent age and education are important factors in identifying patterns of media use that cross-cut the group boundaries.

In order to make sense of the vast amount of raw data, some kind of organization is needed. In the search for categories or themes, I first made summaries of the interviews according to group identification following the chronological order of the interview guide/data collection (c. f. Holliday 2002; 103, Ryen 2002; 145).¹³ The summaries involve a data reduction from approximately 800 pages of raw data to 26 pages. Moreover, I copied all the summaries concerned with *media use* into a new document so as to get a better overview and to make more plausible comparison between the groups. In addition, I made an extensive list of the people interviewed, including background information and categories of media use (newspapers, radio programs, television use and access, the importance of the mass media) as well as individual problems and societal problems, which combined, present the information from the interviews in a nutshell.¹⁴ On this

¹² Discursive commentary is what the researcher says about the data; what it means, how it connects and in what it is significant (Holliday 2002; 99).

¹³ See interview guide Appendix G.

¹⁴ See Appendix I for list over people interviewed using the interview guide.

basis, I was able to make a simple count of newspaper choice and radio- and television preferences according to gender, age, and group identification.¹⁵

Simultaneously, as I worked on these summaries, I copied data extracts that illustrated the tendencies that I found in the material and cataloged these in a separate document independent of group affiliation. This accounted for approximately 250 quotations. The main categories correspond with the sections in the summaries, but were further classified by subcategories that emerged in the data. The categories or subcategories are not mutually exclusive and some important themes arose during the process of analysis and writing, which further refined the data (Holliday 2002; 106). Consequently, four themes were systematically indexed by different colored marker pens; *television/globalization/culture* (green); *women/gender issues* (yellow); *rape, violence and prostitution* (pink); *changing attitudes* (orange). For instance, comments reflecting upon women's or gender issues were found in all the main categories and most of the subcategories. Under the main heading 'media use', these statements were associated with reading strategies and program preferences, while under the headline 'society' (in which I had not yet specifically addressed gender issues) these statements were concerned with oppression and tradition, lack of rights in inheritance, et cetera. Due to the differing nature of these statements I didn't find it useful to place these under one title.

As already pointed out, the reception interviews were limited to analyzing the interpretations of the Swahili plays (Chapter 8), and as such function as an interpretative aid in understanding these plays in their particular context. Reception interviews differ from ordinary focus groups by accounting for both texts and recipients as complementary elements of one area of inquiry. Hence, findings from the discourse analysis of the Swahili plays represent a starting point for analyzing audience' reception. I have not categorized themes in the group discussions or split the material into smaller units; I have rather taken them as a whole and compared them with the analysis of the texts concerned. An advantage of this strategy is that I did not lose sight of the context in which a particular smaller data extract is found within the whole, which is of particular importance in the interactive nature of focus group data (c.f. Bloor et al. 2001; 65). I was therefore able to keep in mind whether a statement represented the group's opinion, further developed by the group members, or even contradicted by and diverging from the rest of the group. Moreover, the number of groups exposed to the same play varies from one to three groups, which limits the degree of comparison between the different groups. However, I found it to be more important to put all the plays into context. As no more than three groups have

¹⁵ See Appendix J for media preferences according to group members.

been exposed to the same play, I didn't find it useful to write summaries of these texts, as they already were in a manageable size.

Pros and cons of using local assistants

I found major benefits in using local assistants in overcoming what might be seen as cultural barriers as well as practical hindrances. As my Swahili was not fluent, I had my Tanzanian assistants translate Swahili texts from newspapers and television into English as well as transcribe and translate interviews that they carried out in Swahili into English. In addition, they contributed with cultural knowledge that only a local would know. I am impressed by my assistants' work and trust them completely. However, as a researcher I lose some control over the interview situation and with materials that need translation, which can influence the validity of the research. In order to minimize negative impact on validity, the choice of assistants and the quality of their work is decisive. It has therefore been crucial to find educated people with good English skills as well as good social and communicative skills.

I also tried to minimize lack of control in the interview situation by making sure that my assistants would be aware of what questions were of most importance, and when I would like examples or elaborations in form of follow-up questions. Still, there were situations where I would have asked for clarifications or elaborations where I think my assistants moved on too quickly to the next question (personal interviews). For instance, I was more consequent in finding out precisely how often the interviewees would use the different media by asking, "How often do you read newspapers; everyday, three times a week, once a week, et cetera". I didn't always find the same preciseness with my assistants; however, they have given me the most important information and what is not said in one part of the interview often comes through in another section of the interview. Then again, sometimes my assistants have made the interviewees elaborate on things that I wouldn't have thought of, which I later found useful. Also, if it happened that the participants would have had a problem understanding a question, they would rephrase it in a more contextual and simple manner.

Before conducting the group discussions I carefully instructed my assistant about the aim of the discussions, how to allow interaction between the group members to evolve, and what role the facilitator should have. In addition, the first group discussions that we carried out were conducted in English; thus I took the role as the facilitator, which gave my assistant input as to how to act as facilitator. At this point in time, we had also spent almost every day together for months, which had given him a firm understanding of the research project and experience as a research assistant. Although most of the grassroots groups preferred to carry out the interviews in Swahili, the bankers, the tourist coach workers, and some of the

small scale business women felt comfortable enough to conduct the discussions (and the personal interviews) in English. For the lowest status groups, using an indigenous assistant might also have contributed to making them feel more comfortable in participating in the research project and may have also reduced the risk of trying to give the 'right answers'. Overall, the use of assistants has given me few problems and has been a great asset in my work.

3.3 A discourse-analytical approach

Discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary field of study that emerged between the mid-1960s and mid-1970s in a range of disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences. Consequently, discourse analysis entails a variety of theoretical entrances and methods. Even in the area of mass media research, the applications of discourse analysis are varied. We can distinguish between three major directions: linguistic, semiotic, and discourse-analytical approaches.¹⁶ The discourse-analytical approach has often been used in cultural studies; this approach is a significant influence on this thesis (c.f. Chapter 2.2). The analytical aspects of cultural studies are rooted in literary analysis-cum-interpretation, while emphasizing an extra-textual framework for explanation. While this approach also deals with language, discourse, and images, it is not linguistics in a strict sense, but pays special attention to ideological and political dimensions of media messages. I have focused upon the specific structures in news and Swahili drama that may have particular implications for gender ideologies. Ideological analysis focuses on the systematic meanings and contradictions embedded in textual practices. The various levels or dimensions of analysis entail a complex network, which might form a consistent pattern of discursive features signaling various and even contradictory underlying meanings, opinions, and ideological positions.

Ideological analysis draws on methods and insights from different textual analysis approaches, such as semiotics, genre study, psychoanalysis, narrative analysis and others to determine what meanings are made available (White 1992; 172). I have found that narrative analysis is more applicable and suitable for the aims of this dissertation than a linguistic discourse analysis. An important assumption in this thesis is that the construction of gender in the media discourse embodies specific interests that benefit certain groups, which in turn channel and restrict development of the society. In line with this, narrative analysis is based on the notion that every story is told by 'someone' and in particular ways. At the other end, every story entails someone to whom and for whose benefit the story is told (Allen 1992; 113). Narrative analysis can therefore be a fruitful starting point for an ideological analysis in order to see how the structural and functional logic of plot development explains and naturalizes a sequence of events (White 1992; 173).

¹⁶ It is not my intention to give a review over the different approaches, rather find methodological entrances suitable to this study. See van Dijk 1991 for references in regard to the different approaches.

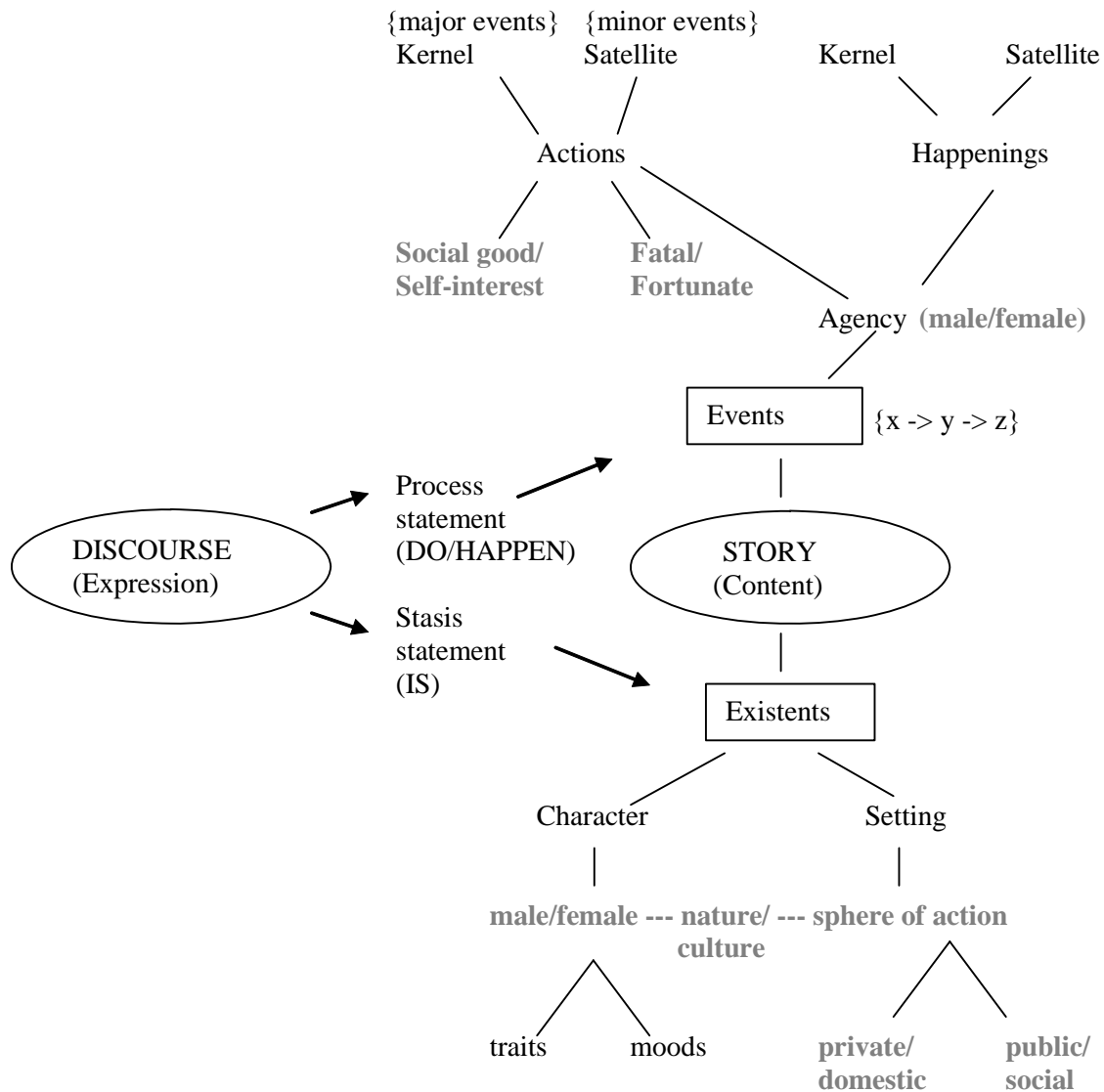
Narratives and news conventions are crucial ways in which media handles social tensions and contradictions in the society, and as such articulate important elements in the construction of an overall gender discourse. Previous studies also show that the procedures involved in narrative analysis can be applied to various texts in different media (Larsen 1991; 129). Narrative analysis is therefore not limited to the narrative mode, but is applicable to genres such as news. In any case, one chooses a specific set of texts and analyzes them with the goal of understanding the cultural logic that sustains them (White 1992; 177). I should underscore that it was not my intention to develop narrative analysis, but to use its conceptual framework as an analytical tool to study the construction of gender and positioning of women in media discourse as part of a broader ideological analysis. Below, I have drawn upon narrative analysis in developing an analytical model that will be used in studying the media texts included in this thesis.

Analytical model: Gender ideology in narrative analysis

Since the mid-1960s, narrative analysis has been a promising field. Large groups of texts can be broken down into their basic components and structures by means of qualitative procedures – without breaking up the text as a meaningful whole. Hence, narrative analysis provides an alternative in qualitative analysis, which has been haunted by the problems inherent in addressing the quantity and heterogeneity of media texts due to the limited number of texts. Narrative analysis has its roots in literary theory and Russian Formalism, especially in the work of Vladimir Propp (e.g. his study of the fairy-tale 1958). Later contributions have come from a diverse international group of linguists, semiologists, anthropologists, folklorists, literary critics, and film theorists. In spite of the different disciplines and studies entailing various questions and texts, a common outline of narrative structure and process has emerged (Kozloff 1992; 67). I find Chatman's contribution to narrative analysis useful, especially his "narrative grid model" (1978). My approach has been to develop an analytical model based upon Chatman's narrative grid and elements from a well known gender dichotomy discussed by Ortner and Whitehead (1981). The model is presented in Figure 3.2 below; the grey text in the figure shows my own additions to Chatman's model in order to adjust it to the needs of this study. An issue to be addressed is how gender oppositions are linked or built into the structure of texts, the functional logic of a plot or a sequence.¹⁷

¹⁷ The media discourse represents a symbolic expression of the gender dichotomy revealing differences in cultural thought; however, the construction of gender in the media discourse emerging in form of binary oppositions refers to the cultural constructed differences between men and women, and not of biological origin.

Figure 3.2 Elements of a narrative grid and gender dichotomy



Source: Chatman 1978

As illustrated in the figure, a common distinction in narrative analysis is between *story* and *discourse*. While the story is concerned with the question “what” in the narrative (what happens to whom), discourse is how the story is told (Kozloff 1991; 67, Chatman 1978; 19). The story consists of two major elements, the chain of *events* (actions and happenings) and the *existents* (characters and setting). The discourse, that is the expression, includes the means by which the content is communicated. In this context discourse is understood as discursive devices in the transmission of a text, which is a much more narrow definition of discourse than the theoretical understanding of the concept as used previously in this thesis (c.f. Chapter 2.4). In order to distinguish the two different ways of employing discourse, Chatman’s use of the concept can be said to be limited to

the empirical level of analysis or as an analytical tool. In a theoretical sense, the broader notion of discourse embraces the thorough construction of meaning, informing whole ways of thinking and talking about gender, which includes the different levels of analysis (story and discourse) that might produce contradictory cultural definitions of femininity and masculinity.

According to Chatman, discourse is said to 'state' the story. These statements are of two kinds - *process* and *stasis* - according to whether someone did something or something happen, or whether something simply exists in the story. Process statements are in the mode of DO or HAPPEN - as abstract expressional categories - either in form of recounting or enacting an event. A stasis statement is in the mode of IS, either in the form of exposing or presenting. While a process statement leads up to an event, a stasis statement points to an existent. We can see from the model that events build upon process statements. Somebody does something or something happens, which either way brings about a change of state. They can be either *actions* or *happenings*, behind which an agent or agency stands. As an agent, the character is the narrative subject of the narrative predicate (non-verbal physical acts, speeches, thoughts and feelings, perceptions, and sensations); while the existent is the narrative object.

It is possible to determine the distinction between process and stasis statements in both news and fiction. Events in news stories, much like narrative stories, can be either actions or happenings, behind which a male or a female agent or agency stands. Viewing texts at the level of events, agents and existents helps to reveal the positioning of women in the discourse and the ideological implications involved. If the agent recurrently appears in the form of a male and the existent typically takes shape of a female it can be read as an expression that a man is thought to be active and acting on events while a woman is passive and subjected to other peoples' actions and decisions. One implication might be that men are associated with the sphere of wider social coordination, whereas women occupy sub-units, a position that suggests possible disempowering effects for women.

In a narrative story, events have strictly determined positions and a clear-cut beginning and end; x happens, then y happens because of x, then z as a final consequence. Most narrative events not only have a logical connection but also logic of hierarchy, which means that some events are more important than other events. In order to distinguish between major and minor events in a story, Chatman's division between *kernels* and *satellites* is useful. Only major events or kernels are part of the chain. Kernels cannot be deleted without destroying the narrative logic. A minor event or a satellite is not crucial in the same sense as a kernel. It can be deleted without disturbing the logic of the plot, although its omission might impoverish the story. As Chatman puts it (1978; 53-54):

Kernels are nodes or hinges in the structure, branching points, which force a movement into one of two (or more) possible paths. ... Satellites entail no choice, but are solely the workings-out of the choices made at the kernels. They necessarily imply the existence of kernels, but not vice versa. Their function is that of filling in, elaborating, completing the kernel; they form the flesh of the skeleton.

News is not a story in a strict narrative sense, based on a logical chain of events or a hierarchy of connected events. Most often a news story concerns a single event without elaboration about the causes or consequences. Something happened or someone did or said something in the near past or since yesterday's news. However, news has what might be called superstructure, abstract schema or skeleton, which consists of principles underlying the text and directing the organizing of topics (van Dijk 1991; 114). A hierarchical set of topics forms the thematic structure of the text, which summarizes the text and specifies its most important information (van Dijk 1991; 113). News reports typically follow a hierarchical structure consisting of conventional categories: At the top of this macro-structure we find the headline and lead paragraph, which we use to summarize news events, followed by main events, context or history, verbal reactions by informants and possibly the journalist's comments (positive/negative). Typically, these categories are expressed discontinuously as 'installments' throughout the text; in each category the most important information is expressed first, a top-down strategy that assigns a so-called relevance structure of the text. The assignment of importance or relevance may have ideological implications. The relevance structure might favor attention to some aspects, while leaving out other information and evaluations about a situation, event or issue.

In order to examine how gender is linked to narrative structures we also need to take a closer look at the existents - characters and setting. The importance of a character can be seen in the extent to which he/she takes or is affected by plot-significant action.¹⁸ To facilitate an impression or a clear image of the characters, the author has to portray the narrative figures with their actions, environment, manners, habits, emotions and desires, and so on. In an attempt to label a narrative person's character, *trait* is a useful concept, which may be said to be a narrative adjective. The audience relies upon its knowledge of trait-codes in the real world. The actual verbal adjective doesn't need to appear, but whether it is inferred or not it is immanent in the deep structure of the text (Chatman 1978; 129). Presuppositions can be a powerful device for hinting that a character or real person is deluded, naive, ignorant, self-deceiving, or the like.

The setting 'sets the character off'. It is the place and collection of objects "against which his or her actions and passions appropriately emerge" (Chatman 1978; 139). Drawing upon Ortner and Whitehead (1981), I have integrated in this

¹⁸ In news stories it makes more sense to talk about news actors rather than characters.

model a classification of 'spheres of action' divided into the two main spheres: the private/domestic sphere and the public/social coordinating sphere. This does not only apply to the physical place of action, but also to mental or discursive actions (thoughts, talks, et cetera). The division between private/public will be seen in relation to the defining of female versus male characters and values, which have their resonance in the tendency to define men in terms of culture, that is, status and role categories, and women in terms of nature, that is, in relation to men and kinship roles. Defining and prescribing women as related to nature draws symbolic boundaries between men's and women's sphere of action, which might exclude women from taking an active part in society and development.

Viewing a text as a whole, we can talk about schema or 'archetypal' narrative. The narrative system behind individual texts might consist of a limited number of central, opposed characters with fixed features and spheres of action, constituting a set of narrative agents. A set of basic values is the background against which these agents act. If we view characters as a series of 'opposing characters and values' it might reveal limitations in the number of themes, sequencing, and interactions (Eco 1984; 147). Such opposing characters and values can also function as expressions of beliefs and symbolic associations that naturalize the order of human relations. Examples of opposing characters are man versus woman, husband versus wife, city girl versus rural girl. Values attached to the characters can rotate around different sets of oppositions such as respect versus disregard, superior versus subordinate, selfish versus sacrifice.

Moreover, by using the main actions and events in the narrative and their causal connections, it is possible to break down a group of narratives into a string of narrative 'moves'. These moves show that not only do the same types of actions appear in each narrative text, but they also appear in the same order (Jensen 1991; 127). Each text can then be said to represent a variation of a single 'archetypal' narrative. It has been demonstrated that such common archetypal or mythical structures articulate particular sets of norms and principles stemming from social institutions and serving to order social life in general (Wright 1975; Cawelti 1970). From a gender perspective, specific narratives or genres can be understood as ritual actions serving to reinforce rather than to challenge dominant social beliefs concerning gender.

Finally, we can speak of language and style as a level or dimension of analysis, which direct our attention towards the smallest elements in texts. At this level, van Dijk (1991) operates with style and rhetoric as the textual result of choices between alternative ways of saying or describing the same phenomenon (events, characters or news actors) by using different words, metaphors, or syntactic structure. Such stylistic choices also have clear social and ideological implications, because they often carry differing degrees of positive/negative values, attitudes, and associations,

and thereby have the potential to induce the consent of the readers (Herman and Chomsky 1988). They might signal the opinions of the reporter about news actors and events, the properties of the social and communicative situation (popular style of tabloid), or the group affiliation of speakers. Another aspect of style is the syntax of sentences, for instance, when agents of negative actions are left out (e.g. sex buyers or rapists). Analysis of language and style is micro-linguistic oriented, and has been given less attention in this study than the previous levels. It was not my intent to make a systematic analysis of language and style, rather I have commented on in it where I find it has striking importance for ideological positions. In particular, it can be useful in analyzing news headings and leads.

Discursive devices

Among discursive devices, we find many of the same techniques in both fiction and news. The principal features are order, selection, and sequencing; for instance, a discourse involves the choice of the events and objects which are stated and which are implied, leaving it up to the audiences to fill in the gaps and draw inferences. The narrative transmission of a story also concerns plot arrangements, point of view, and authority of the story. In the transmission of news, the journalist needs to make choices concerning news genre, angle, selection of sources or authority of the story, images, and so on.

Point of view is central in the narrative transmission between text and reader, because of the importance of identification with characters. Point of view can be explained as the physical place, the ideological situation, or the practical life-orientation that the narrative events or existents stand in relation to. First, a character may literally perceive a certain object or event in which the implied reader sees the same event through someone's eyes. Second, it may be presented in terms of a character's conceptualization or world view. Finally, we can be shown an event from a character's interest-vantage or his/her interest in it may be invoked, for example in terms of profit, welfare, or well being (even if the person is unaware of that interest).

Part of the plot arrangement or the narrative communication of a story is the use of a narrator and/or a narratee. A narrative text can be arranged in accordance to the *presence and absence* of a narrator. A story can be communicated by direct presentation, which presumes a kind of overhearing by the audience, or mediated narration that presumes more or less explicit communication from narrator to audience (a narrating voice). Narrative texts sometimes make use of a narratee. The situation of the narratee is parallel to that of the narrator; he/she ranges from a fully characterized individual to 'no one'. A narratee may materialize as a character in the world of the work or there may be no overt reference to him at all, though his presence is felt. In cases of a narratee, the author makes explicit the desired audience stance (limiting interpretations), that we have to 'accept' if

we are to follow the narrative. The narratee-character is only one device by which the implied author informs the real reader how to perform as implied reader.

We find a device similar to the narrator in news; that is, the presence or absence of the journalist writing the story. In spite of the common belief that news is fairly objective, the fact is that any story - fiction or facts - needs a teller, even if the voice is barely heard by the reader. Chatman's observation about narratives is true even for news: "It is an illusion that events literally unfold before the reader's eyes" (1978; 147). Some authors may make special efforts to preserve this illusion, mostly by restricting the kind of statements that are made. Different news genres have different conventions for the presence/absence of the journalist. At the positive pole of journalist presence we find editorial columns, commentary and analysis, and feature reportage. However, most news reports are at the negative pole of journalist-presence, in which the journalist tries to appear as objective as possible.

Unlike the 'non-narrated' story, *covert or indirect* narration can express a character's speech or thoughts in indirect form. Such expression implies an interpretative device or mediator. Interpretative devices common in both fiction and news include backgrounding and foregrounding of elements of various degrees of importance, and presuppositions. In narratives it is also common to use an interpreting person who converts the characters' thoughts into indirect expression (Chatman, 1978; 197). In news, an interpreting person of events, issues, or news actors can appear in the form of an informant or authority. Information that is not explicitly expressed, but left implicit in the discursive shadows and inferred on the basis of social-cultural knowledge can sometimes be more revealing than the study of what is actually expressed in a text.

Fairclough (1995; 104-105) has described an axis that can be used to summarize the different discursive devices in approaching degrees of presence and absence in media texts. He suggests a scale composed of four categories: Absent - presupposed - backgrounded - foregrounded. In the context of news, backgrounded information can be identified by the presence of subordinate clauses, while foregrounded information is characterized by its position in prominent headlines, leads, and main clauses. Fairclough (1995; 108) says that the unsaid (absence) and the already said (the presupposed) are important in ideological analysis, and are generally embedded in the implicit meaning of a text. As a result, the subject or viewer position that is found in media texts might legitimize and reproduce relations of domination by assuring a consensus that doesn't exist (ideological function).

Altogether, I have attempted to get a better understanding of the powerful spoken and unspoken cultural messages subsumed by narratives and news by employing elements from the narrative grid. My main addition to the narrative model has been to view events, characters, and settings in light of a gender structure or hierarchy (marked with grey in Figure 3.2). Each text included in this research has been systematically subjected to an analytical schema, which has been developed on the basis of the main elements in the narrative model.¹⁹ While I have attempted to make a common framework that can be applied to news and Swahili plays, the particular emphasis varied according to genre and the set of texts. In general, the Swahili plays set the scene for a deeper analysis than the news texts. The analytical model gives rise to a series of tentative hypotheses:

- Men are most likely to be depicted as agents acting upon events and making influential decisions for the social good (family, community, or society at large).
- Women are most likely to be portrayed as existents, that is, affected by the actions and decisions, which can have either fatal or fortunate consequences.
- When women are portrayed as agents it is more likely to be in the context of minor events, done out of self-interest and with a fatal outcome.
- Male characters or news actors are more likely to be portrayed in terms of culture and within the public sphere as social coordinators.
- Female characters are likely to be depicted in relational terms associated with nature within the private or domestic sphere.
- Female members of activist organizations are more likely to be portrayed as agents acting on events in the public sphere motivated by social good and with intended fortunate effects for women and children.
- Portrayal of female activists aligns women with cultural and status roles.

The postulations outlined above are preliminary and should be handled with caution so as to keep an open mind regarding uncertainties and contradictions in the construction of gender in the media discourse. They represent a starting point that helps to highlight how gender representations are embedded in the media discourse and how women are positioned, which forms the basis for drawing ideological implications, and revealing relationships of power (marking of boundaries), and exclusion. For instance, a lack of female agency might reinforce or legitimize the idea that women are not fit for decision-making and public life, and as such may work as a barrier to women's liberation. Positions inscribed in the discourse might engender specific values and interests, which might channel or restrict the development of society. Positioning women as evil offenders undercuts a feminist discourse in favor of men's interests that reproduce and legitimize men's power. Media coverage of women's/gender NGOs might challenge dominant representations and traditional beliefs of women as subordinate and unable to participate in public debate and decision-making, and thereby contest the boundaries between men's and women's sphere of actions and identities.

¹⁹ See Appendix A for an example of the use of the analytical schema.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the research design, which is influenced by the cultural studies tradition and has enabled me to pay special attention to gender ideologies inscribed in media texts. It is my suggestion that the intersection between media's discourse and women's/gender NGOs' discourse and the media-audience nexus can lead to valuable knowledge about the role of the media in the cultural struggle of gender transformation and potential for socio-cultural change. The political-economic framework constitutes an important point of reference in explaining constructions and negotiations of gender in the media discourse. The goal of establishing a link between texts and audiences has led to a dual strategy of analysis, where both discursive elements and social aspects of communication are addressed. The common denominator connecting these two perspectives is the social production of meaning. A central issue to be addressed is whether audiences negotiate or even resist dominant definitions of gender so that they have an empowering impact on women.

My analytical design has led to multiple sources of information, an approach often referred to as data triangulation (Østbye et al. 2001; 122). The most elaborate material consists of three types of texts from the mass media, which constitute the discourse analysis. I have emphasized the inclusion of media texts from different media channels (newspapers and television) and genres (news and Swahili drama), which should give a considerable account of mainstream images of women as well as alternative voices in the fight for women's rights, and thereby illuminating how the media channel and restrict gender transformation. In order to account for actual textual interpretations, I have conducted reception interviews in form of focus groups, which complement the findings from the discourse analysis (Swahili drama). I have also conducted personal interviews with the participants prior to the focus group discussions, which have helped illuminate social uses of the mass media and have enhanced a contextualized understanding of the research issues. The three main sources of field materials aim at illuminating media's role in gender transformation from different perspectives in order to deepen and enrich the understanding of the main problem statement.

Moreover, I have argued for an interpretative research strategy entailing qualitative methods that is sensitive to contradictions and the ambiguous process in the construction of gender arising in media texts as well as participants' own formulations and understandings in their sense making of texts. In developing an analytical model for studying the texts, I have found narrative analysis to be a fruitful starting point for illuminating how gender is embedded in the structure of narrative transmission and news conventions and its ideological implications. The model accounts for how gender oppositions are linked or built into the

structure of texts, the functional logic of the plot, or the sequence. This approach gives rise to a series of tentative hypotheses, which helped to highlight how gender representations are embedded in the media discourse and how women are positioned, which in turn forms the basis for drawing ideological implications to reveal relations of power and exclusion. A key issue is whether women are portrayed as active and productive subjects able to influence their own life situation and taking an active part in the society, or whether they become victims and objects of other people's actions and decisions, which would be at odds with participatory development approaches (c.f. Chapter 4).

CHAPTER FOUR

From socialism to capitalism and civil society as a roadmap to development

One of the key concepts emphasized in this chapter is that development has to go hand in hand with gender transformation in society. Attitudes that have traditionally placed women lower than men in terms of both social and economical status restrict women's possibilities in taking an active part in development. In order for women to emerge as subjects rather than objects in development, traditional attitudes towards women as subordinate and incapable creatures have to be replaced by values that encourage gender equality and positive attitudes towards women as competent participants in all areas of life and society.

This chapter begins with a historical outline of Tanzania's struggle for independence and an examination of socialism as a model for development. This leads to an examination of the transition from socialism to capitalism and civil society as the driving force for development, and how these changes affect women's/gender issues. In general, this transition entails a shift away from a centralized top-down strategy to a receiver-centered approach that includes human development as well as economic growth. This change of perspective has brought attention to women's role in development and has led to development strategies that are more pro-women. Furthermore, an emphasis on civil society, and the organizations it consists of, results in new political opportunities for women to organize and express themselves. As such, it provides opportunities for woman activists and legitimizes their struggle for women's rights and gender transformation in the society. I also discuss the role of the mass media in a women's movement.

The chapter ends with an exploration of a micro-oriented perspective on gender transformation, empowerment, and development, a perspective that links critical consciousness with action. This perspective is based on a belief that it takes both collective and individual action to change the power structures and relationship in the society that disempowered women.

4.1 The struggle for independence and socialism

The colonial period saw the emergence of a number of organizations, with ethnic or religious associations, cooperative movements, and trade unions mobilizing a number of people. In this period, the African Association (clerks, teachers, and civil servants) gained footing and grew to be influential in national politics. The African Association was formed in 1929 in Dar es Salaam, and soon established regional branches in other parts of the country. In 1953 Julius Nyerere became president of the organization, and turned it into a political party fighting for national independence against British rule. The name was changed to Tanganyika African Nationalist Union (TANU), and in less than 10 years TANU won an overwhelming majority of the votes in the 1960 elections. An important part of TANU's success was its collaboration with existing associations. TANU incorporated a strong cooperative movement, which developed in the rural areas and numbered 617 societies by 1959. In the cities, TANU joined hands with the labor movement, which had become a mass movement with the union drive of the Tanganyika Federation of Labor. After independence was won in 1961, TANU became the state party and changed its name to Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). The period after independence was characterized by nation building, cultural revival, and socialism as the road to development. The Arusha declaration, a blueprint for African socialism, was launched during the annual party meeting in 1967 and represented a major shift in Tanzanian politics:

Arguing that foreign aid was inadequate to develop the economy, that cash-crop farming encouraged capitalist differentiation, and that services could not reach scattered homesteads, Nyerere advocated a rural-focused development strategy centered on ujamaa (socialist) villages with an element of communal farming (Ilfie 1995; 254).

The development model was based on socialistic principles of self-reliance, popular participation, and democracy under the one-party system. The declaration also allowed for the nationalization of all large industries, parastatals, and cooperatives. Ironically, the kind of civil society that had enabled TANU to come to power was suppressed once independence had been achieved; the enabling environment was replaced by a society that banned independent organizations, including former TANU supporters such as the labor federation and the cooperative movement (Lange et al. 2000). The authorities also banned all unions based on ethnic identity, abolished the chieftdom system, and warned religious associations to stay out of politics. Independent organizations were replaced or incorporated under the state party, which were given monopolies to organize people. The mass organizations that were established were supposed to serve as vehicles for people to express their interests to the ruling party, but instead became a vehicle for the CCM in translating their aspirations and implementation of party policies (McHenry 1994; 174). Together with an

increasingly centralized government, this created a deteriorating environment for non-governmental organizations and civil society.

Although women were slow to join TANU, they came to play a significant role in the struggle for independence. With help of Bibi Titi Mohammed, the sister-in-law of one of the committee members and the leader of a popular woman's *ngoma* troupe (traditional dance), women was mobilized in great numbers (Lange 2002; 53). Soon, women outnumbered men in the membership of TANU and marched in support of a social transformation process that promised equity and liberation for all oppressed people (Mbilyi 1997). However, as soon as the national movement succeeded and became absorbed by the political system, women's issues were sidelined and were focused only on welfare kinds of projects, such as handicrafts, tailoring, and a few child-care centers for the urban population (Meena 1992; 16). 'Positive' discrimination in favour of women was also introduced in party and government representative bodies, but did not lead to a numerical increase of female representatives in these organs (Meena and Migiiri 1988).

Women's fight for their rights from within the state party crystallized in CCM's women's wing the Union of Tanzanian Women (UWT). According to Mbilyi (1997; 1), UWT sustained a more high profile feminist stance in the early years, and confronted policy makers and parliamentarians to lobby for the 1971 Marriage Act and the extension of full three month Maternity Leave to all women. In the 1970s, UWT shifted from a political focus to economic concerns. Inheritance laws remained ambiguous and in most cases women had no right to inherit property or land, which left widows and their children unable to sustain a decent life. Most of the changes that occurred did not challenge the structural gender inequities in the society, but were mere token and symbolic gestures intended to patronize women and appease those who had taken an active role in the struggle for independence (Meena 1992; 17). A male activist, previously a district treasurer, described the situation in the following way:

After independence there was no movements, the government decided to lead the people in every area, the only organizations existing were those party wings. Woman group (UWT), youth group and so forth they never talked anything against the government; they were there to speed the performance of the leading party and not for the interest of the people concerned (male activist #51).

As the above statement illustrates, people were left with few channels for communication upward in the system. In spite of efforts to decentralize power and engage people in development processes, the population instead became objects of a top-down form of development, which allowed very little participation from below. Initially, there were some efforts to decentralize power by ceding authority to local governments, but centralization and bureaucratization, national integration, and centrally planned development

inhibited local governments in becoming an effective mean by which people could gain control over their lives. The *ujamaa* villages were probably the most significant policy that was implemented in an attempt to build socialism in rural Tanzania, as it moved, often by force, most of the rural population into villages as self-reliant entities. But again, the central party and government sought in a variety of ways to diminish the independence of the villages by extracting wealth from them, determining the form of government, and by sending central government agents to supervise implementation of party-government policies (McHenry 1994; 175). So rather than a system ruled by the people, in which socialism is embraced at the bottom and spreads to the top, the importance of leadership prevailed, implying that socialism is embraced at the top and enforced on the masses (McHenry 1994; 47).

President Nyerere's leadership had paternalistic overtones, and the centralized planning and top-down form of development was also apparent in the media system. Mass communication was characterized by a centralized one-way and top-down form of communication, in which information meant to be persuasive from the leaders to the people. The media was placed solely under state control and was subordinate to the socialist party. The media's main task was to spread party propaganda and advocate the country's policy of socialism and self-reliance (Maoulidi 1997; 1). The CCM 'inherited' the already established colonial-era media that was introduced by the British administration to protect their interests. Newspapers and later radio were used by colonial authorities to communicate among themselves, to disseminate their colonial policy, and to make reprimands or issue instructions as to what should be done to abide with colonial rule. The media was established on an overall 'authoritarian' ideology, which limits media freedom, advances censorship, and imposes punishment for deviation from rules laid down by the political authorities (McQuail 1994; 127). For the next 30 years, the socialist government used similar tactics to control the media, which at the time consisted of Radio Tanzania and two newspapers, the Daily News and the party paper Uhuru.

In addition to propagating the socialistic policy of self-reliance, the media was also given a positive role in the development of the society and in educating the individual. For example, the media's efforts to educate women involved a focus on issues such as fetching water, nurturing babies, and attending mother and child clinics. This reflects a welfare approach to women's development, which emphasizes women's traditional role of mothering. Sewing, domestic science, and child-care services are some of the welfare type of organizations that were designed to improve the material conditions of women. Overall, the development efforts that aimed at improving the conditions of women came from within the patriarchal system (Mannathoko 1992; 86). It has also been argued that the media portrayed women very negatively, for instance, some radio dramas would always

present female characters as crying or being thrown out of their homes (TGNP 1997). While Radio Tanzania enjoyed wide coverage in several parts of the country, the newspapers were mainly available in urban areas. Nevertheless, the majority of women had limited access to the media due to poor living conditions and lack of time.

4.2 Towards a new model for development

In spite of the principle of self-reliance, which involved a minimum of foreign trade and participation in the capitalist world, Tanzania became more rather than less dependent on foreign aid. As such, Tanzania followed in the stream of Third World nations experiencing increased dependency. An economic decline from the late 1970s also undermined equality as a state policy, and the government shifted from emphasizing equitable distribution to increased production. Ultimately, the economic malaise brought about an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1986 resulting in a major turning point away from socialistic policies. With this move, Tanzania introduced Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) based upon capitalistic principles, and thereby opened up its economy to increasing participation in the world economic system. The beginning of the 1990s marked a significant turning point in Tanzanian politics. The increasing gap between ideology and praxis paved the way for a multiparty system in an attempt to make CCM stronger (McHenry 1994; 159). In 1991, the CCM revised the Arusha Declaration in Zanzibar, which became known as the Zanzibar Declaration. This new declaration abandoned the Leadership Code, an approach that was presented as an adaptation to the new social and economic conditions, but in reality it represented a clear ideological retreat (Tripp 1997; 188, 196). By 1992 the party had announced that it would relinquish its dominance as the sole party in Tanzania, and the first national multiparty elections were scheduled for 1995. Government leaders reluctant to embrace political liberalization hoped that they would be able to gather support by exhibiting tolerance toward the opposition at a time when pressures were mounting for multipartyism throughout Africa. At the same time, lawyers, academics, and journalists were pushing the boundaries of state control, demanding the repeal of laws that restricted freedom of the press and the freedom of organization.

Along with these changes came the observation that the welfare-based approaches to women's issues had increased women's marginalization and impoverishment. Liberal feminists proposed that women be integrated in mainstream development, which blended well with the shift in state policy from equitable distribution to increased production. It was argued that women, who constituted the majority of agricultural producers, had not been part of the mainstream development plans - a factor that was attributed to the agrarian crisis

in the 1970s (Meena 1992). In order to maximize efficiency in the use of all factors for production in the development process, women had to be incorporated, and the emphasis shifted from a welfare approach to equity. Radical feminists also voiced their concerns stressing that governments should pay attention to the strategic needs of women as well as practical needs. While practical needs mean assisting women in meeting their basic needs and interests (food, water, shelter, health, and education), strategic needs entail empowering women to take control over their own needs by providing them with space to make decisions that affect them and society (Mannathoko 1992; 70). Among the more radical demands were the transformation of discriminatory legal systems, gender-typed curricula and the educational system as well as providing affirmative action that would enhance women's participation in the management of the society as managers, politicians, and intellectuals (Mannathoko 1992; 87). However, radical demands fell short under the international pressure on African governments to pursue policies under a World Bank package, that is, the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) during the 1980s.

With this shift in development strategy, Tanzania has been incorporated into 'mainstream' development. Against the backdrop of the criticism of modernization theories that had prevailed in development research and planning during the 1960s, in Third World nations, in the United Nations, as well as other multilateral and bilateral agencies, alternative approaches to development started to gain footing during the 1980s. This entailed a shift away from a centralized top-down strategy to a receiver-centered approach, which is more sensitive to different contexts and includes human development as well as economic growth. As a result, the development focus shifted from being based on economic parameters to an emphasis on basic needs, an orientation on poverty, and a push for self-development and grassroots participation. In a receiver-centered development approach, empowerment of women is an implicit goal that results from giving women greater control over resources and decisions affecting their lives. The new approach means that women are supposed to be considered as active participants in the development process, and offered equal opportunities. Sustainable human development is not possible as long as women are excluded from the development process (Human Development Report 1995; 12). New concepts for development have been summarized as:

A widely participatory process of social change in a society intended to bring about social and material advancement (including greater equality, freedom, and other valued qualities) for the majority of the people through their gaining greater control over their environment (Rogers 1976a; 133).

In Tanzania, the extreme economic conditions forced men and women to challenge the existing political and economic order, which they did in a massive non-compliance with the government and CCM's regulations. By engaging in

informal projects in numbers of hundreds of thousands, people forced the government to acknowledge the situation and to relax the enforcement of various policies that most directly affected urban dwellers' pursuit of a livelihood (Tripp 1997; 191, 202). The expansion of the informal economy created an internal pressure that later allowed the government to embark on a program of economic reforms entailing layoffs and the introduction of cost-sharing policies in education and the health sector. In addition to the internal pressure to loosen up its economic regulations, there were enormous external constraints on the government, under the Economic Recovery Programme and the IMF agreement, which reduced the government's independent ability to shape political policy. The economic restructuring has had a high social price. High unemployment and falling incomes are associated with an increase in crime and drug use, especially among youth. During my interviews I met many who complained about unemployment, especially among young males. The following statement illustrates the problem:

In fact I don't have peace in my heart. Especially, when I find that in my life I don't understand what I can do ... even if I try to do a business or I try to get a premise somewhere so that my life can at least have some form, I never manage. I fail completely. I am living a miserable life, I am not sure of meal, I am not sure of dressing myself. I am at the level of just looking for something to eat; I am entering the 21st century, a young person. These problems have caused me to become unhappy in life. My marriage broke when I still loved my wife. I have two children, they are still small and they are staying with their mother. I am failing to take care of my children. I would still manage to send them something, but my heart pains, why am I far from my children? I want to take care of them, I personally prefer... (petty trader/unemployed #33).

The new economic situation has also had a negative impact on women. In particular, the Structural Adjustment Policies have been criticized for moving the cost of reproduction from the state to the household level. These policies are said to increase women's labor burden, have a negative impact on the welfare of women, and undermine the minimal liberal achievements of the 1970s and early 1980s (Mannathoko 1992). Cost-sharing in education and health services is linked to an increase of maternal deaths and growth in school dropout rates for females. Recent studies show that poor farmers, traders, and workers were unable to afford to send their children to primary school and were withdrawing from the formal health sector (Mbilinyi 1997; 5). Schoolgirls are vulnerable in this situation, because they are more likely to be taken out of school if their parents are not able to pay for all their children to attend. The following statement illustrates this point:

In my family there are nine children. My father has no means to educate his own children, and he is keen to find some of the girls to be married, some of them at standard seven. Suppose they are getting divorced; how are they going to sustain their lives without education? Personally, I am not happy about this at all. Women

are not regarded as men are. If my father had some cows he would sell them to educate the boys. I am telling you from my experience of my society, whenever there is a resource to pay for secondary school they only think of the boys (male activist #48).

The interviews with grassroots women revealed stories that described a lack of education and difficulties in finding a job that could support a decent life – a situation that often was linked to increased prostitution among women: “*Life is very tough for us women. We have come to town here and try to do whatever we can to make life go around. We are working, but are being paid very little and have to do problematic jobs. That’s why other women stay in the streets in town; it is due to poverty*” (barmaid #7).

The WID approach

At the same time as external and internal pressure and the struggle towards development have lead Tanzania to be open to democratic and economic reforms, international forces have pushed for incorporating women into development programs. The United Nations declared the 1970s a Women’s Decade (1975-1985) and the world saw the First International Women’s Conference in 1975, which revolved around gender inequality in development processes. The event sharpened the international community’s perception of the role of gender in social change and development. As a part of this process, the UN General Assembly urged governments to pursue policies that ensured the incorporation of women in the planning process. In Tanzania, The Ministry of Community Development, Women Affairs and Children was established in 1990 in response to the United Nations’ call to all member states to strengthen or establish an effective institution to coordinate and monitor women’s development activities. The Ministry is responsible for monitoring and improving the status of women, for developing a policy on women in development, as well as for integrating women in all development programs and plans (Mrutu in TGNP’s: Our Histories 1993). This provided the context in which the Women In Development (WID) approach was conceived, which has become the predominant approach in both development planning and research.

The WID approach is a part of a liberal framework in which integrating women in the mainstream plans were seen to improve efficiency in the production of goods and services in a competitive market economy. It was initiated by women development experts, many working in the UN and other multilateral and bilateral agencies, but most WID experts in Africa today are indigenous women. Within the WID approach experts adopted a line that became ‘truth’ among different kinds of feminists in the West; that women’s oppression was grounded in their economic position. Women were relegated to inferior and dependent positions as housewives, and the solution was to get women into the labor market and wage employment so they could earn cash income and become independent

of husbands and other men. However, the WID approach has been criticized for not empowering women and for marginalizing women in considering, monitoring, and evaluating income-generating activities. According to Meena (1992; 20), the WID strategy did not enable women to improve their status, build their self-esteem, increase women's access to resources, or enhance their capacities to get involved in the development process. Instead, WID projects increased women's burdens, which came on top of other responsibilities that women had in production and reproduction. By focusing on more income-generating activities or increasing the level of productivity, such projects reinforced the gender division of labor (Mbilinyi 1992; 48). It can therefore be argued that these projects tend to contribute to the status quo rather than empowering women economically, socially, and culturally.

It doesn't make sense to dispute that women's work burden has increased; yet, the greater economic activity has also given women more autonomy in the household and consequently, their husbands. In accordance with Tripp (1997; 107, 119), I have argued that we should see women as agents of social change, in which they are perceived as actively pursuing solutions for their individual difficulties. In this perspective, women appear to have gained autonomy and control, not by chance, but by their persistence in pursuing income-generative activities that draw women out of the home and into more contact with broader sections of the society (cf. Chapter 1.3). Although some woman participants in my research voiced the opinion that they had a lot of responsibilities, none of them ever expressed the feeling that entering business was a burden. On the contrary, they saw this as a significant element of women's liberation and development; to have one's own business was to be independent from one's husband, able to contribute to the family as well as the nation as a whole. What these women wanted was gender equality, where men start to take more responsibility. It is interesting that when these women were asked to imagine that they were the president and had the power to change the society, most of them wanted to prioritize women's rights:

If I was the President, first I would like the society to have development in education, services, and development focusing on women. A woman should have rights. A woman should have the right to supervise her own project; husbands should not take money from her project for alcohol. A mother should be confident with her project, make progress in her family and build up the society (small-scale business woman #23).

For the women who didn't have a project, especially those who occupied the lowest paid jobs such as barmaids and house girls, the feeling was commonly expressed that they wanted assistance in order to break out of oppressive work relations. Hardships and lack of education, as well as nobody to assist them, led them to take these jobs. As a barmaid put it: *"I chose this job, because I have nobody to help me to get another kind of job. If I had somebody to assist me I*

would go to study secretarial courses like computers. Then I would get a good job” (barmaid #7). Or as a house girl explains: “My father died long ago, and my mother was not in a position to send me to school. So now, I am an adult there is nothing I can do. It is not that I like this work, I could even do business, the problem is capital, I hope one day I will be doing something else” (house girl #1).

Nevertheless, the emphasis on the economic sphere in the WID approach leaves out cultural, psychological, and political elements, which have been particularly resistant to according women equal rights, in spite of significant changes in women’s and men’s respective positions in the economy. The ways in which different discourses and the state construct gender relations are ignored. Moreover, WID experts have been criticized for considering grassroots women as victims who are spoken on behalf of, rather than viewed as potential allies in coalitions built by different groups of women at the local, national, and international level. In general, the problems in the attempts of involving the grassroots in development remain, which are conditioned by a dialog between the different levels in the development process. This has turned attention to civil society, spearheaded by non-governmental organizations, which have been seen to mediate between the state and the private household and to link individuals together. NGOs are normally seen as closer to people and more sensitive to local needs, which have given them legitimacy as representatives of the grassroots.

NGOs as a motor in development and civil society

The political and economic liberalization in Tanzania has enabled an environment for a civil society to grow and for NGOs to hold an active role in decision-making and development. In the early 1980s the government chose to ignore their earlier ban on independent organizations, and called upon churches and other non-governmental organizations to play a greater role in the provision of education and health services (Lange et al. 2000; 6). Soon afterwards, a variety of organizations entered the void left by the withdrawal of the state. These changes must be seen against the backdrop of the failure of the government in providing jobs and social services. Adding to the growth of the non-governmental sector is a strong focus upon NGOs on the part of donors, who have become disillusioned by the poor performance of autocratic third world governments. This has led to an increase in aid money channeled through NGOs and CBOs (community based organizations). Following these fundamental political and economic changes, there has been a mushrooming of non-governmental organizations, which are expected to play a significant role in service delivery and in the development of democracy. In 1993 there were 224 registered NGOs in Tanzania; in 2000 the number was 8499¹. In 1995, 56

¹ The number of NGOs varies with different sources. 8499 is taken from Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (1999) and Tripp (2000), in Lange et al. 2000. The Office of the Vice President in Tanzania operates with 2400

women's NGOs were registered in Tanzania (The Directory of Non-Governmental Organizations in Tanzania, 1995).

The NGO community is complex, consisting of different levels and objectives, and various financial and organizational resources. On the one hand, we find organizations preoccupied with social service delivery or so-called 'filling in the gaps' services (listed as District Development Trusts in the Directory of Tanzanian NGOs 1995, plus many religious organizations). On the other hand, we find interest organizations consisting of small community based organizations (CBOs), mass organizations like trade unions, and high profile advocacy groups. The high profile advocacy organizations comprise only a small part of the NGO sector, but due to their resources, advocacy profile, outreach activities, and media coverage they are highly visible members of the NGO community. These are also the organizations that are most likely to use the mass media strategically.

Advocacy organizations differ from the other types of NGOs by their goals of advocacy and raising awareness. As one organization stated, their role was to "form a critical part of the civil society, being close to the grassroots, and then advocate issues for policies and programmes" (Lange et al 2000; 16). Advocacy organizations aim to play a role in relation to the government and lobby for changes as well as advocate and strengthen democracy and development in general. In order to empower people and make them aware of their rights, a large number of awareness programs, workshops, and training seminars have been carried out by these organization, specifically related to human rights and democracy, women and children's rights, gender and development, and so forth. These efforts can be seen to meet strategic needs, which aim to empower people to take control of their own needs and provide them with space to make decisions affecting them and society (Mannathoko 1992; 70).

In spite of the vision of a civil society, in which NGOs hold a central role in representing and mobilizing popular participation, there is an overall tendency for top-down approaches to development among the NGOs. Organizations tend to be formed by resource people who reach out to the grassroots and not the other way around, which contradicts the ideal that civil society should be the voice of the people. A top-down approach is strengthened by the fact that people tend to see social development as something that should be carried out by the state, donors, and international or local organizations. Donor intervention and a history marked by a strong repressive state have hampered participation and local initiatives. It can therefore not be assumed that attempts to strengthen civil society by funding NGOs will automatically lead to the development, democratic governance, and popular participation considered necessary for meeting local needs. It is precisely

NGOs in the New NGO policy document 2000, while the last Directory of Tanzanian NGOs published in 1995 lists 64 international and 740 local NGOs, of these 56 women groups.

the perceived closeness to the people and understanding of their culture that gives local NGOs their position, which is seen to smooth program implementation and counter accusations of imperialism. If this closeness is absent, NGOs can lose their legitimacy as representatives of the grassroots, which are in turn further alienated from the center of decision-making (Mohan 2000; 13).

There are a number of critical issues that can be addressed regarding the NGOs' role in development. One other concern is that NGOs can be plagued by greed and fraud. The emphasis on NGOs in development could lead to the hijacking of genuinely needed aid money by old and well-established elites. Critics are also skeptical about the ability of civil society to create equality and universal benefits (Mohan 2000; 2). A study of NGOs' role in civil society and development turns up plenty of examples supporting this criticism, however, they are still seen as central players in Tanzania as elsewhere (cf. Lange et al. 2000). A central concept for this thesis is that the focus upon NGOs in development and civil society has opened up new opportunities for a women's movement to emerge and that the presence of NGOs legitimizes the struggle for women's rights and gender transformation in society.

4.3 New opportunities for a women's movement

In spite of political ideals based upon popular participation and a state policy that declared women and men as equals, the socialistic era left few opportunities for women to organize, as women were denied the freedom of print and expression and a civil society in general. However, Tanzania's past and successful experiences in mass movements, organizations, and collaboration have offered a tool for mobilizing women in the struggle for liberation. Women took an active part in the struggle for independence and therefore have collective memories to build upon. Women 'lost' their case for liberation after independence; now there are new opportunities evolving along with fundamental political and economical changes affecting the society as a whole. This time it is important that women make the struggle their own. As the statement below illustrates, the new political context represents an opportunity for women in Tanzania to organize, independent of political loyalty bonds and the governing party:

The door is now open for women. In the olden days if women wanted to get together they were united only in the CCM women's wing (UWT). There are more chances nowadays, not only political woman wings, but women can sit together and make their own associations and groups where they can work together regardless of their ideology (male activist #48).

As a result of the political changes as well as donors' attention, a space has been created for women to organize on different levels, ranging from small

community based organizations engaged in income-generating projects to high profile advocacy organizations. The first group can be characterized as economic enterprises where the members are struggling for their own survival, rather than aiming for social transformation of their society. In this thesis, it is the high profile advocacy organizations that are of greatest interest due to the primary goal to fight for gender equality, women's rights and the empowerment of women. A handful of women's/gender NGOs have concrete programs and action plans, and have gained visibility. The Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) is probably the most profiled women's NGO that is recognized by gender activists as well as ordinary people. The Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP), the Tanzania Women Lawyers' Association (TAWLA), and other women's/gender NGOs are starting to make headway on a social agenda. Following in the wake of multiparty democracy, these advocacy organizations create a potential new space for gender issues that didn't previously exist under the one party system:

During the single party time there was only one woman organization, which was affiliated to the ruling party. If you were not interested with the CCM you were left aside, because there was no any other movement. If you wanted to register another organization they would say; why don't you join UWT? Now, at least there are many organizations and they have decided not to involve themselves with politics. A woman movement is organized, not based on politics, which was not possible during the single party system (male activist #50).

The gender activists participating in this research acknowledged the importance of political liberalization for the emergence of a women's movement. To a great extent UWT was seen as part and parcel of the political system that for most part addressed economic issues while fundamental issues were not touched. One of my interviewees compared the role of UWT and TAMWA: *"UWT fought hard for the Marriage Act and for Maternity Leave, but it was not like a movement as such; it was a reserve of that clique, they were in power, even their husbands were in high power positions... So it was something that they were doing for women, but the issue of TAMWA was to make this our issue, come and join us if you are interested. I think this was a new phase"* (female activist #47). Among the grassroots there were both positive and negative reactions to what political liberalization had done for women's situation in the society. The following statement demonstrates an increased awareness about women's issues as a result of the emergence of women's/gender NGOs in the wake of multiparty democracy: *"I was very happy. It was a good thing; we went with time, not to follow the same channel we were following. We can see many NGOs, something we were not aware of before. TAMWA gained power; they passed everywhere to learn people about the election. TAMWA motivated women, so you see women are now warmed up with all issues concerning development. But, we fear that those who will benefit are the same who knows the meaning of development;*

others sit down to wait for their husband” (retired/small-scale business woman #28).

Among the grassroots it was common to associate political liberalization with freedom of speech, women’s rights, the emergence of non-governmental organizations, as well as increased political activity among women. As one house girl expressed: *“I am glad that women now can speak up their mind, lay down their suggestions and ideas, which are accepted and even pass in the Parliament”* (house girl #1). However, one specific event has been recurrently described by both gender activists and ordinary women as a demonstration of how state intervention limits the autonomy of civil society and the organizations it consists of. The following statement is a good illustration of this position: *“There is no room for women in these issues (political liberalization); this is because the organizations that represent women in the country are not wanted by the government. We expected BAWATA to be a tool for all women to be aware of their rights. If you observe the aims of BAWATA they touched even the areas of grassroots women”* (female secretary #13).

The National Women’s Council of Tanzania (BAWATA) was reckoned to be one of the most promising women’s NGOs, but was de-registered in late 1997 under the accusation of political activity. BAWATA was officially registered in May 1995, and already by October the same year the organization had more than 100,000 individual members and branches in all regions of Tanzania. The organization was the most promising women’s NGO in regard to real grassroots support. Among the aims were to liberate women from oppression, discrimination, and sexual harassment rooted in culture, customs and misguided laws (BAWATA material 1997). Some interviewees (gender activists) claimed that the suspension of BAWATA wouldn’t have happened if it had not operated alone.

The building of networks and coalitions are important for a social movement’s success both in regard to influencing macro policies and the public. In literature about civil society and democracy, these aspects are referred to as social capital, which includes features of social organization such as networks, norms, and trust that all facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam 1993). For a women’s movement to come into being, it is crucial to create and strengthen social capital, in the form of local organizations, cooperation, and networking. The importance of coalition building and networking were also stressed among the activists participating in my research, which requires that organizations pull their resources together and advocate a case as a group when there is an issue of common interest. As a TGNP member expressed it:

A woman movement cannot be achieved by one organization; even TGNP cannot fight for women emancipation alone. We have to cooperate with other organizations and groups and people in the government, combine our constraints and fight for common goals that we want to fulfill. We need a uniform sound that has to be heard and not silenced. It is very easy to silence let say TGNP, but not many organizations at the same time (male activist # 48).

The building of networks and coalitions to lobby and advocate for change distinguishes the 1990s from the 1980s; many of the older educational and professional NGOs have been swept up by the process. The early advocacy groups began as separate women's study groups, whereby women professionals struggled to combat gender discrimination in educational institutions and other workplaces (Mbilinyi 1997; 2). This development must also be seen against the backdrop of international trends. For instance, the TGNP started as a professional activist group determined to bring about development and gender equality, which was asked to find out the 'real' situation for Tanzanian women as a preparation to the 1995 Conference in Beijing. The networking process began early in 1992/1993 as an informal group of facilitators organized three workshops for leaders of NGOs. At the time of the Beijing conference, Tanzanian women activists exhibited the highest level ever of networking before, during, and after the event (Mbilinyi 1997; 4).

There are several examples of coalitions consisting of women's/gender NGOs that have decided to pull their resources together for common goals on issues such as land, education, violence against women, and strengthening women's power and visibility on gender issues in Parliament. A well-known coalition is the Gender Land Task Force, consisting of seven NGOs led by TAWLA, which is a professional group of female lawyers. TAWLA had previously involved itself with internal matters, but after agreeing to lead the coalition, this was the first step in a more visible struggle that involved sensitizing and mobilizing the public about a new land policy that was being launched. A male activist in the force claimed:

In fact, what I have discovered is if NGOs are united for a particular issue the government is going to respond immediately. We have experience of this in the land issue; because we have been working it as a common matter the government officials were very much responsible. In fact, most of the issues that we were working have been resolved; but not as a particular NGO, it can't work. The government could claim that some NGOs are being used by opposition parties, but because we are many they can't say that all are working for a particular political party. So they have to accept the issues as issues. If we write together, fight together for particular problems then I am sure that all the major issues will come to an end (male activist #51).

The creation of organizations is critical for a women's movement to emerge as a social movement, but it is important not to mistake one for the other. A social

movement is not one organization or one particular interest group, but rather like a cognitive territory; it is a new conceptual space that is filled by the interaction between different groups, organizations, and institutions (Eyerman and Jamison 1992). Women's/gender NGOs have a special role to play in shaping a cultural space for gender transformation entailing alternative representations and identities that contest dominant cultural codes and representations.

TAMWA, TGNP, and other high profile women's organizations can be thought of as vehicles carrying and producing the movement's identity in their attempts to lobby and advocate among Parliamentarians and other strategic groups in society, as well as build networks and coalitions, and by organizing workshops, seminars, producing reports, newsletters, campaigns, demonstrations, and speeches. However, if women's/gender NGOs are to challenge dominant meaning systems it is not enough to do this only on the grounds of technocratic power. They must also make this struggle visible to public scrutiny. In order to put new ideas and issues on the public agenda - as opposed to more closed circles - the mass media plays a crucial role in the wider dissemination of ideas, issues, and actions, and by redefining collective identities. A point that is also recognized among high profile women's organizations, as illustrated in the following statement: "*The media is important if you want to advocate; you can organize and if you want the whole country to know then use the media*" (female activist #46). The aim of advocacy women's organizations is normally two-fold. On the one hand, these groups want to influence policies affecting women on a macro-level and the course of development in general. On the other hand, they want to reach out to the public and involve grassroots women in their work. The problems involved with including the grassroots and an urban bias are major criticisms of women's/gender activist organizations.

Problems posed by involving the grassroots

The establishment of non-governmental organizations dealing with women's/gender issues is not sufficient on its own for a women's movement to emerge. The issues, ideas, and understandings that a women's movement stands for have to strike a chord in people. Such a group has to mobilize the grassroots and be incorporated into their daily lives. No matter how successful these organizations are at influencing macro policies and government politics they will come to short if they don't engage the grassroots. As a woman activist explains:

There is not really a woman movement just because we see NGOs and CBOs of women all over the country. They are mushrooming, but not in a very coordinated way. However, collisions are being built up on issues of common interest, so I would have to say it is coming. When you talk of a movement that is everybody is more or less involved and not just a few. In mobilizing all women so we are talking one thing is a long way to go (female activist #46).

Women's/gender activist organizations have been heavily criticized for working on behalf of grassroots women and not with them, which is related to a narrow elite membership base. Advocacy organizations in general are formed by educated people or professionals (from 10 to a few hundred members), and typically have an urban base, mostly localized in Dar es Salaam. The organizations do not generally aim to have a broad membership, but rather work for the disadvantaged masses through advocacy and lobbying, training and workshops, and cooperation with smaller organizations. This raises the question of whether workshops and training courses are being extended to the groups that most need them. In order to reach unorganized people Lange et al. (2000) suggests exploring other arenas where Tanzanians meet. However, such meeting places are gendered, and women's activities are often organized in or around the household sphere. This makes it hard to reach the majority of women. One way is to intensify the use of the mass media and in a more strategic manner, as the media is one of the few means to gain access to the private household.

Women have yet to get direction on how they can be helped. Those women who know what to do and where to go to get assistance they keep it for themselves. Therefore, I would advise those organizations that give assistance to women groups or activities to let women know of their whereabouts and the kind of assistance offered through the mass media (female secretary #12).

From my interviews it appears that the mass media reaches many women. Several of the female participants used the media deliberately to get information about women's (and children's) issues, which is apparent in both reading strategies (newspapers) and in the choice of programs in radio and television (cf. Chapter 5.3). Some of the interviewees even learned about different organizations through the media before they joined these groups. For instance: *"I heard about SERO (Women in Business) for the first time in the newspaper, and from neighbours who had joined. Then, I decided to come and join. I also saw the director Miss Victoria in TV, she explained... in Jarida la Wanawake (Women's Journal)"* (retired/small-scale business woman #29). Also, two of the teenage mothers in this study learned about Temeke Youth Center, where they are able to continue with their studies, through newspapers and radio.

It is interesting to observe that men are in general more critical than women regarding women's/gender NGOs, and at the same time men appear to have less knowledge about these organizations. As the statement below illustrates, there is a general tendency to judge all women's organizations alike: *"Woman activists are very few, what they are doing you can agree that they don't intend to liberate women or make them equal. They are always fighting for equal rights with men, but they don't show any efforts to make more women equal. Most women are poor, not educated and don't live in Dar es Salaam, they live in the village... they are the ones they should be going to educate the rural ones in practice"* (male petty trader/unemployed #33). Yet, TAMWA as well as other woman/gender

organizations have outreach programs in order to reach the grassroots, along with free consultative services for their target groups. For example, TAMWA runs a crisis center for women; TAWLA offers free legal aid on certain weekdays. One reason behind men's criticism of women's/gender NGOs might be a common belief among people that whoever gets access to foreign funds will embezzle them. There is also little doubt that the elite-based organizations are seen as important career opportunities.

In order to reach men it appears that a women's movement would benefit from male activists in their activities. The activists participating in this research saw men as having an important role to play in a women's movement; male activists particularly perceived it as crucial that they attempt to reach and sensitize their fellow men and therefore should be more visible in a women's movement, in their activities, and in the media. According to these men, a women's movement wouldn't be taken seriously by men if it didn't include men as its spokespersons:

The major role of men is to reach their fellow men, because women cannot penetrate to reach men and sensitize them. If you say Mrs. so and so will come to address, men will say that it is woman business - it is not for us. Issues of women need to be addressed to men; because men are the ones to change, but if you are concentrating on women only you are just wasting your time. You're sensitizing them, but they don't have decision at their homes. But if you sensitize both men and women, I think it becomes easier (male activist #49).

A similar point was made by another male activist who saw it as a problem that men have not come up in the press talking clearly about women's or gender issues – something that makes people lose interest: *“If women are trying to disintegrate from men - which is not true, they are trying to get what they are supposed to get - but the way news is being received about women, it's seen as women are trying to keep themselves different to men; it's not considered that they are fighting for their rights. That's why sometimes I think that any woman activities they should invite men to be there to get support, rather than themselves alone* (male activist #51). In other words, a women's movement would benefit from more men being visible in the groups' activities and issues so as to counteract the perception that woman activists are 'doing it for themselves' and not for other women, and for men to accept the issues as issues.

Along the same lines, women's/gender activist organizations have also been heavily criticized for failing to go to rural areas where the majority of the people live. A criticism that was also evident among the participants in this thesis, as can be illustrated by the following statement: *“Women are now fighting for their rights; everyday there is a meeting or a seminar where they are trying to organize themselves, but I am telling you they only talk of themselves here in Dar es Salaam; there is no talking about the rural women”* (male banker #39).

Reaching out to the rural areas is a critical point that faces advocacy organizations in general. At the same time, there is a lack of involvement from the people's side, which is reflected in a shortage of independent organizations in many rural districts. Several factors might contribute to this situation. There are few educated people to establish and run organizations. People lack awareness of their rights, and knowledge as to how these rights can be voiced and channeled into the government system. There is no culture for voicing discontent or taking action, which has been described as the 'culture of silence', developed during the one-party rule (Lange et al. 2000; 15). Finally, poverty serves as an explanation for the limited grassroots participation. People who are preoccupied with meeting their basic needs don't have the resources to participate and organize themselves. With these restrictions in mind, it is clearly a challenge for all advocacy groups to overcome the barriers of the countryside - not the least in convincing people of the importance in voicing their concerns and that voicing concerns is legitimate. Women's activist groups face a situation that is further complicated by the dominant patriarchal attitude in addition to a 'culture of silence'. In this context, it can be regarded as positive that some people fight the cause for others, a point that was recognized among my participants: "*If I look at the little I know of women and their life in Tanzania, maybe they are not able to express themselves what they want to explain, what they are facing and when it comes how to write... that's why we have associations like TAMWA and whatever*" (male banker #41). Or as a nursery school teacher expressed: "*Our fellow women are defending us, for example woman MPs are talking about raping issues. This is an important issue. Woman harassment by husbands, in inheritance women are harassed, but through the mass media they are defending us and they talk about these issues*" (nursery school teacher #8).

Aside from the need for women's NGOs to have a physical presence in rural areas, a women's movement depends on the mass media to further disseminate ideas, actions, and identities. However, in rural areas the mass media is poorly developed, which represents a barrier for women to get information from the mass media. Both male and female interviewees stressed the importance of developing the mass media in rural areas, but the latter group also saw this in relation to women's development issues. "*The media should spread up to the villages, because the light we have here in Dar es Salaam is only here, but in the village men are harassing women. They don't have any push, the media is not available in the villages, even somebody cannot get information about crisis centers*" (female tailoring teacher #10). Besides using the mass media in a more strategic and intensive manner, the elite-based advocacy organizations could work closer with the people and reach out with their awareness programs and training by developing better links between the elite-based organizations and smaller community-based organizations. Even organizations primarily occupied with service delivery acknowledge that they have a role in strengthening

democracy and civil society in general (Lange et al. 2000; 16). Links could therefore be developed between these types of organizations and advocacy groups.

All in all, women's/gender organizations have been heavily criticized for working on behalf of the grassroots rather than with them. The central component of empowerment is for the disempowered to act on their own behalf. Thus, it can be argued that the strong focus upon NGOs in development has not lead to empowerment of women or other disenfranchised groups such as poor men and youths. In practical terms this means that attempts to enhance the role of NGOs as the engine for development and civil society share similar features to the welfare approach in which concerned individuals act on behalf of the grassroots. Women's empowerment involves both collective and individual action to change each sector's power structures and relations that are disempowering, including economic, political, cultural, and psychological powers and at different levels from household to global (TGNP 1993). Hence, I end this chapter by exploring a micro-oriented knowledge perspective on gender transformation, empowerment, and development, in which increased critical consciousness through encounters with others is central.

4.4 A micro-oriented knowledge perspective on development

I have emphasized the importance of people, in particular women, in participating as subjects rather than objects in development and social transformation. Development and women's liberation must go hand-in-hand entailing transformed gender identities that replace traditional attitudes towards women as subordinate and incapable creatures. The struggle for women's liberation is not only something that happens out there, but on an inner level. Every woman born into a reality structured by unequal gender relations has to undertake this inner struggle of self-identity in order to liberate herself. This point can be illustrated by a statement from one of my interviewees:

First, I would like the media to increase the programs related to development. Secondly, to motivate women development-wise and to have economic status; other women do not show their struggle they only know that women's duty is to stay at home cooking for their husband, washing, et cetera. But, for women to struggle themselves so that they can contribute to the family (retired/small-scale business woman #27).

In my thinking about gender transformation and empowerment as significant elements in development, I have found useful information in the work of Paulo Freire (1997). He developed a theory for the education of people who are illiterate, especially adults, based on the conviction that every human being, no matter how ignorant or submerged in the 'culture of silence', is capable of

looking critically at the world in dialogical encounters with others. Provided with the proper tools for such an encounter, the individual can gradually perceive his or her personal and social reality and deal critically with it. Freire writes about 'conscientizaqao', which refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economical contradictions and to take action against the oppressive elements of 'reality' (Freire 1997; 1). Those who come to a new awareness of selfhood and begin to look critically at the social situation in which they find themselves often take the initiative to transform the society that has denied them this opportunity of participation. A keyword in Freire's work is liberation, that is, a struggle of the oppressed to become free subjects and to participate in the transformation of their society.

Even though Freire doesn't deal with gender issues, I find his ideas inspiring as I attempt to grasp the creation of transformed gender identities as a significant element in development. The similarity to the struggle of women's liberation is striking, where women emerge as free and productive subjects with a conscious self, taking part in development processes and transformation of their society. Women will not only benefit from democratic freedom and income-generating activities, but their contributions also fuel democratic and development processes. They will not gain liberation by chance, but through their quest for it and through their recognition of the necessity to fight for it (c.f Freire 1997; 27). When women accept the struggle for women's liberation they also accept responsibility for this struggle. They must realize that they are fighting not merely for freedom from hunger, but for freedom to create and to construct, to question and venture into the world as well as inside themselves. During my interviews I came across many examples showing that women/girls have started to analyze and reflect upon the social situation that surrounds them, which can be illustrated by the following statement:

We are being oppressed different from men, for instance, say a girl she has become pregnant when she is still in school and she may have been made pregnant by her fellow student. You find that the girl will be dismissed from school, but the boy is left unquestioned. It is not her own mistake, but caused by two people...the girl should be allowed to complete her studies... the act of isolating the girl, it is not good (female youth #21).

Women's/gender NGOs represent leadership that is spearheading the struggle for women's liberation; their actions can be viewed as moments of collective identity formation. Women/gender activists can be seen as subjects who are no longer willing to be mere objects, but have taken it upon themselves to change the structures of the society that has served to oppress them. They have discovered that they are creators of culture. However, activists should not perceive themselves as liberators of grassroots women, but as committed to fight at their side. No one liberates herself by her own efforts alone. In the struggle for gender transformation, therefore, both activists and grassroots women should be

perceived as subjects who attain knowledge of reality and critical approach it through common reflection and action. Critical and liberating dialogue, which presupposes action, must be carried out with women, whatever stage of their struggle for liberation they find themselves in. Critical encounters must be carried out, on the one hand, between and among gender activists and male sympathizers and, on the other hand, ordinary women and men; between husbands and wives, as well as between parents and their children. I believe that the mass media has the potential to be a tool for dialogical encounters by confronting oppressive relationships and praxis, which can spur to discussion, reflection, and critical dialogue. The following statement illuminates the role of the media:

I think the media is important especially for a woman movement, because we need to get issues discussed. What we need to do is initiate a dialog so that the issues that are emerging in the woman movement can really be part of a national debate that can engage people into a dialogue where they see the rationality of the issues that we are talking about. You find that there is resistance, but if you can succeed to have a dialog at the level of the family; in schools the children can talk about things in the play ground. I think the media is one powerful way of being able to create such a situation (female activist #47).

The media is not the only tool for carrying out dialogical encounters, but it is the only arena that provides a potential shared public discourse. As such, the media plays a crucial role for the wider dissemination of ideas, issues and actions, and by redefining collective identities, which can ease the struggle for gender transformation. It is by participating in the intersection of a wide range of social discourses and practices that subjectivity is constructed and reconstructed. Within this ‘cognitive territory’, the media can highlight causes of oppression and relations of subordination at different levels and sectors of the society – between men and women as well as between people and the state. Among my interviewees, it was recurrently stressed that the media was important due to its educational and informative functions: *“The mass media is important, because it educates. In the news you hear about important issues like gender harassment, woman development; therefore this motivates us. For example, different tribes oppress women like circumcising a woman. Therefore, if you sit down and analyze issues you will see how they oppress women when they want to fight for their own development”* (small-scale business woman #23).

Underlying Freire’s work is the idea that the world is not a static and closed order, a given reality which one must accept and adjust to; rather it is a problem to be worked on and solved. According to his way of thinking, the struggle for women’s liberation is possible because oppression of women is not a given destiny, but the result of an unjust order. This order engenders violence in men, which in turn dehumanizes women. In order for women to be able to wage the struggle for their liberation, they must perceive the reality of oppression not as a

closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation that can be transformed. The media can challenge this unjust order by promoting a dynamic view of the world or legitimize this order by featuring oppression as a given reality from which there is no escape, and thereby contribute to oppression and dehumanization of women.

Freire operates with a dialectic relationship between the oppressor versus the oppressed, which in this study is manifested first and foremost in the relationship between men and women². There are several obstacles to the achievement of women's liberation that are apparent in the characteristic relationship between men and women as well as in men and women. Freire (1997; 29) claims that one of the basic elements of the relationship between oppressor (man) and oppressed (woman) is prescription: "Every prescription represents the imposition of one individual's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness." Thus, the behavior of women is a prescribed behavior following as it does the guidelines of men. A woman who has internalized the image of a man and adopted his guidelines is fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to reject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility. The media could contribute to this process by portraying alternative representations of women as independent and responsible, with success stories of women entrepreneurs and in politics as well as in other sectors of society. Another feature of oppression apparent in the relationship between men and women is that one is independent and its essential nature is to be for itself; the other is dependent and its essential nature is life or existence for another (Freire 1997; 31). The media can reflect and thereby legitimize this biased picture, or the media can contribute to change by portraying women with virtues that are independent of their relationships to men, reproduction, or kinship.

Moreover, Freire mentions characteristics of the oppressor (man) that work as hindrances to achieve liberation. According to his approach, a man's consciousness tends to transform everything surrounding him into an object of his domination. The earth, property, production, reproduction, time, women and children are all reduced to the status of objects at his disposal. In their eagerness to possess, men develop the conviction that it is possible for them to transform everything into objects of their purchasing power. For the oppressors what counts is to have more even at the cost of the oppressed having less or nothing. A man therefore might perceive women's liberation as a subversion of himself and a threat to his manhood. This might be a source for hostility against women who try to liberate themselves – viewed as potential enemies who are ungrateful towards the generous gestures of their men.

² Although, it is an important part of gender relations I recognize that oppressive structures discriminating against women cannot be reduced to their relationships with men.

Concerning characteristics of the oppressed (women), I will mention three features that I find relevant for this study. First, the so-called duality of the oppressed, which means that women are at the same time themselves and their men, whose image they have internalized. Until they discover their oppressor and in turn their own consciousness, they nearly always express fatalistic attitudes towards their situation (Freire 1997; 43). Second, the oppressed cannot perceive clearly the 'order' that serves the interests of the oppressors. "Chafing under the restriction of this order, they often manifest a type of horizontal violence striking out at their own comrades for the pettiest reasons" (Freire 1997; 44). Third, the oppressed are characterized by a lack of confidence and self-depreciation, which derives from their internalization of the oppressor's opinion and hold on them.

Since I was born I have seen a woman regarded as nothing, just somebody to do all the works, but men do specific jobs. This is not fear, we need to be equal, and men should not treat women as tools rather their fellow being. They should work together with women without despises and oppression (female secretary #15).

If women hear all the time that they are good for nothing, know nothing and are incapable of learning anything, in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness. This leads to the feeling of being inferior to the man and causes emotionally dependency, because the man seems to be the one who knows things and is able to run them. Without realizing that they too know things, women come to distrust themselves as well as other women. As long as the oppressed remain unaware of the causes of their condition, they fatalistically accept their exploitation. Women are therefore apt to react in a passive and alienated manner when confronted with the necessity of struggle for their freedom and self-affirmation.

An important idea in this study is that subjectivity and gender identity are constructed and reconstructed in our articulation and expression through language, and in other forms of cultural representation by our participation in a multitude of social processes and discourses. Unlike Freire, I have approached relations of subordination from a discursive angle, using his input in approaching the role of the media in the cultural struggle of gender transformation. However, both a discursive perspective and Freire's standpoint, which probably can best be understood as an actor-oriented or radical perspective, emphasize that language and communication are key elements in constituting objects of knowledge, and can therefore be said to share the Lacanian notion of subjectivity. Post-structuralist theory understands power as an all-pervasive cultural influence, or as described by Foucault, power operates in culture through discourses (c.f. Chapter 2.3). A central idea in post-structuralism is that the disciplinary power of discourse can be resisted and subverted. Along with this view, Freire's contribution can be seen to explain *how* individuals can be empowered to look

critically at the social situation in which they find themselves, and thereby resist the disciplinary power of discourse prescribing and restricting gender identities. I therefore have found Freire's theory useful in analyzing discursive practices.

4.5 Conclusion

The political watershed facing Tanzania has changed its policy for development and opened the country up to liberal forces with a contradictory impact on women. In general, these changes have entailed a shift from sender to receiver-centered approach to development. Criticism of welfare approaches and their failure to incorporate women as well as other disempowered groups have given way to alternative theories of development. As a result, development approaches have become more pro-women, in which women are considered active participants in development processes. This shift has also allowed for a stronger focus on the need for NGOs to take an active role in development and civil society. This has created new opportunities for women to organize, articulate, and express themselves and for civil society to grow in general. Moreover, Tanzania is increasingly becoming part of a worldwide political economy. Thus, it can be expected that the process of globalization will have a bigger impact on the development of the country than previously. In sum, these trends have directed attention to women's role in development and have created new opportunities for woman activists, while at the same time legitimizing their struggle for women's rights and gender transformation in the society.

However, non-governmental organizations have been heavily criticized for working on behalf of the grassroots rather than with them. Hence, it can be argued that the strong focus on NGOs in development has not led to empowerment of women or other disempowered groups. Women's empowerment involves both collective and individual action to change the power structures and relations in each sector that are disempowering, including economic, political, cultural, and psychological powers. However, there has been a continued tendency to relate women's oppression to their economic position, while leaving out other important elements in overcoming unequal and oppressive relations. Many problems or constraints on development are culturally conditioned, such as the patriarchal attitude or gender ideology that hinders women's participation in development.

In order for women to participate in development as subjects, every woman born into a reality structured by unequal gender relations will have to undertake this inner struggle of self-identity in order to liberate herself. In this respect, it is not enough to focus primarily on basic needs and poverty elimination, as is reflected in current welfare approaches as well as NGOs, which are occupied with service delivery. It is also not sufficient to focus on issues of access and equality to

resources and opportunities in education, land, employment and wages, credit and other productive resources as expressed in liberal feminism and the WID approach. In order to empower women it is also necessary to enable women (and men) to critically analyze the world at all levels (from household to global) and the different sectors of society so as to identify basic causes of gender discrimination and inequality. The media has an important role in confronting oppressive relationships and praxis, and in stimulating to discussion, reflection, and critical dialogue. Moreover, the mass media has potential for promoting a dynamic view of the world by exposing local audiences to new places, cultures, and behavior.

CHAPTER FIVE

The media landscape: From local to global culture

The media landscape in Tanzania has changed dramatically as a result of the liberalization of the economy and the political system. These changes have allowed for private media to emerge and to have more autonomy in the society. This chapter begins with a discussion of these changes and how they may affect women's liberation (5.1). It is my contention that the liberalization and commercialization of the mass media has had a double-edged impact on the woman's movement, an impact that represents both new opportunities and risks for female representations in the media.

The movement from socialism to capitalism also opens Tanzania for the forces of globalization and foreign culture, as the country is increasingly becoming part of a worldwide political economy. In the cultural arena, the country has gone from being almost completely closed off from the outside world to becoming part of a global and commercial culture. In Chapter 5.2, I discuss the consequences of the sudden transformation of the media landscape, in particular the fear of Western influence on Tanzanian culture and morals. Television, which is the newest and most international mass medium, is blamed for teaching youth a Western culture and lifestyle that is bringing moral decay into Tanzanian society. At the same time, globalization of the media represents a new symbolic environment that can open up new horizons and give rise to new ideas, thoughts and feelings in local audiences. As such, globalization of the media represents new opportunities for women in different parts of the world to overcome oppressive traditions. An issue at stake, therefore, is the impact of media globalization on gender identities and how this might result in cultural transformation in the society.

Finally, I discuss issues related to media use and people's experiences of the mass media, including global considerations (Chapter 5.3). Overall, it appears that the mass media, such as newspapers, radio, and even television, already play an important part in urban dwellers' lives. A central issue is how media choice and reading strategies entail empowering elements for women (and men), which might facilitate gender transformation or development in general.

5.1 Changing the rules of the press

The liberalization of the economy and the introduction of multiparty democracy represented a major turning point for the media; it paved the way for private media to emerge, including the introduction of television, and allowed for an increase in market penetration. Over the last few years, private radio and television stations have appeared and a wave of independent newspapers has been born. This development stands in sharp contrast to media situation during the socialist era, when there were a few state-owned media, consisting of one state-owned radio channel and two newspapers, which were mainly concerned with party propaganda and supporting socialism as the country's policy for development. Under President Nyerere's leadership, television was prohibited in an attempt to escape Western influence. At the time of my fieldwork (1998), there were four television stations in Dar es Salaam: ITV (Independent television), CTN (Cable Television Network), DTV (Dar es Salaam Television) and CEN (Cable Entertainment Network). Television ya Taifa (National Television) was introduced in late 1999. The latest development is the IPP media group's introduction of Channel 5 – a 24 hour entertainment channel for East Africa (EATV) and East Africa Radio (2002). More than 50 newspapers were registered; however, none of them were controlled by a woman (TGNP 1997)¹. This development has enabled the media to gain more autonomy in Tanzanian society. The increase in media channels allows for the articulation of problems and the dissemination of knowledge, along with the presentation of different priorities and views than those of the state-owned media. According to a TGNP review (1997), the private media challenges the state-owned media and has diversified the role of the media in informing, educating, and entertaining the public. The media are now continuously reporting on corruption by state officials and other sensitive areas, which previously would not be disseminated by the state-owned media.

Still, many newspapers are more business-oriented rather than ideologically based; the latter serve readers with a wide range of topics, balanced coverage of events, analysis of social issues, and development-oriented stories. Many Swahili newspapers lack hard news and investigative journalism, instead filling their pages with cheap stories spiced up by provocative headlines and graphics, and entertainment news. Some excuse this approach, by using the notion of the freedom of the press, which entails a minimum of state intervention (Maoulidi 1997; 7). For a women's movement, the commercialization of the press appears to be a doubled-edged sword. On the one side, liberalization has paved the way for women's/gender issues to win more coverage in the news. Topics that used to be taboo, such as gender-based violence and sexual abuse, are now commonly

¹ The number of mass media is subjected to constant change; however, most of them are urban based. Also other regions have their own radio and television stations.

reported (TGNP 1997; 10). Some newspapers have policies that promote women's and gender issues, including a special women's page (The Guardian/Sunday observer, The Daily News, Majira, Mtanzania, and Nipashe). On the other side, liberalization of the press is blamed for increased and widespread portrayal of women as objects of male pleasure and violence. It is claimed that women have become a commodity and are only portrayed to the degree that they satisfy certain economic needs (Sanga 1996, TGNP 1997, Kayoka 1997). The priority is to sell newspapers, and the assumption is that stories about women do not sell unless they involve sex, violence, or scandals committed by women or against women such as rape, suicide attempts, and dealing with fraud (Kayoka 1997). One major contributor to the poor quality and lack of professional ethics has been the rapid growth in the media industry, which has led to a lack of qualified journalists and media workers. In spite of the positive effects this development has had on increasing the percentage of working female journalists over the past two decades, the majority of female journalists are found among the unskilled media workers, resulting in a negative reputation (Maoulidi 1997).

Strong tendencies toward market concentration and monopolies are now commonly seen in the Western, developed world as a threat to the freedom of the press and expression. Such trends are not yet as prevalent in the Tanzanian media world, although there are clear signs of market concentration. For example, the IPP media group has 14 newspaper titles under its name, two TV stations (ITV and EATV), as well as two radio stations (Radio One and EAR)). Likewise, Majira, Business Times, Dar Leo, and Sanifu are one media group (Maoulidi 1997; 8). Still, the state is seen as the biggest enemy to freedom of the press in Tanzania. In spite of the right to have privately owned media and the elimination of direct censorship, the State still lurks behind the scene. Since the emergence of an independent press in the early 1990s, journalists, editors, and publishers have been arbitrarily detained and at times charged with sedition (Tripp 1997; 104). Other state interventions that limit the free market and freedom of expression are the requirement that cultural groups have to obtain a special permit before giving a performance, and the state's refusal to allow private television and radio stations to have national coverage.

The media coverage under the first multiparty election in 1995 demonstrated that the media's ideology still bears elements from the previous periods that were marked by authoritarianism and socialism. The use of a government propaganda film from the civil war in Rwanda/Burundi cast a shadow over this election when it was aired over Tanzanian television and shown in the rural countryside by government officials. It was publicized in order to scare the population away from unrest if opposition parties had won the election, an approach that made a solid impression on people. This message of unrest and even civil war was

perceptible among participants in this research, in particular women and youth. Nursery school teachers, barmaids, house girls and male and female youths said that they were afraid that the introduction of multiparty democracy in the country would lead to chaos and at worst civil war. "*I felt just bad, because there is a lot of opposition, this can endanger people's lives, there can happen a war. So for me, I found multiparty bad, I even didn't vote*" (barmaid #4). Hence, the media can represent a force that promotes assimilation and the subordination of potentially deviant or oppositional elements in society (McQuail 1994; 100).

Popular culture and access to television

While Tanzania's political and economic changes have opened up new opportunities for women to earn their own money and participate more fully in the economy and in society, these changes also pose risks, because women can lose important values. As I have argued previously, I have found the Swahili drama particular suited to understanding the conflicts and negotiations that arise when urban dwellers are pulled between modern and traditional discourses. It is important to note that even though the groups producing these plays draw upon real life experiences from their neighborhoods, relatives, friends, or their own lives, they do not represent real life. Rather, the plays can be seen as a discursive site where actors and producers engage in serious self-reflection about urban life and the conflicts and tensions that arise in the process of modernization (Lange 1997; 156).

The fictionalized contrasts between the city and country found in the political discourse of the *ujamaa*, reflected in the cultural policy at the time, still live strong in contemporary popular culture. In Swahili drama productions, stereotypical images of women and contrasts between the country and the city are recurrently constructed to make sense of a changing world, but in contrast to the idealized versions of country and village life, these plays don't represent coherent support for official ideology (Lange 2002; 1997). Even though there are some obvious differences between live popular drama and television plays, the latter can be seen as a continuation of the live popular drama developed by the commercial cultural groups that established themselves in the wake of liberalization policies that started in the mid-eighties. Instead of dealing with governmental campaigns and policies, these groups used their space to make plays that were of interest to ordinary people, addressing domestic conflicts between the sexes and in the family, and the dilemmas people face when pulled between traditional norms and values and modern urban life (Lange 2002; 172). Live drama as well as television drama provides a space where modern and traditional values and ways of life are negotiated and contested, and often present conflicting solutions to contemporary problems and dilemmas that the urban population faces (Lange 2002; 20). Typical problems played out in these plays

are related to tensions between modern lifestyles and traditional customs in marriage, bride price, and parental authority.

With the introduction of television in Dar es Salaam in 1993, Swahili drama was able to reach new audiences. While the live shows were and still are made by and for the lower and intermediate classes, the television plays are increasingly created for middle class tastes, and by producers and actors from this stratum. However, as I discuss more in detail below, television is not something that only the more privileged have access to. Popular culture therefore has increasing importance in defining reality and gender definitions.

Television access

Over just a few years, during Tanzanian television's short history, it has become common among the urban population to own a television set. Sixty-eight percent of the participants in my study had television at home (c. f. Chapter 5.3). Other studies have shown the same trend. A random survey conducted in Dar es Salaam in 1997 showed that in Sinza, a middle class residential area, as many as 74 percent had television, while the same was true for 43 percent in Mwananyamala, a typical Swahili neighborhood (Schifferdecker 2000; 74). In my own neighborhood, Kariakoo/Gerezani, where I was surrounded by people who were struggling to make life go around, I was struck by all the TV-antennas sticking up from the buildings everywhere. This observation confirms to the impression that TV is not only becoming widespread among the middle class and rich people, but also among ordinary women and men.

One reason that people can afford a television set is that many outlets sell used black and white TVs that they have imported 'cheaply' from abroad. In addition, of course, it is a matter of priority. As elsewhere in the Third World, people living in rented rooms in poor housing use the little money they have to buy a television set. There are probably more people who own a television set than a refrigerator. Moreover, there is always the opportunity to watch television in bars, and at the houses of neighbors or friends. In my survey, those who didn't own a TV commonly watched television at the homes of neighbors, friends, and relatives, or at work. Only 5 of my 51 participants stated that they never or rarely watched television. When television was first introduced, people would gather in big crowds at the bars that had invested in a television set. And there is Mnazi Mmoja, a big space between the Indian Quarter and Kariakoo, where television is shown on a huge screen. During the first years of television, the wars in the neighboring countries, and an endless row of refugees, made a great impact on Tanzanians (Lange 2002; 143). This was also clear from my own interviews:

In TV I can see other countries I would never have thought of seeing; like in Rwanda and Burundi. I watch news about wars and learn how a country may be if it enters in civil wars. People have no settlement at all; they are refugees here and there. But in TV you can watch them; you see also different events happening in almost every corner of the world (female secretary #13).

An event that drew people's attention at the time of my fieldwork was the death of Princess Diana, September 1997. This event struck me as a "world moment" (Johansen 1999; 200); as soon as it had been announced on TV the death of the princess was the biggest topic in the streets of Dar es Salaam. Both television and the newspapers covered this event intensely in the weeks that followed. The following comment illustrates the importance of television in such events: "*We heard it in the radio the death of Princess Diana. Television showed all events live. You are not there, but you see all actions. It is not like you only hear people saying. So if one does not have TV you will be discouraged* (small-scale business woman #26). At first, I was puzzled by all the attention people gave to this event, but soon realized that Princess Diana and her tragic death meant something different for people in Africa. She came to symbolize the 'princess of the poor' with her engagement in battling land mines and embracing the problems of third-world countries. Nonetheless, the event demonstrates that Tanzania is now part of a global media world, and television adds a new dimension to this new symbolic environment. If the accident had happen 10 years earlier, probably few would have given it the attention that it received 1997, when the event was fueled by television's immediate and vivid images.

5.2 From local to global culture

Watching TV is like, what is happening in one place I can see the happening at the same time as it occurs in the news or when we have boxing or soccer competition you get it live. Apart from, let say radio they can tell you something happened and they can explain, but you can't watch what they mean to explain... From dramas, it is like you learn culture from people (tourist coach agent # 37).

With the movement from socialism to capitalism, Tanzania is increasingly becoming part of a worldwide political economy that is being subjected to the processes of globalization. This development is not at least visible in the cultural arena, where the country has gone from being almost closed off from the outside world to becoming part of a global and commercial culture. In general, globalization refers to market forces that cross national boundaries without state influence or political control, which give rise to increased interconnectedness of different parts of the world and thereby complex forms of interaction and interdependency (Johansen 1999; 139). The globalization of the mass media has dislodged restrictions of space and time, which makes it possible for individuals situated in local contexts to have access to information and entertainment across continents and cultures at nearly the same time. Individuals in different parts of

the world can interact or at least act within a mediated quasi-interaction, even though they are situated in their local context in their day-to-day lives (Thompson 1995; 149).

However, power and resources are unevenly distributed between countries, and the flow of information is, as a consequence, asymmetric, with a few important centers and numerous peripheries. A handful of transnational media corporations dominate the global media market. This development has provoked concern in many parts of the world – especially the influence of American media-culture on smaller states' cultural integrity and sovereignty. The unbalanced flow of communication from North to South has raised debates about the potential cultural effects on Third World nations, where these nations are subjected to a new form of Western dependency that has the potential to damage the original culture and to act as a barrier to development. Criticism of globalization of the media has its roots in the notion of worldwide US imperialism, and dates back to the 1970s when the non-aligned countries forwarded demands about a New World Information and Communication Order through UNESCO in their struggle to retain their cultural and political autonomy (Ulla Carlsson 1998; 114). These issues have gained renewed attention with the acceleration of globalization processes, along with the development of new information technology, increased concentration of media power, and the expansion of transnational media corporations.

At the same time that Tanzania is increasingly becoming integrated into the world economy, the globalization processes have picked up its pace. Morley and Robins (1995; 11) argue that “during the 1980s, as a consequence of the complex interplay of regulatory, economic and technological change, dramatic upheavals took place in the media industries, laying the basis for what must be seen as new media order”.² Whereas broadcasting around the globe used to be nationally oriented, with the goal of national unity, it now has taken a global form, resulting in a fear of a loss of national identity. In Europe, the system of public service broadcasting – providing the audience with mixed programming that is subject to strict controls over the amount of foreign material – have prevailed for more than half a century. Radio, and later television, became the central mechanism for the political public sphere of the nation-state and was the focus for national unity and cultural identification. As Cardiff and Scannell (1987; 157) describe in their account of the early days of BBC, radio was consciously employed “to forge a link between the dispersed and disparate listeners and the symbolic heartland of national life.” Even in different contexts such as the United States, where commercial broadcasting was the norm from the beginning, or the previous

² Morley and Robins use of the term new media order is not be confused with the 1970s debate concerning a New World Information and Communication Order, which aimed (and failed) at making information flow more democratic and balanced, and thereby protecting Third World countries political and cultural sovereignty and identity .

communist Soviet Union, where the media was directly controlled by the party, national concerns were paramount. Broadcasting is probably the most significant institution in our history, through which listeners and viewers have come to imagine themselves as members of a national community.

In a relatively short time, the media's national character is changing decisively. Driven now by the demands of profit and competition rather than public interest, the goal of new media corporations is to produce and distribute media products to the largest possible number of consumers. This change in objective means that viewers are no longer addressed in political terms, as citizens of a national community, but as economic entities, as part of a larger consumer market. In the 'new media order', dominated by a few transnational corporations, audiovisual geographies are becoming detached from the symbolic spaces of national culture, and realigned on the basis of the more universal principles of international consumer culture (Morley and Robins; 11). Critics express the fear of world cultural convergence, using as support for their arguments the increased standardization and cultural homogenization that has been successfully achieved by a handful of global media players who have escalated their power and influence across the world (e.g. Schiller 1991, Aksoy and Robins 1992). In Europe, American mass culture has for a long time been seen as a force that is eroding and dissolving European culture and tradition. As Morley and Robins (1995; 21) argue, "globalization seems to expose more of a threat than opening up new horizons; because it actually seems to expose a crisis of identity for Europe".

Even though the forces behind globalization are not new, it has reached a new level that appears to have come about more abruptly in Africa, and not the least for previously socialist countries such as Tanzania. The socialist principle of self-reliance involved a minimum of foreign trade and participation in the capitalistic world. The few mass media available were under state control and were subordinated to the socialist party; their main objective was to advocate the country's policy for socialism and self-reliance (c.f. Chapter 4.1). A vital element in creating a national identity and unity in Tanzania after independence was the demarcation line with the West. With the shift from socialism to capitalism, Tanzania has opened the country to Western influence and diminution of state control. In the cultural arena the country has, in just a few years, gone from being almost sealed to the outside world to finding the 'Other' in the middle of their living room through television with its menu of western music, films, life styles and consumer values. On the one hand, the sudden transformation of the media has prompted great anxiety about western influence. Television, as the newest and most international mass medium, is blamed for exposing Tanzanian youth to a Western culture and lifestyle that is resulting in moral decay. On the other

hand, people have embraced this change, responding to the exposure by broadening their horizons and treating difference as a source of enrichment.

The opening of the country to the outside world is associated with an increase in drugs, crime, and prostitution. During my fieldwork, I observed a general concern about the negative effects of cultural influence, in particular television, which was publicly debated in newspapers and in gender forums. As women activists have pointed out, liberalization has given new rise to discrimination against women, as a result of the expansion of pornography and the negative imagery of women in the media, sexual harassment, and prostitution (TGNP 1993; 150). Exposure to TV is new and has led to fear of TV influence, which might be identified as a moral panic³. Africans fear the effects of Western culture. In particular, nudity and sex scenes as shown on television clashes with that part of African culture where dress codes are strict and even holding hands in public is a rare sight. The Danish paper, *Ekstra Bladet* (6.8.2003) reported that the African version of *Big Brother* had been rejected in three African countries, with Malawi as the last country to join the refusal, in order to protect the nations' youth from moral decay.

It is not only among cultural elites that this development causes anxiety, but also among ordinary women and men and even youth. Several of the participants in my research reacted to nudity and intimate situations shown on TV, as demonstrated in the following example: *"In TV especially there are things shown that make us grown ups feel ashamed, in particular, when we watch with our children... we are forced to face down or change the channel. You know in African traditions kiss alone is done secretly. I recall an incidence in TV when people kissed each other and the children called each other to see people biting themselves. So I felt ashamed"* (female secretary #12). One of the female youths called upon the media to *"abolish the broadcasting of bad movies and instead use educative films to youths. And, also to teach youths that boy to girl relationship not necessarily has to be a sexual relation, but they can build habits of relating to each other for the purpose of exchanging views"* (female youth #22). In other words, the media are here perceived to impose unwanted values

³ The term moral panic has been used to describe the fear of negative media influence on particular groups in the society or the society as a whole. In Western societies moral panics have been recurring historically with the introduction of new media; starting with film at the turn of the century, later TV and cartoons, and more recently video games and Internet. A moral panic has often led to some kind of restrictions or control on the behalf of the media. The notion builds on a belief that the mass media is very powerful. Historically, the belief in the effects of mass communication has varied from all-powerful to limited effects to a more powerful model of effects. It can be argued that variations in belief of the power of mass communication may have historical explanations; it seems like whenever the stability of a society is disturbed, by crime, war, economic malaise or some moral panic the mass media are given some of the responsibility. The media might be more influential in times of crisis, in times of change and uncertainty, and in matters that are outside immediate personal experience. In other words, the power or potential effects of the media are not constant, but may vary according to historical conditions, over time and places (McQuail 1994; 333).

and styles of living as a result of liberalization and foreign influence. Yet, these commentaries don't reject all foreign productions, just the ones that go against Tanzanian moral codes concerning intimacy.

The focus on moral decay in the media discourse can be viewed as an expression of fear of losing important values and perhaps even as a sign of an identity crisis. The negative effects of globalization and commercialization also affect productions on a local level, where sensationalism and increased competition among newspapers (and other mass media) has been identified as a major source where women have become the object of sensational news reporting (Mtambalike 1996; 135).

Globalization and cultural transformation

The cultural resistance to Western influence can be seen as an expression of media-culture imperialism; that is, Western influence and dominance in the international media market are believed to be destroying the cultural milieu in developing countries, leading to cultural uniformity. From this perspective, the consequences for women's liberation would be biased and imposed by western values as part of a larger set of culture-consumerist values. However, culture is not a static entity, but a process that is subject to change and contestation as seen through history, cultural contact and exchange between countries and continents over the centuries. The term 'destroying' culture is therefore not very useful. Thompson (1995; 192) writes that tradition is not necessarily abandoned in the quest for 'bread and enlightenment', but is on the contrary reshaped, transformed, perhaps even strengthened through the encounter with other ways of life. From this perspective, the media may appear to help in the process of cultural growth, diffusion, invention and creativity, and not just undermining existing culture. As the following statement illustrates, foreign media productions can serve as a source of enrichment:

What I like most is the English dramas. Yes, because what I find in the Swahili plays are just something happening from everyday life... it doesn't make any difference. Like, when I watch something with a different culture – English, Austrian, German dramas – it is like I am over-viewing what people are doing in their lives and what I am living ... I like it very much (tourist coach agent # 37).

Modern theory and research support the view that a media and cultural invasion can be resisted or redefined according to local cultures and experiences. As discussed in Chapter 2.2, a key assumption in recent media research has been that audiences are actively involved in the construction of meaning. Foreign media content can be decoded differently depending on the culture of receivers (Liebes and Katz 1986) or with a more removed attitude than local productions (Biltereyst 1992). Even within the same culture, audiences often interpret the same media content in different ways depending on their own preferences, life

situation, and sub-cultures or based on factors such as gender, class, and race. A general objection to media and cultural imperialism is that the mass media is more likely to have an influence, for better or worse, on cultural identities of the kind that are more voluntary, transient, and multiple (McQuail 1994; 114). Multiple gender identities (c.f. Chapter 2.3) indicate that women and men can probably tolerate several different and inconsistent worlds of cultural experiences without one having to destroy the other. For many people, the option of maintaining traditional ways or adopting modern lifestyles is not a mutually exclusive option; rather, people are able to integrate elements of tradition with new styles of living (Thompson 1995; 192). The notion of 'destroying' cultural identities, however, indicates that people have to choose either modern or traditional, and that culture is always something positive or holy that shouldn't be touched.

Media studies has discarded its conception of communication as one-way, with direct influences, and has adopted more complex models that take into account insights into media audiences as active recipients. This shift has re-actualized an opportunity for the mass media to extend its shared symbolic space and overcome constraints of place and time. The globalization of media allows for people to share experiences on a global scale, which might expand traditional frames and discourses, and in turn liberate new perspectives, thoughts and feelings in local audiences. This positive perspective on the media can be traced back to the 1960s. Lerner's (1958) ideas concerning the role of the mass media in development were influential in this period. Even though his study is outdated in many aspects and his statements might be overblown, his work highlights several points that retain their significance today. He suggested that the media plays a crucial role in the cultural transformation that is associated with the rise of modern societies by enabling individuals to experience vicariously events that take place in distant places, thereby stimulating their ability to imagine alternative ways of life. Lerner furthermore suggested that exposure to the media enables the self to become more expansive and open-minded, less constrained by the precedents of tradition, and more open to experimentation in the search for new opportunities and ways of life (Thompson 1995; 191). The tourist coach workers in my study were among the most open-minded participants, as the mass media enabled them to imagine another kind of life, a willingness that might be reinforced, if not explained, by the nature of their work in which they are in constant contact with the outside world through their encounters with tourists. The comment below underscores the notion that traditional and modern lifestyles do not need to be mutually exclusive options, but are rather able to be mixed when people blend traditional elements with new lifestyles, resulting in a change with unknown consequences:

Some things that you watch on the screen, some are stories you know, you see ways people are making their lives; sometimes you see different cultures and when you come to mix them with your own culture and you find two different things. There you can find that your position can better. Yeh, I think so (tourist coach worker # 37).

While a local production operates within the framework of its own culture, which might re-enforce oppressive structures and attitudes towards women, international productions might break traditional customs and thereby help to overcome deep-rooted conceptions by introducing new ideas. As one of my respondents pointed out; *“journalists and reporters who are mostly males have their own stereotypes; they think they are superior and that women cannot perform as well as men”* (banker #38). The statement below illustrates how imported programs can give audiences new ideas by exposing how women and men interact and live together in other countries and cultures: *“You see in Africa, women are the only people who are supposed to be in the kitchen; cooking, washing and all that, not men. But, when you watch TV you see men cooking, serving, washing, cleaning, ironing, we learn.... I say to my husband, look at what he is doing, what about you? Who are you? It is a nice lesson, new ideas”* (retired/business woman #30). From this point of view, the media can be seen to help in promoting a dynamic view of the world, which is crucial in the struggle for women’s liberation (c.f. Chapter 4.4). The media has potential to expose the fact that oppression of women is a concrete result of historical conditions and can therefore be changed. Among gender activists, the mass media is seen as an important tool of communication across national boundaries:

I think that the media is the most important thing for any person, especially if you are an activist; you need to know what is happening around you, your own country, neighboring countries, and also the world. Also, it helps to expose the issues that are common to all people, women all over the world. What is the agenda at the particular time, so I think it is inevitable that I have to read papers, listen to radio and watch television (female activist #46).

At the same time, an increasing global and perhaps uniform stream of mass communication raises concerns about its impact on gender transformation as well as the significance of local productions in this process. Local productions have a clear advantage compared to productions imported from distant sources, because they are locally rooted and thereby have an immediate higher level of relevance for local problems and identification. For example, locally produced women-oriented programs focus on issues that are of relevance to women in their particular context, such as gender-based violence and brutality against women and children, women’s economic liberation, as well as social empowerment. Among the grassroots women participating in this research, many of them clearly have learned about women’s/gender issues through local media productions, an observation that is illustrated in the following statement: *“In the radio, programs like Women and Development (Wanawake na Maendeleo) and women’s rights...*

they help me. My problems become one of those issues talked about in those programs. Therefore; I get to learn from these programs” (teenage mother #18).

All in all, there are several factors intervening between mass-mediated modern conceptions of gender and traditional notions of cultural identities. The media can promote gender equality by supporting changes in discriminatory practices and attitudes without necessarily ‘destroying’ the culture. Whatever the mass media choose to present it is up to local audiences to interpret the media content according to their own preferences, experiences, and material and symbolic resources. Still, in order for the mass media to support gender equality and gender transformation it is necessary to critically review societal norms, values, and traditions that discriminate against women and maintain norms and values that promote equality. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of globalization of mass communication on gender identities, in-depth studies of international content and local audiences’ reception are required. Although this falls outside the scope of this thesis, it is an interesting topic that deserves more attention. In the next section, I deal more systematically with issues of media use and people’s experiences with the mass media, including global considerations.

5.3 Media use, reading strategies and empowerment

The media is important, because it facilitates liberation of women and later gender equality (female secretary #15).

Tanzania has had relatively few channels of mass communications until recently, and newspapers have been limited to urban elite. Due to the major changes in the political and economic system, the mass media has grown in importance and now represents an expression of the burgeoning modern society, able to influence political processes, and representing an intersection of the modern and the traditional and as such play a part in the formation of cultural identity. The changing environment gives the mass media more autonomy to take a more active role in the struggle for gender transformation and to interact, influence, and mold societal attitudes. As the anecdote above shows, the media is perceived as playing an important role in speeding the progress of women’s liberation. A central issue that has not yet been addressed in a systematic manner is how audiences make sense of the mass media in a changing environment. The key question is how media choice and reading strategies are empowering elements for women (and men) that can be the seeds for change in the cultural struggle of gender transformation. In order to approach this issue, I have found it necessary to first clarify the importance of the mass media in urban dwellers’ everyday lives. Is the mass media only for the rich and successful, or is it also something for the common man and woman? Is the mass media becoming a part of people’s everyday lives? Is media use gendered; are there distinct differences in media

choice and purpose between men and women or between women belonging to different segments of the society (based on age, education, or occupation)?

There are a lack of official statistics and research on media use in Tanzania, such as newspaper copies sold per inhabitant, number of TV-sets, ratings, the regularity and amount of time used, and so forth. In an attempt to answer the questions outlined above, I have had to rely upon my own personal interviews with 51 individuals, including youths (males and females), house girls, barmaids, nursery school teachers, secretaries, small-scale business women, male petty traders (carpentry), male tourist coach workers, male bankers, and gender activists (males and females).⁴ This selection is not based on a random quantitative survey, and can therefore not be generalized in absolute terms to the urban population (c.f. Chapter 3.3). Nonetheless, it covers a diverse group of participants who are vital in the city picture. The interviews should therefore give a reasonable account of the use of the mass media in Dar es Salaam.

One overall impression from the interviews is that the mass media already plays a vital part in urban dwellers' lives. The vast majority of the participants find it hard to imagine living without the mass media, and access the media on a daily basis. It is more striking that as much as everybody uses the mass media, than some groups use it more than others. In other words, the mass media is not restricted to a particular segment in the society; on the contrary, it is becoming an important source of definitions and images of social reality for the common man and woman. The significance of the media is ascribed to its news function, the fact that it provides information about happenings on a local, national, and international level. The way people describe the importance of the mass media is illustrated by the following statement:

The mass media makes me feel that I really exist in this world. After a week in the village with no communication I feel different. I don't understand where we are, how far we have gone. The day I come back to Dar es Salaam I feel like a stranger (petty trader/unemployed #33).

The mass media is to a certain extent seen as a tool that broadens one's horizons. During the interviews, participants stated that without the media "it would be like cutting yourself from the world"; "like living in a forest gathering roots and fruits"; and "the media is giving you a future for tomorrow and how things are going on outside Tanzania". The mass media is also appreciated for its educational functions, while few think of the media's importance for entertainment. It is salient that even entertainment programs are expected to convey some sort of lesson. Learning a lesson involves embracing new ideas and alternative ways of life; but it also occurs as audiences recognize and identify

⁴ See also Appendix I List over people interviewed.

oppressive positions and their consequences, as illustrated in the following statement:

“We get a lot of lessons for women. For instance, in *Twende na Wakati* (Radio play: Let’s go with time) they usually talk about how women are being oppressed by men. Say a man has married you and you have children with him, he despises you, beats you, and after all that he chases you away and marry another woman. The kids will suffer and have a hard time with their stepmother. So they are not brought up well, others disappear from home to become beggars and their lives are distorted” (female secretary #15).

People have developed individual media strategies depending on daily routines, work, access, time, and money. However, there are also some clear patterns along gender lines in terms of media preferences and program choice. Among women/girls, newspapers compete with radio, which has a predominant position among lower income brackets of the society, such as house girls, barmaids, and nursery school teachers. Among men, television has a stronger position than radio. In general, families and individuals who have television at home tend to allow television to dominate as the evening activity at the expense of radio. Out of a total of 51 respondents, 68 percent had access to television at home; in all of the groups, at least 50 percent of the individuals had access to television, while in some groups, everybody had television (bankers and tourist coach workers).

Newspapers appear to have a predominant position among both males and females. It is only rarely that you find people who don’t read newspapers at all. Those who can’t afford to buy their own paper commonly borrow newspapers from neighbors, friends or colleagues, as illustrated by the following comment:

Newspapers are important, because without them we will have no communication. And if you for a single day did not have a chance to read a newspaper you find yourself in no fit for the world. That is why some people borrow them from house to house. You can even build up an enemy over a newspaper. She/he can say: You refuse to borrow me a newspaper! Everyone wants to read news everyday. People like to know international and national news (retired/business woman #28).

In Dar es Salaam there are many newspapers to choose from; Swahili and English; government and opposition; serious and entertaining newspapers (c.f. Chapter 3.2). However, there are some differences in preferences. On the whole, Swahili newspapers tend to dominate among the grassroots⁵. Most popular are the serious opposition papers like *Majira* and *Nipahse*, which are well-liked among a diverse readership including both men and women. In addition, *Mtanzania* is popular among the female readership as well as gender activists. Swahili newspapers that specialize in entertainment news and the use of cartoons, like *Kasheshe* and *Sanifu*, are popular among young people, especially non-educated females (e.g. house girls). The evening papers *Dar Leo* and *Alasiri*

⁵ See also Appendix J for choice of newspapers along group lines.

are also popular among the low and middle classes. The heaviest consumers of English newspapers, including the *Guardian*, *Daily News*, and *Business Times*, are the bankers. This group also contains respondents who read foreign papers like the *Times*, *Newsweek*, and *East African*. However, it is also common for gender activists, small-scale business women, secretaries, and tourist coach workers to read English newspapers. For people who know at least basic English, reading English newspapers is perceived as good practice in broadening vocabulary while accessing quality articles about the nation and the world.

Furthermore, my analysis reveals variations in reading strategies between the different groups of women. While young non-educated women such as barmaids and house girls are concerned with celebrity events and sensational news, small-scale business women, the secretaries, and even female youths use the media deliberately to get information about issues related to women (and children), as demonstrated in the following statements: “*Most of the time I look at the headings then I read the articles that attracts me first ... mostly issues concerning women and children, woman development, and oppression of women*” (female secretary #15). “*... All the problems I have mentioned (rape, inheritance, widows, genital mutilation, and AIDS) together with property ownership are information that the media write and tell about. I know already a lot about women and children’s rights from the media* (teenage mother #18). While a female secretary in my project feels that papers like *Kasheshe* and *Sanifu* have childish reporting, younger women find them entertaining. As expressed by one of the house girls: “*I like Kasheshe because it gives stories on fan events here in the city and I also like its cartoons, they make me happy, I enjoy them*” (house girl #1). This might reflect a change of attitude towards the mass media among young people, in which the media is increasingly used for entertainment purposes.

In radio programming, news, music, and sports are popular among all participants, and all participants have access to radio at home.⁶ The commercial station Radio One is most popular among young people and males, which reflects a preference for music and news. While men’s use of radio is essentially restricted to news, music and sport, women choose additional programming such as special women’s programs, radio plays, health programs (including *Radio One Doctor*), and *Majira* (regional news from all over the country). Radio Tanzania is more popular among people over 40 and also women. Radio Tanzania is distinguished from Radio One by being state-owned, national, and by containing a diverse schedule of locally produced programs. Therefore, Radio Tanzania is popular among people who like listening to the radio for educational purposes and not only for music and news summaries. The group that is the most unusual in terms of media consumption is the nursery school teachers, who rely on radio

⁶ See also Appendix J for radio preferences according to group membership.

as their main media outlet. In this group, three out of four say that they listen to radio plays and women's programs. The next two groups in terms of frequency of radio listening are small-scale business women and female youths who also use the radio for educational purposes. While youths choose among a variety of programs ranging from radio plays, women's programs, sports and health, it is noteworthy that five out of eight small-scale business women say that they listen to women's programs. Aside from news and music, which are two areas that tend to cut across gender lines, sports is the only category dominated by men, with male petty traders in particular contributing to the high numbers, perhaps because only two of four male petty traders had a television at home. One exception is male gender activists who listen eagerly to women's programs and radio plays, reflecting an interest in learning about and keeping updated on women's/gender issues in society.

By far the most popular television channel was ITV, which might reflect the fact that ITV had more resources than the other local channels and was the only channel owned by African Tanzanian. Until Television ya Taifa (National Television) was introduced in late 1999, ITV functioned as a state channel (Lange 2002; 144). Compared to radio, the use of television is less gendered and seems to depend more on actual access to television. Another reason might be that television is more of a family activity than an activity based upon individual choices.

Table 5.1 Ranking of television use among different groups

1. Tourist coach agents (m)	6. Secretaries
2. Activists (m & f)	7. Barmaids
3. Bankers (m)	8. House girls
4. Small scale business women	9. Nursery school teachers
5. Female youth	10. Petty traders (m) and male youth

Table 5.1 shows a ranking of the different groups' use of television based on how many programs they watch regularly.⁷ In the first four groups, 90 percent on average have access to television at home, while the same is true for approximately 50 percent in the remaining groups who watch less television. Female youths score rather high in this ranking in spite of the fact that only four out of seven had television at home. This is explained by the fact that those who didn't have access to television at home reported that they watched television at a neighbor's or friend's house. A closer look at programming choices shows that news scores highest among both men and women (see Table 5.2 below). The

⁷ See also Appendix J for television preferences according to group members.

biggest difference is that after news, Swahili plays are most popular among the female audience while among the male audience it is 'ranked' as number five. Next to news, sports is most popular among men, but is also watched by many of the female participants. There is a stronger orientation towards English programming and international news among male viewers. Bankers are not surprisingly the heaviest viewers of international news channels like BBC and CNN. Female and male activists, tourist coach workers, and small-scale business women show a preference for international news as well.

Table 5.2 Five top television programs

	Females	Males	All
1.	News	News	News
2.	Swahili plays	Sport	Sport
3.	Sports	International news	Swahili plays
4.	Woman's Journal	African Journal	International news
5.	International news and entertainment (film)	Swahili plays	International entertainment (film, American sit.com, & Eng. drama)

Development from below?

In this dissertation, I have emphasized the importance of allowing women to participate in development as subjects, which calls for transformed gender identities to replace traditional attitudes towards women as subordinate and incapable human beings. Women will not achieve liberation by chance, but only through their quest for it and through their recognition of the need to fight for it (c.f. Freire 1997; 27). In order to break out of oppressive gender relationships, both collective and individual efforts are needed. Achieving a transition where the individual starts perceiving and addressing personal and social reality requires dialogical encounters with others (c.f. Chapter 4.4). The analysis in this chapter demonstrates that the media is perceived as important for recognizing oppressive relationships and praxis, and in motivating women in terms of taking an active role in development. The following comment illustrates this fact perfectly: "I like to watch *Jarida la Wanawake* (ITV: *Women's Journal*), because it helps me to know about other women and what they are doing, and it teaches how women can live their lives with children, other women and husbands, how to develop their lives" (retired/business woman #29). Especially among the small-scale business women, secretaries, female youths, and to some extent, the nursery school teachers media use, the choice of programs and reading strategies entail elements of empowerment that can support the struggle for women's emancipation. Among the individuals from the grassroots included in this research, these women not only show the most active strategy in their quest to get information and knowledge concerned with gender issues through their media use, but they also exhibit the highest level of awareness about women's/gender

issues in the society. When asked about what problems or issues that struck them as important they spontaneously started talking about oppression of women in inheritance and education, rape and sexual harassment, gender equality, and issues concerned with economic liberation and development of women. They also stressed that they like plays or news that address the problems they experience or find important for women in general. Hence, the mass media can be understood as facilitating problem articulation and serving as a tool for diagnosis of women's problems.

Furthermore, the interviews signify a shift in cultural perceptions towards women as well as in women, as can be seen in responses across the interviewee groups: *"Concerning the relationship between women and men I can say that according to African traditions men are superior to women, which has kept women at the inferior level where they don't have a say. But, to me I don't like that and if it was up to me I could even choose a woman to be a president"* (tourist coach worker #35). The significance of this account is even more evident when contrasting it to how women were and still are to some extent viewed by men: *"Women are slaves of everybody here in Tanzania. Everybody who is not a woman, of any age use a woman as he wishes... there are women whose lives are not good if they don't sell themselves. It comes to a point where she thinks that is the only way to make life go around... the person you rely on is a man. She is forced to rely on a man. I would therefore say that women's situation in our society is not as good as men's"* (petty trader/unemployed #33).

However, by comparing the barmaids with the small-scale business women, it is clear that the former had less confidence and expressed less concern with gender issues and interest in women's emancipation. As one of the barmaids said: *"Women are weaker than men. Husbands should cooperate with their wives and discuss what they should do. If they work together life condition would be good, but if women are left alone life becomes miserable, if somebody is poor she can do strange things, but if she is wealthy and she has a man who gives her necessary requirements, she stays faithful at home"* (barmaid #7). While the barmaids said that they need men to help them to overcome their situation, the small-scale business women stressed that women should change their attitude that leads them to depend on men. *"Previously a woman was a dependent, but now due to life styles (difficulties) a woman should also be liberated in education, gender wise, and in the family in general"* (small scale business woman #23). The following statement strengthens the impression that these women are becoming more confident and are increasingly acknowledging their role in society: *"We have to be happy, because women now recognize their contribution to the society... know how to liberate themselves. In the past women didn't know they were human beings, they only knew that men were the only*

human beings. A woman was not able to sleep inside a house without a man as a guard, but now she can sleep without fear” (small-scale business woman #26).

The small-scale business women stand out as high and active media consumers who are seeking knowledge and motivation from both local and international programs and media. The women in this group are more concerned with finding knowledge and motivation in the news about the progress of other women than with the negative portrayal of women. The mass media plays an important part in their lives and enables them to imagine other ways to organize their lives and alter gender relations. This supports Lerner’s theory that the media plays a vital role in the cultural transformation associated with modern societies in which media exposure can make the self become more expansive and open-minded.

All in all, the media has the potential of representing a progressive force that facilitates women’s liberation, based on the audiences’ prior experiences and their material and symbolic resources.

5.4 Conclusion

The movement from socialism to capitalism in Tanzania has opened the country to the forces of globalization and foreign influence at a time when globalization processes all over the world have accelerated. The sudden transformation of the media landscape has prompted a great amount anxiety about the possibility of corrupting Western influences. In particular, television is blamed for teaching youths a Western culture and lifestyle that is resulting in moral decay in Tanzanian society. The strong focus upon moral decay in the media discourse might reflect a general distress in society as a whole as Tanzania is becoming part of a modern, capitalistic, and open society. Moreover, this might put women at risk of being blamed for ‘everything’ that goes wrong. As noted by others, public anxieties concerning social change tend to be channeled through a focus on contrasts, and women and sexuality (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993).

Simultaneously, the globalization of the media allows people to share experiences on a global scale, which might result in new perspectives, thoughts and feelings in local audiences. My analysis indicates that international media productions have the potential to extend the shared symbolic space by presenting encounters with other ways of life, which provides both male and female audiences new ideas about how to organize their lives (e.g. bankers, tourist coach workers, and small scale business women). From this perspective, the media may appear to help - and not undermine existing culture - in the process of cultural growth, diffusion, invention and creativity. In line with recent media research, it appears that cultural transformation doesn’t seem to happen in a direct and destructive way; rather, culture is reshaped, transformed, and perhaps

even strengthened through encounters with other ways of life. While media exposure in some instances appears to broaden life perspectives, audiences discard ideas and values they find obscure. This is evident in the resistance towards Western cultural influences on television that appear to be threatening, such as nudity and sexual intimacy. Local and international productions seem to complement each other: While local productions have a higher level of relevance for local problems and identification, and thereby facilitate problem articulation and serve as a tool for diagnosis of women's problems, international productions have their strength in expanding traditional frames and discourses and thereby help overcome deep-rooted conceptions. From this point of view, the media can be seen to help in promoting a dynamic view of the world, which is crucial in the struggle for women's liberation (c.f. Chapter 4.4).

Moreover, my analysis shows that the mass media has already become an integrated aspect of urban dwellers lives and as such is an important source of definitions and images of social reality for the common man and woman. The vast majority of the participants in this study have found it hard to imagine living without the mass media, and use the media daily. My work also shows that media use is in part gendered, and distinct variations appear among different groups of women. While the small-scale business women, secretaries, female youths, and to some extent the nursery school teachers are most active in their quest for programs and newspapers/articles that directly or indirectly facilitate women's liberation, the barmaids and house girls pay little attention to gender-sensitive content in the media. Furthermore, the grassroots women who actively seek information and knowledge concerned with gender issues through their media use also exhibit the highest level of awareness about women's/gender issues in society. Hence, media choice and reading strategies play a significant role in women's empowerment, which can ease the progress of gender transformation.

In particular, the small-scale business women show an active media strategy by seeking knowledge and motivation from both local and international media. My analysis strengthens previous arguments that present women as agents of social change who actively pursue solutions for their individual difficulties (c.f. Chapter 4.2). Women engaged in business projects, no matter how small, appear to have gained autonomy and control by their persistence in pursuing income-generating activities that bring them into more contact with broader sections in the society. They also expressed strong confidence in own abilities, which is crucial in women's liberation and for women to be active participants in development. For these women, the mass media emerges as a means to deal critically and creatively with social reality and provides them a means to participate in the transformation of their world.

CHAPTER SIX

Representations of women in the news

One thing I am proud of is that unlike days ago women are now coming up in various aspects and they appear very often in the media, but one thing women should change is their way of looking at things. They should build confidence in themselves (house girl # 1).

The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of the portrayal of women in the news discourse against the backdrop of the social-economic transformation of the society. An initial question to be addressed is the extent to which women are involved in news stories and what these stories are about. Additional questions concern the ways in which representations of women are manifested in the news discourse and the ways that the news media position the female subject, and, in doing so, contribute to a definition of femininity. A prevailing image of women is one that associates them with gender violence and sexual harassment, which is the main topic in Chapter 6.1. Furthermore, it is my contention that the mass media provides an important place where cultural encounters are carried out, as people try to make sense of their changing environment. An important issue is how the mass media comes to grips with the problems and tensions that arise in the process of modernization (Chapter 6.2). In Chapter 6.3, I explore links between development, empowerment and gender transformation. For women to be perceived as active participants in development, it is essential that women are visible in the economy, civil society and the political system, as well as in social sectors such as education and health. I have focused on the issue of whether women are recognized as subjects who take an active part in their society, or who are passive receivers of development. Finally, I have attempted to assess the results from the discourse analysis as a whole (Chapter 6.4). An important issue is whether the news discourse leaves openings for negotiations in the construction of gender or causes cultural resistance in the struggle of gender transformation. Statements from my interviewees constitute a central element in this discussion and function as an interpretative aid so as to assess the results from the discourse analysis in its context.

In approaching the issues outlined above I have used the model developed in Chapter 3.3. I view gender representations and positioning in the news discourse in terms of story and discourse, which constitute two layers or dimensions in texts. While a story describes what happens to whom, the latter is how the story is told (Chatman 1978; 19). Major elements in a story are events, agents, and existents, which will be viewed in light of a gender structure or dichotomy (c.f. Chapter 3.3). The model highlights whether women are depicted as being able to

act upon events, with specific reference to the extent that women are portrayed as able to influence their own life situations or act for the social good on behalf of society. Moreover, women can be portrayed in the domestic or public sphere, defined in relational terms to men, sex, and reproduction, which is linked to nature, or in roles associated with culture, such as politicians or workers. Defining women mainly as related to nature draws symbolic boundaries between men's and women's spheres of action, and might work to exclude women from taking an active part in politics, business, and development.

The case study consists of 14 newspapers that were covered over a two-week period, from September 8th - 21st 1997, which totals 131 copies¹ (cf. Chapter 3.3). The newspapers were screened for content concerning women or gender relations; there were 415 relevant articles in total. The large number of articles allows for a thematic analysis that focuses on thematic structure more than discursive means, which would require a detailed analysis of each text. In other words, I give preference to story rather than discourse in a narrow sense (c.f. Chapter 3.3).

6.1 Prevailing representations of women

Women or women's/gender issues are a main concern in 415 articles, or approximately three articles per copy, which confirms an impression that liberalization of the media has allowed women's/gender issues to be given more space in the news (TGNP 1997). The first question to be addressed is what these articles are about or what happens to whom; then it is a question of how women are positioned in the news discourse or how the story is told, both of which contribute to a definition of femininity. In table 6.1, I have grouped the articles into four main categories, which gives a thematic overview of how women are represented in newspapers.

Table 6.1 Women in the news, by topic

Topic	Amount	Percent	Pr. day	Pr. copy
1. Society	104	25	7	0.8
2. Gender violence and sexual harassment	148	36	11	1.1
3. Love/sex relationships	88	21	6	0.7
4. Extraordinary women	75	18	5	0.6
Total	415	100	29	3

Articles categorized under the broader heading "society" contain a variety of topics such as politics, production/economy, education, social/cultural issues, and

¹ See Appendix B for details over newspapers included in this research.

women's/gender issues. Many of these articles have as their point of departure the public sphere, and thereby link women to their role in the society. However, these articles represent only one of four articles, or less than one article per newspaper copy.

As can be seen in the table above, the most common topic associated with women in the news discourse is in relation to gender violence and sexual harassment. This topic constitutes more than one-third of the articles, which stands in contrast to the time before liberalization, when such stories were not written about (TGNP 1997; 10). Articles concerned with gender violence and sexual harassment as well as stories grouped as love/sex relationships represent more than half of the news stories concerning women or girls. In other words, the majority of the articles position women in some kind of relationship with men, which are of violent or sexual character (voluntarily or by force). When portrayed in relation to men, sex, and reproduction, women are associated with nature. Such representations of women reflect and possibly reinforce an existing attitude that all relationships between women and men are based on sex, which makes it hard to establish other non-sexual relationships (e.g. strict employer-employee relationships). Moreover, the gender relations illustrated in the articles are typically of an intimate character, and are therefore associated with the private or domestic sphere of action. In addition, many of the articles concerned with society associate womanhood with nature and the domestic sphere by focusing on pregnancy, mothering, and women's health issues. This initial analysis confirms my early assumption that women are likely to be depicted in relational terms associated with nature within the private or domestic sphere, which draws symbolic boundaries between male and female spheres of action and identity (cf. Chapter 3.3). This might hinder women who would like to take an active part in society and would therefore channel development in the interest of a male-dominated society.

Due to the extensive number of articles in my sample, I have chosen to restrict further analysis to the first two main categories, which will further be divided into sub-categories.² This choice is based on the fact that articles concerned with love/sex relationships are mainly fictional stories and are thereby entertainment by definition. Moreover, the articles in the last category are based upon two extraordinary events; the death of the world celebrities Princess Diana and Mother Theresa. Due to the rather intensive coverage of these two events the total number of articles was probably higher than in a 'normal' week. If these articles are set aside, gender violence and sexual harassment are a recurring theme in 43% of the articles.

² Each of the articles within these two categories has been subjected to the same analytical schema based upon the narrative grid model developed in Chapter 3.3. See Appendix A for illustration.

Gender-based violence and sexual harassment

In no other way are women more visible in the news discourse than in relation to gender-based violence and sexual abuse. Until late 1980s, this theme used to be a taboo in Tanzania, and as a consequence victims would suffer in silence while the offenders would go free. In recent decades, marked by the liberalization of the media and increasing pressure from feminist groups, stories about rape and sexual abuse of women and children have had daily play in the newspapers. On the one hand, liberalization of the media has allowed such stories to be presented to the public, which is of crucial importance for women's liberation. On the other hand, there is also a danger that women are reduced to victims of men's actions or sexual objects in stories whose goal is to promote sales, which can hamper women's empowerment and gender transformation. As demonstrated in Table 6.2, women are most likely to be portrayed as victims of men's actions, while women portrayed as standing up for themselves and fighting for their rights tend to be rarely reported events in the news discourse.

Table 6.2 Gender-based violence and sexual harassment

Sub-themes	Articles amount	Percent	% of 415	Art. per day
Women and children as victims – male offenders	84	57	20	6
Women as offenders	44	30	11	3
Women as fighters	9	6	2	0.5
Others	11	7	3	0.8
Total	148	100	36	11

Rape, defilement, and sodomy dominate the events, in which women or children are portrayed as victims, which total 50 articles. Other recurrent happenings are beatings and killings (16), other forms of harassment (9), and teenage pregnancy or early marriage (8). As illustrated in the example below, a typical pattern in these stories is that men are portrayed as the agents behind the events, which are ultimately fatal for women.

Shaba 8/9/97, by Ben ve Burah, Tabora

A STUDENT ATTACKED AND RAPED

A student from Kazima Secondary School was attacked by five boys and badly injured in the head and stomach, and then raped to the point of losing consciousness before she was rushed to the hospital. The student who is in form three faced this tragedy near her home in Tabora town when she was learning to bicycle.

Women and children appear as mere existents or textual objects in the articles. While men are depicted in the mode of 'do' as the ones who rape, beat or harass, women are described in the mode of 'is' somebody who is raped, beaten or harassed, which ascribes a passive position to that person. In the case of rape, the

effects reported are unconsciousness, physical injuries and damaging of private parts, as well as psychological effects. Six women ended up dead after being beaten or attacked by men. Pregnant schoolgirls are reported to quit schooling (by law), and the same outcome is likely for school girls getting married, which either way will affect those girls for rest of their lives.

In general, victims are more often than not foregrounded in the stories. In the case of rape, sodomy, and defilement, it is common to foreground the (female) victim's well-being when the events happened recently (as can be seen in the example above). If the cases have gone to court the (male) offenders are usually foregrounded, as illustrated in the example below. Sentences up to 20 years have been reported in five different cases, which is not uncommon in court cases involving children.

Nipashe, 10/9/97

20 YEARS IN JAIL FOR SODOMIZING HIS STEP DAUGHTER

A father named Fabian Jordan (33) who has raped his stepdaughter has been sentenced 20 years in prison following sufficient evidence given in court.

Articles that foreground male offenders who are in court and/or have been sentenced show that some kind of counter action has been taken. In some instances, the victims have reported the incident to the police themselves; in other cases relatives, parents, or neighbors have come to the victim's rescue, especially when the victim has been badly injured and has fallen unconscious or when the victim is a child. Several articles contain comments in form of moral judgments, often in form of an interpretative person or authority, such as the magistrate or prosecutor. For example, it has been made clear that stern punishment is necessary to send a message to potential rapists. However, most of the articles focusing upon male offenders are small notices, and as seen in the example above the (male) subject is often absent in the headings.

In addition to the news reports referring to various events, rape, sodomy, and defilement are the subject of debate in 11 articles, which indicates that these issues are taken seriously. In contrast to news reports, the journalists' presence is overt, which allows for discussion and analysis of why rape is increasing in society, how to combat the problem, and personal views and moral judgments. Journalists point to social structures such as unemployment and lack of education as causes for the problem. Another recurring explanation is increasing moral decay in the society; leaders are accused of being bad examples and women are criticized for dressing in miniskirts. A third explanation given is the upbringing of boys in which they are made to feel superior to girls. Debating the issue frames rape and sexual abuse as societal problems, and not just a women's problem. However, many of these articles are based on the author's own sense of

the world and moral values, and not scientific facts and statistics. Additionally, there are few articles that address fundamental structural inequities between the genders.

In articles concerned with beating and killing, most events are reported as being under police investigation or taken to court. Nonetheless, most of these articles foreground the victim: **KILLS HIS WIFE BY BEHEADING HER** (Nipashe 19/9/97). Stories about other forms of harassment entail different incidents. For example: **SIX MONTHS IN PRISON FOR PEEPING ON A WOMAN** (Dar Leo 19/9/97) and **REFUSES TO BURY HIS WIFE, MBEYA** (Heko 15/9/97). These stories illustrate a general tendency for the textual subject that refers to the offender to be absent in the headings, while the object is clearly stated. The last example is a rather peculiar event in which a man refused to arrange and attend his wife's burial; he also stopped their children from attending. According to the article, relatives of the late wife claimed that this act showed how some people do not respect women's dignity in spite of efforts taken by the government to fight for women's and children's rights.

Representing women as victims seems to mesh with the existing commercial discourse in which women are reduced to objects for male pleasure, sex, and violence in order to increase sales. This subject positioning can contribute to a disempowering effect for women, in which they have lower social status than men, and which hinders them from contributing to the development of society. The result can be seen in following examples, which have peculiar and attention-grabbing angles based on sensational news reporting:

A FIFTY YEAR OLD WOMAN RAPED BY A YOUNG BOY (Shaba 11/9/97)

THE ONE RAPED BY 12 MEN, GETS EXPULSION BY HER HUSBAND

(Majira 18/9/97)

MAN KILLS OVER SUPPER QUARREL (Sunday News 14/9/97)

I WAS OBLIGATED TO BE A LOVER TO MY TEACHER (Heko 17/9/97)

However, there are also examples of news stories that use sensational news reporting and yet support a feminist discourse. It is rare to find reports of women standing up for themselves in the news, but these stories probably have news value exactly because they are unusual and unexpected. Articles concerned with ordinary women standing up for their rights only constitute six percent of the stories concerned with gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Still, these stories are important as they can be categorized as empowering. Given the topic of gender-based violence and sexual harassment, it is natural that most of these articles involve women taking control over their own bodies, sexuality, and life in general. As the story below illustrates, most of the conflicts arising in these articles have their roots in love relationships. While women are the agents who

are taking positive action in an attempt to improve or take control of their lives, their male counterparts (husbands) are mere existents affected by their wives' actions.

Alasiri 11/9/97 By Mayasa Nkekena

A SPOUSE IN DAR ABANDONS HER BRIDEGROOM IN A HONEY MOON AND RUNS TO THE COURT

Mr. Sultan Salima (23) found himself at a crossroad as he had received a divorce ordered by the court of law before the end of the honeymoon. The bridegroom was given a divorce after being taken to court by his wife, Fatuma Daimu (18), who demanded the court for divorce due to her husband's extraordinary sexual desires.

In this story, the husband tries to defend himself by telling the court that his wife refuses to have sex, and that she doesn't cook or clean, so that from his perspective, his wife is useless. This reflects a common attitude towards women as people who are there to please and do things for their husbands. According to Freire's way of thinking (1997), this aspect can be seen as an expression of a central feature in the relationship between the oppressors (men) versus the oppressed (women). While a man has learned that his essential nature is to look out for himself, women have been taught that their essential nature is to exist for men, which might work as an obstacle for women's liberation. However, the woman in this story is portrayed as a winner, which is reflected in how the journalist ends the article by stating that "the wife left the court as a successful freedom fighter." In other words, the article contests and challenges dominant characteristics in the relationship between the genders, and thereby support a feminist discourse. The articles within this group are all 'entertaining' stories with attention-grabbing angles, reflected by the fact that several of them were placed on the front page. Even though the entertainment value seems to be important in determining whether or not this kind of event will become news, the articles are still informative and show women in stronger positions than they are portrayed in most news coverage.

Overall, the news discourse supports a sympathetic feminist discourse by providing visibility to gender-based violence and sexual harassment. In many cases, action has been taken against the offenders, so that women and children don't have to suffer in silence. Nonetheless, the focus on women as existents subjected to men's actions with fatal consequences signals that women are passive, weak, and inferior to men, a position that might undercut the power of women and thereby contradict the progressive orientation.

6.2 The media as an arena for conflicts and negotiations arising in the process of modernization

The movement from socialist to capitalist principles has had dramatic consequences for the economic, social, and cultural aspects of urban life. I have previously argued that the biggest changes are felt in urban areas, making these the places where conflicts and tensions are most visibly expressed (cf. Chapter 1). The extreme economic conditions that urban dwellers face, beginning in the mid-1970s, have resulted in a remarkable increase in the informal sector, in which women have taken on a significant role in the family economy. By challenging men's position in providing for the family, which is closely linked to men's status as breadwinner and head of household, women also contest the boundaries between the male and female spheres of action and identity. Also, successful female entrepreneurs signal that women can be rational, smart, and capable in contrast to emotional, submissive, and inferior. Women's increasing independence in the economic sphere, together with a perception of women as more sexually aggressive, probably contributes to gender antagonism. The following takes a closer look at how these tensions and contradictions reverberate in the media discourse and contribute to the construction and negotiation of gender.

Women as an economic force

Newspaper coverage of women involved in production or economic issues account for 16 articles.³ The amount is perhaps not so impressive, but at least women appear as the main news actors in the majority of these articles. Women are portrayed in roles aligned with culture, as businesswomen, petty traders, administrators, and contributors in agriculture. Individual women emerge as the agent in three articles, which are success stories of women who have taken action with a fortunate outcome on their lives (empowering). An illustrative example is a story about a businesswoman who founded her own company:

DAR LEO 9/9/97 By Leah Samike

MOST WOMEN ARE NOT ENVIOUS OF DEVELOPMENT

Miss Jane Peter is very creative of various handcrafts and she has decided to found her own company called JAGA Tanzania Enterprises Limited, which is employing 30 employees; 15 who are staying in a hostel. However, she has encountered a lot of difficulties, including insults and even being sent to the police in her efforts to facilitate her plans. Join Leah Samike in this article to know what faced her.

The story tells of a strong woman who in spite of insults and difficulties manages to establish her own company. She stands out as a role model, showing that

³ In addition, economic issues are the focus in two articles from the AGSC'97. I will return to these two articles later in this chapter.

women are capable of being successful in business. The story is inspiring for other women who want to start their own company, as it provides useful information and ideas about how she runs her business, how she gets markets for her products, and how she went about in establishing her company in its present form.

Women's non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide training and loans to women and girls are portrayed as agents in four articles. These are all actions done for the good of society, in order to enable women and girls to engage in business. One good example is **"DAR NGO TO HELP JOBLESS GIRLS"** (Sunday Observer 14/9/97), in which a woman NGO aims to prevent girls from engaging in prostitution by educating those who had to stop their schooling due to pregnancy. The overall aims are to liberate women economically, to eliminate poverty, and contribute to development in general. These articles are empowering on two levels. First, they show that women are able to organize and take actions to improve other women's lives. Second, they provide information to women and girls who need their services.

A third major agent in this coverage is the government/city committee. Women are portrayed as existents or objects of the government's actions. Still, women's role is often foregrounded in the headings or leads, which can be illustrated by the following title: **'MAMA NTILE' (women who sell cheap food) TO WAG FLAGS** (Majira 17/9/97). This is a story in which the city committee organized training for women in the city to prepare clean food in clean surroundings, but it is the women's participation that is foregrounded.

A common feature in most of these stories is that they support a feminist discourse, and many of them also draw upon a development discourse in which economic liberation and even cultural emancipation go hand-in-hand with development. This marriage can be seen more clearly in the following example, which recognizes women's role in agriculture and the keeping of livestock: **A WOMAN CONTRIBUTES TO AGRICULTURE MORE THAN ANY OTHER PERSON** (Taifa Letu, 7-13 Sept. 1997). This story is not based on a specific event or action, but the heading signals an active role of women as the subject with respect to agriculture. The journalist points out several obstacles to women's participation in agriculture. One problem that the journalist mentions is that the country's customs and traditions don't allow a woman to own land and buildings, which is a necessary pre-condition to be given loans by most banks. Other hindrances are traditions that don't allow women to mix with men in their daily meetings and the fact that women have too many responsibilities at home. The journalist ends the article by stating that: *"It is better to involve women in the country's development plans since they bear a lot of the burden in*

agricultural production and the growth of the family in general. We should remember that it is a collection of many families that makes a nation.”

One article focus upon husbands' attitude as an obstacle to women's economic development: **JEALOUSY HINDERS WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT** (Majira 21/9). Jealous husbands are portrayed as agents acting out of self-interest by preventing their wives from engaging in production activities in various groups of women and cooperatives in Zanzibar with the unfortunate consequences for women's development. The article ends by reporting upon a group of women on a neighboring island, Pemba Island, who successfully founded a baby care station serving 65 children and who subsequently planned to expand. In Tripp's survey, men who feared that their women would become too independent were more openly hostile to women's projects and tried to enforce restrictions on their wives income-generating activities (Tripp 1997; 114). Men's frustrations over women's increasing independence can be seen to breed gender hostility that materializes in various ways.

Overall, these articles portray women as significant news actors and agents related to a variety of economic issues, and thereby show women's potential as an economic force in contributing to the national economy. The news coverage allows for the negotiation of female identities associated with culture and status roles, which stand in an opposite relation to reproduction roles as associated with nature. This contests gender boundaries, where masculinity is associated with men's activities in the public sphere and production, while femininity is linked to women's role in the domestic sphere and reproduction. The coverage of women in business supports an image that women are no longer totally dependent on men, which paves the way for the negotiation of women's roles and status in society.

Women as a source of moral decay

More autonomy in the economic sphere doesn't automatically lead to autonomy in other spheres (political, social, or cultural). My analysis reveals a strong focus on women as a source of moral decay, which stands in sharp contrast to the positive female role models in business. As will become evident below, the new context of social problems has a doubled-edged impact on a cultural level. In total, 44 articles are concerned with women as offenders. Among the offenses reported are stealing, drug trafficking, beating and killing, harassing, baby abandonment, and not at least prostitution. A general pattern is that women are portrayed as agents, motivated by self-interest, and with unfortunate consequences for those involved. However, it is rare that men are portrayed as victims of women's actions (7 articles). When women are portrayed as offenders, it is likely to be a fight between women, women harassing other women or children, with the attacks ranging from verbal insults, beating, and other violent

acts. More often than not, the articles foreground the offender (female) rather than the victim (female or male). The motives and relations between the women are often unclear, but the underlying problem is often a dispute between relatives. For example: **A SISTER-IN-LAW BURNED HER FACE FOR POURING CLOTHES OVER THE FLOOR** (Dar Leo 15/9/97). Violent acts are also directed against children, which is illustrated in the following picture. Apparently this happened after the daughter failed to account for 200 Tsh. (small change).



Domestic fights between women show a selfish picture of women. According to Freire (c.f. Chapter 4.4), a characteristic of the oppressed is that they cannot perceive clearly the 'order' that serves the interest of the oppressors, whose image they have internalized. Their vulnerability often leads to a type of horizontal violence, in which they strike out at their own companions for the pettiest reasons. The suffering that results from living under oppressive conditions, which women themselves cannot comprehend, might explain why women turn against each other or against their children over puzzling things. Rather than contesting the dominant order, the news discourse conforms to it, which might work as a barrier in gender transformation.

The image of women as prostitutes is the most widespread representation of women within the category of female offenders, accounting for 14 or 32 percent of the articles. This is almost as many articles as are concerned with 'women in business'. Two of the articles are in the form of debate. In the majority of the articles, female prostitutes are portrayed as agents, acting out of self-interest, with a negative outcome. For example: **HARLOTS INVADE FISHERMAN CAMPS, MWANZA** (SHABA 13/9/97). The article illustrates a general tendency for news coverage to be one-sided, focusing on the prostitutes, while the male customers are hidden in the shadows and thereby not held accountable for their actions. The women involved in prostitution are shown in a negative light, and are blamed for contributing to moral decay in the society, the

breakdown of African customs, and the spread of HIV. Only one (male) journalist criticizes the men who cheat on their wives. According to him, both sexes contribute to the moral decay in society.

In these articles, journalists rely on a commercial discourse, in which women are used as instruments for pleasure and entertainment, with the intention of increasing newspaper sales. This is reflected by the fact that several of these articles ran on the front page, in spite of being based on insignificant events. The following example illustrates this point: **CHANGUDOJA FIGHT TO WIN MAN** (Nipashe 9/9/97). The story is about three prostitutes starting a fight over a customer in a bar in the city. In Dar es Salaam there are bars on almost every corner. It is easy to imagine that there are many fights in these bars, but the one fight selected as having news value is the one that features prostitutes fighting over a man. The representation and positioning of women is likely to disregard and even degrade women as sexual objects or evil offenders who contribute to the moral decay of society. The analysis supports a view among woman activists who criticize the media for representing women with indecent or insulting names and portraying them as a source of problems, and for reducing women to objects of sensational news reporting. In particular, the Swahili press has been condemned for insulting and degrading women by calling them indecent and unworthy names. In this survey, the popularized Swahili press colors their pages with the metaphor *changudoja* in 10 out of 14 articles concerned with prostitution. This word has become a common nickname for sex-workers, but its real meaning is cheap sweet fish.

All in all, the mass media can be seen as an arena for contestation and negotiation in the process of modernization because it signals the fact that women are an economic force to be reckoned with. At the same time, women are widely portrayed as a source of moral decay and are blamed for 'everything' that goes wrong in the society, which might undercut women's ability to take an active role in society and development. The support, solidarity, and trust among women in the economic sphere stand in sharp contrast to media images that present women as female rivals and selfish individuals.

6.3 Development, empowerment and gender transformation

It has been stressed in this thesis that development has to go hand in hand with gender transformation in society (c.f. Chapter 4.2). In the symbolic struggle of gender transformation it is important that women be visible in the economy, civil society, and the political system as well as social sectors like education and health, which are all important for development. In total, 104 articles are concerned with women and societal issues, which can be divided into sub-themes as shown in Table 6.3. Women are most likely to be placed on the news agenda

in relation to socio-cultural issues in which women are likely to be defined in terms of their role in reproduction, as mothers, daughters, or in relation to men. This agrees with the universal tendency to align women with nature and the domestic sphere. The rather scanty coverage of women and societal issues confirms other studies that have claimed that women are underrepresented in fields such as politics, education, business, and agriculture (Shariff 1991; Mtambalike 1996; TGNP 1997; Kayoke 1997). Nevertheless, as I shall return to the coverage of woman/gender issues based upon different women's/gender NGOs constitute a considerable amount of the articles within this category.

Table 6.3 Women and societal issues

Sub-themes	Amount	Percent	% of 415	Pr. day
Politics	13	13	3	1
Economy/production	16	15	4	1
Education	10	9	2	0.5
Social/cultural issues	34	33	8	2
Women's/gender issues	31	30	7	2
Total	104	100	24	7

Important issues to be addressed are whether the mass media contributes to the replacement of traditional attitudes towards women as subordinate and incapable creatures by presenting gender notions that promote equality and positive attitudes towards women as capable of making a living, taking decisions, and participating in all areas of life and society. In this section, I pay special attention to whether women are portrayed as subjects who take an active part in society or who become objects of other people's actions. Lack of agency might position women as passive receivers of development.

Women don't belong in politics

One arena in particular illustrates women's difficulties in breaking into the public sphere - the territory of politics. Politics is the core of the *public sphere*, dealing with universal concerns, as opposed to the private or domestic sphere. It includes the decision-making bodies in society, such as the government and Parliament, which have responsibility for public tasks such as enacting laws, allocating resources, and setting budget priorities. Decisions made here have an impact on the lives of all women, men, and children, as well as on education, training, health services and other social issues, culture, business opportunities and national economic development. The importance of the visibility of women as a force in this area is therefore crucial in the symbolic struggle for gender transformation. Politicians, parliamentarians, and ministers are natural news actors, but non-governmental organizations and citizens who try to influence policies and political processes are also legitimate subjects for the news. The

importance of visibility in the sphere of politics lies in the character of politicians and others involved in politics and decision-making as the social coordinators on behalf of the society. It is therefore alarming that out of the 13 articles of all types concerned with women and politics, only one news article portrays a woman as the agent involved with local political events. In addition, two readers' letters are concerned with women and politics. The majority of the articles concern foreign news and famous people, such as Winnie Mandela and the US Secretary Madeleine Albright.

Winnie Mandela is the headline in eight articles. The news reports vary between the political and the sensational. The stories are split, with half featuring her nomination by the ANC's women's department to run for the vice presidency, and the other half featuring the allegations that she murdered at least two people during the Apartheid regime. **WINNE MANDELA TO CONTEST FOR THE PLACE OF THABO MBEKI** (Nipashe 16/9/97) versus **WINNIE ASSOCIATED AGAIN WITH MURDER** (Uhuru, 18/9/97). In the first example Winnie Mandela is first and foremost portrayed as a positive action-oriented role figure; this is undercut by the second story in which it remains unclear whether her actions are for the good of society or for her own self-interest, which sheds doubt on the positive benefits to society if she is elected. The only news article that represents a female agent clearly motivated by social good and with (intended) fortunate effects is: **ALBRIGHT FACES TALL ORDER TO HALT MIDDLE EAST SLIDE** (The Guardian 10/9/97). Madeline Albright emerges as an unambiguous positive role model, who is touring to the Middle East in an attempt to revive Israel-Palestinian peace negotiations. However, Israel-Palestinian peace negotiations are probably not the biggest concern for grassroots women in Tanzania.

Three articles are concerned with internal events, which include two readers' letters. In the one editorial article, a female CCM campaigner is accused of threatening and bribing her fellow women during the 1995 election. **WOMEN WERE WARNED AGAINST VOTING FOR LUTTER** (Daily News 11/9). The article reports an ongoing court case in which a CCM campaigner, a female doctor, threatened women that she would not provide them maternity services at her hospital unless they voted for a CCM candidate (male). Her actions can be interpreted as motivated by self-interest, which is not only at odds with democratic values but also casts women in a negative light in an arena where they already have difficulties breaking into. It was also claimed that the CCM candidate bribed women during the campaign. Consequently, women in this article are portrayed as both agitator and passive victimized voters. The headline supports this weak position in which "women" have a passive, non-action oriented position ("were warned").

An ideological implication of the limited coverage of women in politics might strengthen a prevailing attitude that women are not fit for politics and decision-making in society. Rather than contesting the boundaries between male and female spheres of action and identity, the news discourse reinforces these boundaries by excluding women from the important sphere of politics. As consequence, women remain sidelined in the public debate over issues concerning their own lives, which in turn might have a disempowering effect on women. However, this could change in favor of female politicians when issues of special concern to women are treated in the Parliament.

Better access and equal opportunities

Ten articles in my sample are concerned with girls in education. Most of these report on different programs or special arrangements meant to improve access and conditions for girls in education at all levels, particularly for children from poor households and in subjects that have been male dominated, such as mathematics and science. Similar programs have also been reported from Kenya and Uganda. The newspapers provide a space for girls and young women to be valued as students, which are associated with cultural roles, and in the long run educated people benefit the society and development. However, government officials, bureaucrats, and experts are the dominant sources (mostly males), while girls that are influenced by these programs are spoken on behalf of without giving them a direct voice. The positioning of girls as existents or objects signals a passive position, which is reflected in most headings and leads. The example below illustrates a typical pattern in which the government or other public institutions is the agent enacting upon events in an attempt to improve conditions and opportunities for girls in education. Their actions can be seen as conducted for the social good and with intended fortunate effects. The events take place in the public sphere concerned with educational policies. In a few cases female politicians, academics, head mistresses, and others are visible as a driving force.

Majira 9/9/97 By Josephine Sanga, Moshi

GIRLS ENCOURAGED TO STUDY SCIENCE SUBJECTS

The government has encouraged female secondary school students to abandon their habit of avoiding science subjects due to claims that they are too tough for them.

To a certain extent, this newspaper coverage draws on a feminist discourse by stressing equal educational opportunities and access for girls and boys and by calling attention to efforts to increase the share of female students and make more girls aware of the importance of education and opportunities available to them. One article is interesting in this respect: **UDSM 2000 BENEFITS MORE WOMEN** (The Express Sept. 11-17 1997). This story describes the success of a pre-entry program aiming to increase the number of female students in science subjects at the University of Dar es Salaam. Female students in this program who

have lower but promising entry qualifications in science subjects undergo training and sit for exams before they are enrolled in regular coursework. However, the feminist discourse is contradicted by a statement from the Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education (male), who had told the Parliament that the government will no longer accept students with lower passes to join higher learning institutions. He was strongly condemned by female Members of Parliament (MPs) and woman academics. Other articles show attempts to link a feminist discourse with a development discourse. For instance, in one article Mama Anna MKapa urged education for women to improve their status in society, and asked the girls' parents to encourage them to attend school in order to bring faster economic growth in the country.

All in all, there are elements of both empowering and disempowering character in the news discourse concerning girls/women in education. On the one hand, the efforts reported upon aim to enable girls/women to take control of their own lives and to take a more active role in society and development. On the other hand, there is a lack of articles portraying women as able to influence their life situations or act for the social good. This is reflected by the fact that most of the official sources staging the events are males.

'Mother nature' as an object of discussion

A variety of topics concerning women/girls in social and cultural issues were debated in the newspapers during the two weeks of investigation for this thesis. In total, there were 34 articles within this category, which almost outnumber women/girls in politics, economy, and education altogether (39). Recurrent themes are pregnancy, motherhood, and health-related issues (12); abortion (5); circumcision, health, and tradition (4); and conditions facing widows (2). On the one hand, this coverage can be seen to support a sympathetic liberal feminism by giving visibility to topics of special concern to women. On the other hand, prevailing representations of women are associated with nature, such as their role in reproduction, as mothers, daughters, or in relation to men. Hence, this kind of news coverage might contribute to reinforce the symbolic boundaries between men's and women's spheres of actions and identity.

Mtanzania 19/9/97, By Sydney Kwiyaamba

POVERTY CAUSES THE INCREASE OF WOMEN DEATHS IN TANZANIA

The statistics given by the Health Ministry in the country show that an average of 7000 women die every year from maternity problems either during their pregnancy or when giving birth. This is a very dangerous situation bearing in mind that death of a woman or her bad health has a very bad impact on her family, the society, and the nation as a whole.

The article above represents a typical example that implicitly draws on a feminist discourse by foregrounding issues that are perceived as being of particular

concern to women. It points out different causes for maternity deaths and health problems during pregnancies, such as poor health services, misleading customs and traditions, poor living conditions (malnutrition) and poverty, and illiteracy among women. Also, several articles explicitly draw on a feminist discourse to explain women's health problems, such as the denial of rights for women to make decisions regarding societal issues that affect them either socially or economically. In addition, there are elements in the coverage that draw on a development discourse. The following story illustrates the close links between a feminist and development discourse: **HEALTH FOR ALL EXPECTANT MOTHERS REMAINS A PIPE DREAM** (The Guardian 9/9/97). The story urges the community and government institutions to ensure that health facilities are extended to all parts of the country, and for social and economic conditions to be changed so that women can enjoy all human rights. Nonetheless, women are absent as agents acting upon situations that will improve their lives or as social coordinators acting on behalf of the society. The positioning of women might work against this progressive orientation, and thereby undercut the power and efficiency of women.

Not all articles involving women or women's issues need to have a female agent to be empowering. Journalists contribute to an increased awareness by analyzing causes for health problems, oppression, and underdevelopment, which could help women identify and overcome problems they are facing. As discussed in Chapter 4.4, critical encounters with reality can help women start thinking critically and creatively deal with their own situation (Freire 1997). In fact, half of the articles within this category are written in genres such as features, analysis, and commentary, which aim to educate or raise awareness about women's conditions, causes, and consequences. In contrast to most news reports, these stories are not based upon a specific event, but rather represent conditions without a clear agent or agency, beginning or end. As seen in the first example above, "poverty" is seen as major cause for women's deaths. It is not something that happened overnight or that one person causes, rather it is a very complex situation resulting from a variety of factors.

Nevertheless, half of the articles in this category are based on a specific event entailing a visible agent. Nearly all of the articles about abortion are based on a meeting held by the members of the Tanzania Pharmacist Union (PST). The government started the debate by encouraging professionals from different departments to discuss whether or not there should be a law in the country to allow abortion. The major agents in these stories are the government, pharmacists, and religious leaders, while women and girls are barely visible in the discussion. This is particularly reflected in the headlines, as can be seen in the following example: **BISHOP CONDEMNS THE DOCTORS INVOLVED IN ABORTION. HE SAYS THAT WHAT THEY ARE DOING IS JUST**

KILLING (Mtanzania 9/9/97). Only one (female) journalist discusses the abortion issue in a careful and analytical manner, in which she considers women's situations (causes) and the children who might grow up in a very poor environment (effects).

International organizations, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Organization for African Unity (OAU) are major agents in articles concerned with female circumcision, as these groups try to eliminate this practice due to the health problems it causes. As one article states: **CRUSADE AGAINST FEMALE CIRCUMCISION HAS TO CONTINUE** (The Guardian 18/9/97). According to this article, WHO maintains that female circumcision is a barrier to the goals of health, development, and human rights. In another article, a male journalist claims that most societies continue this practice simply because it was done from the past, passed on from generation to generation, in spite of the health risks involved: "*We get circumcised and insist our daughters be circumcised... Some see circumcision as needed to cool down women's emotional feelings and make them believe that when a woman is circumcised, she becomes really a woman*" (Mtanzania 14/9). Part of the problem is that women have internalized a belief that circumcision is necessary to keep them clean and in order to get married. To a large extent women and girls are reduced to victims of this practice, which is deeply rooted in their culture, customs and traditions, but they are also blamed for continuing the practice. The author cited above states that circumcision is generally done by women who are unaware of hygienic conditions and are conducted in most cases without any painkillers. This is reflected in another article that reports on a student (13) who died after being circumcised. According to the article, the woman was operated by an old woman under very bad conditions, and then kept in the house by her mother in spite of being ill and in pain. This example also shows that in the rare cases where women are portrayed as agents, their actions can be interpreted as motivated out of self-interest, and with unfortunate effects.

However, there are a few exceptions where female agents acting on events with intended fortunate effects. The Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) is the agent in three articles concerned with a new film aiming to educate citizens on the benefits of family planning. **TAMWA LAUNCHES FILM ON FAMILY PLANNING** (Daily News 10/9/97). It is reported that the film will be shown on all the local TV channels. TAMWA is the social coordinator acting for the social good in order to improve the lives of women and children. Not only the agent is a women's NGO, the sources are also females who are aligned with culture and act in the public sphere.

In general, there is a tendency to reduce social and cultural issues such as health, pregnancy, and motherhood to women's issues only, which is reflected in the

absence of 'ordinary men' in the discussion. At the same time, it is men who should be targeted and made responsible, because it is they who often take family decisions, including giving expectant mothers their permission to see a doctor, the number of children, and so forth. Even though there are health services for mothers and their children, there is no guarantee they will use it. As stated in one article: "*The health ministry statistics showed that 90 percent of the citizens who were interviewed in research on health and family planning, are aware of the existence of this service, but only 16 percent make use of it*" (Mtanzania 19/9). Targeting both men and women could contribute to raising the level of importance for these matters from being non-important women issues to being of public interest and concern. Additionally, articles drawing upon a feminist discourse support a liberal feminist framework rather than a radical position. The implication is that women's participation in society and development will be hindered if gender is not treated as a theme, such as gender-based power relations, social-cultural roles, and the patriarchal system. Non-governmental organizations dealing with women's or gender issues could play a key role in approaching the gender dimension and transform these issues into public concerns.

NGOs as an oppositional discourse

The news coverage of women's or gender NGOs differs from mainstream female representations by portraying women as a force in fighting for women's rights and women's liberation. In total, women's/gender NGOs are involved in 38 articles, or 37 percent of all articles classified under the broader heading of 'society', which shows the importance of women's/gender NGOs in providing alternative representations of women and making women's/gender issues visible.⁴ Coverage of the Second Annual Gender Studies Conference (AGSC'97), organized by the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme, accounted for 15 articles. Nine articles were related to the Tanzania Media Women Association's (TAMWA) activities. Additionally, seven articles were based upon a diverse group of women's/gender NGOs located in different parts of the country. These articles cannot easily be placed in a specific compartment of the society; rather they focus more directly upon women's/gender issues. Among these NGOs are grassroots-oriented organizations like Grassroots Female Communicators Association (GRAFCA), and religious organizations for Catholic women and Muslim women. Among the objectives and activities reported for these groups are fighting oppression, exploitation, and sexual abuse of women and children. One means for liberating women is to eliminate misleading traditions that discriminate against women who would like to participate in programs for savings and credit to run small-scale businesses, the formation of production groups, and education about gender for both rural and

⁴ This number includes 7 articles already discussed in which woman NGOs were the main news actors, divided between production/economy and social/cultural issues.

urban women. The importance of the coverage is not the single events, but rather the total impression of various NGOs working to improve women's conditions in different parts of the country, which might inspire new local groups to make similar efforts.

AGSC'97 - gender and development hand in hand

The Annual Gender Studies Conference is a yearly event organized by the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP). The AGSC'97 had as its goals a campaign on gender equality and equity in resource allocation in land, education, and health services, and to promote networking and coalition-building among non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations (CBOs). The conference took place at the University of Dar es Salaam and attracted NGOs and CBOs from all over the country as well as journalists, politicians, donors, intellectuals, and other interested persons. It created an arena where women and some men could meet, talk, exchange knowledge and ideas, network, and draw up action plans. Prior to the conference, the TGNP organized workshops on gender training (pre-AGSC'97). One of them was special training for journalists on gender and media, which probably played a role in involving journalists in covering the conference. In order to reach out to the broader public, media attention is crucial. Even though I have characterized the AGSC'97 as being visible in the media, the event was not covered by 9 of the 14 newspapers included in this research. In total, five newspapers took up issues concerning the conference, totaling 12 articles. In addition, three articles addressed issues raised by the gender training. The event was also covered by Radio Tanzania in six news items and two special programs, as well as in two television shows⁵.

Four of the articles appeared prior to the conference, and were informative in style, focusing on TGNP's objectives and activities related to the upcoming conference. One issue these articles have in common is that they portrayed TGNP as the agent and social coordinator of the event, as a group acting out for social good and with intended positive effects. According to the newspapers, TGNP's goals are to enable local organizations to facilitate gender equality, equity, and empowerment and to bring social transformation to target groups.

The Guardian 10/9/97

TGNP PLANS FORUM TO BOOST GENDER NETWORKING

The Tanzania Gender Networking Program is a non-governmental organization established in 1993 to promote gender with a new perspective in the country. From 15-18 September the organization will hold an annual gender conference (AGSC) at the University of Dar es Salaam. Our Staff writer, MATILDA KASANGA, talks to the TGNP Programme Officer, Mary Rusimbi, on TGNP achievements and the coming conference.

⁵ See Appendix C for inventory listing. Only newspaper articles covering the conference are included in this analysis.

Recurring themes in the remaining articles, which were written in a more argumentative and critical mode, are the benefits of the introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT) and lack of a gender perspective; the draft of a new land bill and implications for gender; customs and traditions as a cause to oppression; and the biased portrayal of women in the media. Other important issues in the conference, such as shortcomings in relation to gender in education and health, were essentially unnoticed in the newspapers. Among the main news actors we find a female planning officer (VAT), a professor/woman activist (customs and traditions), the Secretary for the Women International Conference (land), the Chairperson of Africa Network (land), TAMWA's secretary general (gender and media), and other participants from the conference. With just one exception, all the articles have female news agents. Women are shown as action-oriented, fighting for their rights and speaking out about gender shortcomings in various fields, and targeting the government, the media, as well as customs and traditions. Their motivation in the fight against oppression and gender discrimination in society is for the good of society. A feminist discourse is blended with a development discourse, which is illustrated in the following example:

Shaba 18/9/97, Rehema Nakenya

DEVELOPMENT WILL BE BROUGHT IN COOPERATION OF ALL GENDERS

It has been said that development of the country will be achieved only when both sexes will be given equal rights and equal development services without discriminating against women, men, and even children.

By and large, the news coverage supports a liberal feminist framework (equal rights and equity in access to resources and law). In addition, it draws upon a more radical view pinpointing culture, tradition and norms as barriers to women's development. For example, in a "People Watch" column in the *Guardian*, a cross selection of participants from the AGSC'97 are given the opportunity to air their views; a recurring opinion is that cultural attitudes against women influence gender perceptions and stand in the way of women's development. As one male journalist states: "*Gender equality is common talk in Tanzania today; but trouble is, there is this widespread misconception that gender issues are the concern of females alone. That is a wrong attitude, for the attainment of gender balance we will go along way to enhance development for the benefit of the whole society... We need to get rid of backward traditions which presume women are naturally inferior.*" Overall, the news coverage of the AGSC'97 event challenged prevailing definitions of women as subordinate and unable to be social coordinators in public life, which might contribute to reframe women's identity and status in society.

TAMWA – an even stream of news

The Tanzania Media Women's Association is probably the most profiled women's NGO in Tanzania, which is reflected in a continuous news flow about the organization and their activities. During the two weeks investigated for this thesis, TAMWA did not experience any major events, but conducted their day-to-day activities towards their goals as usual. In total, TAMWA was involved in 14 articles. Three of these articles have already been discussed under social-cultural issues; one of these reports on TAMWA's launch of a new film on family planning, and two articles covered a gender and media workshop held prior to the AGSC'97. The articles discussed below accounted for nine articles, and were based upon seminars, meetings, research, and other activities organized by TAMWA. Most of the events were part of TAMWA's 3 year program for eradicating gender-based violence and child abuse. One reason for TAMWA's visibility in the media is that the organization consists of media professionals, which thereby enhances their skill in accessing the media.

In general, TAMWA is portrayed as a women's organization that takes actions against oppression, gender violence, and child abuse. Two of the news events were meetings in which TAMWA invited religious leaders and traditional healers to participate in debates about harassment and oppression of women and children. The focus in these articles is shifted between foregrounding TAMWA as the major agent and other participants, as seen in the following headings: **WITCH DOCTORS SWEAR TO ERADICATE RAPING** (Heko 14/9/97) versus **TAMWA EFFORTS NOW DIRECTED TO THE WITCH DOCTORS** (Heko 21/9/97). The meeting with traditional healers and midwives created a debate in the newspapers focusing on child abuse, rape and sodomizing. A call was made for the government to take traditional healers seriously in order for them to help fighting evils in the society. By foregrounding the involvement of other groups, the news coverage illustrates outside support for TAMWA's objectives. In addition, TAMWA's efforts in involving different groups and affiliations in the society in their fight against gender violence and sexual abuse probably added to the news value.

Overall, the news coverage of women's/gender NGOs provides images of women as agents enacting upon events or as social coordinators within the public sphere, motivated by the social good and with intended positive effects for women and other disempowered groups. This is in line with an earlier assumption that portrayal of female activists aligns women with culture and status roles, rather than in the relational terms associated with nature (cf. Chapter 3.3).

6.4 Discussion and conclusion

The movement from socialist to capitalist principles entails both new opportunities and risks for gender transformation. During the two weeks of news coverage investigated for this thesis, various events have been reported upon and issues debated which can be seen as an indication of an increasing awareness and acknowledgment of the importance of women's roles in society. In total, women or woman/gender issues were found to be of major importance in 415 articles as reflected in headings or leads. More than half of these articles have been subjected to additional analysis. Important topics with an impact on the development of women's lives such as gender violence and sexual abuse, health-related issues and to some extent education, training, and economy are recurrent themes in the news discourse, which combined make women's lives and efforts visible on the public arena. However, the absence of women in politics in the news discourse might strengthen a prevailing belief that women are not fit for politics and decision-making in society.

The news discourse is sympathetic to liberal feminism by contesting equal opportunities and access in education, training, and business and by raising awareness of the causes for women's health problems, oppression, and underdevelopment. Also, to a certain extent, a feminist discourse converges with a development discourse in which women's economic, social, and cultural emancipation are all seen as a precondition to development. Still, a feminist discourse must compete with a commercial discourse, which is particularly evident in articles concerned with gender violence and sexual harassment. The interviews with grassroots women also revealed a change in perception of the media's coverage of women and women's issues as illustrated in the following example:

Nowadays it is better, not like previous days when only issues reported upon were men's issues. It is almost balanced... All the problems I have mentioned (rape, inheritance, widows, genital mutilation, and AIDS) together with property ownership are information that the media write and tell about. I know already a lot about women and children's rights from the media (teenage mother #18).

As discussed in Chapter 5, women who use mass media most actively in their search for information about gender issues - female petty traders, secretaries, and female youths - are also most aware of women or gender issues in society. In particular, female petty traders find information and motivation in the news about the progress of other women, but at the same time they are less concerned with negative portrayals of women. *"We like to hear about woman development in Singida, Tabora, and Mara et cetera. For example, I read a newspaper article that said that women in Mbeya want to establish a business venture with the republic of South Africa. I like this very much. I am asking myself – why not in*

Dar es Salaam? Can we have a business agreement with Kenya?" (retired/small scale business woman #28).

However, when viewing gender in terms of events, agents, and existents, women are most often portrayed as existents, affected by the actions and decisions of others in a way that may be an obstacle in the struggle for gender transformation. It is a paradox that women are to a limited extent visible as agents of development, which ascribe women a position as objects of discussions conducted by men. In nearly all the articles concerning education and social and cultural issues, the majority of sources are men who hold posts in the government or other official bodies, local or international organizations, pharmacists, or religious leaders. A possible result of this is that women are sidelined, even with respect to issues that are of particular concern to them, and that women are portrayed as individuals who 'are' rather than individuals who 'do'. Lack of agency assigns a passive position for women, which is at odds with a receiver-oriented approach to development. An ideological implication of the prevailing images of women as existents is that women are associated with nature, and are defined in relational terms to men, sex, or reproduction, which draws symbolic boundaries between male and female spheres of action and identities. Positioning women as existents therefore might work to exclude women from taking an active part in society and thereby channel development in the interest of a male-dominated society.

Still, a significant element that challenges the dominant position of women as existents is the portrayal of woman activists. The news coverage of women's/gender NGOs depicts women as agents enacting upon events in the public sphere. Women are defined by status or role categories associated with culture, as social coordinators creating and participating in public debate. For example, the news coverage of the AGSC'97 challenges prevailing definitions of women as subordinate and unable to be social coordinators in public life, which might contribute to reframe women's identity and status in society. Keeping in mind that women are traditionally not supposed to speak in front of a man, these articles challenge the boundaries between male's and female's sphere of action.

Moreover, women's/gender NGOs are making a difference in calling attention to gender and women's issues. They manage to raise issues from a private to public concern and involve different groups in society as well as targeting the government. Several of the efforts have ended in concrete action or action plans to improve women's lives so as to enable them to gain control over their own destiny. The articles draw upon a feminist as well as a development discourse, which is particularly evident in the coverage of the AGSC'97. One reason might be that TGNP stresses gender transformation rather than women's liberation, by drawing upon development and democracy as frames of reference. The following

statements confirm that the mass media is becoming an important agent for cultural change providing a space for negotiation of gender identities and women's role in society: *"Truly, the thought is different now; the mass media is fighting for women's rights. I am convinced that they are doing their best"* (female nursery school teacher #8). *"The media talks about women's rights and equality. I think it has been useful, because things are now changing; men are not as conservative as they used to, they now share ideas with their wives, at least there is negotiation of some things"* (female secretary #15).

Furthermore, representations of women in production/business symbolize a force that can be used in recasting female identities associated with culture and status roles. It challenges gender boundaries where masculinity is associated with men's activities in the public sphere and production, while femininity is linked to women's role in the domestic sphere and reproduction. The coverage of women in business supports an image that women are no longer totally dependent on men, which paves the way for renegotiating women's role and status in society. As argued in Chapter 5.3, the interviews revealed a change of attitude towards women and among women, which can be illustrated by the following statements: *"We have seen it in Tanzania; we have advocates who are women, we have women who are head of parastatals, we have seen female ministers in Tanzania and Kenya. In Kenya now, a woman has raised challenge to President Moi contesting for President ... that is pointing directly that women can perform"* (banker #38). *"Previously a woman was a dependent, but now due to life styles (difficulties) a woman should also be liberated in education, gender wise, and in the family in general"* (small-scale business woman #23). *"Women should change their attitude of depending on men to assist them to do things. Both men and women should cooperate for the well-being of both of them"* (teenage mother #17). The interviews also showed disparities between different groups of women and even in women. I started this chapter with a statement illustrating this inconsistency in the perception of women: *"One thing I am proud of is that unlike days ago women are now coming up in various aspects and they appear very often in the media, but one thing women should change is their way of looking at things. They should build confidence in themselves"* (house girl #1). On the one hand, this statement illustrates that women are more visible in the media and thereby in society at large. On the other hand, it shows a lack of confidence, which is reflected in media images of women as dependent on men and not at least media descriptions of female sex-workers.

Women's growing independence in the economic sphere as well as their visibility in the public sphere (women's/gender NGOs) seems to have not only set off a cultural flux in perceptions of women and their role in society, but also carries a risk. By challenging men's position in production, which is closely linked to their status as breadwinner and head of the household, women also

contest men's hegemony in the areas of decision-making, coordination, and resource allocation. In addition, prostitution is becoming widespread in Dar es Salaam and is clearly at odds with Tanzanian culture and moral values. But this growth in prostitution also represents a situation where women have taken control over sexual resources and relations which were traditionally controlled by men, which can be read as a cultural provocation. This might therefore be a source of gender antagonism and might explain the frequent and biased picture of women as prostitutes in the news discourse. The news coverage is one-sided, focusing on female sex-workers, while the male customers remain hidden in the shadows and thereby not held accountable for their actions. The journalists draw on a commercial discourse in which women are used as instruments for pleasure and entertainment, which is underscored by the fact that most of the articles are based on insignificant events. As a result, representation and positioning of women will likely disregard and even degrade women as sexual objects or evil offenders contributing to the moral decay of society.

My analysis supports a view among woman activists who have criticized the media for showing them as a source of problems, and by representing women with indecent names, and for reducing women to objects of sensational news reporting. Also, female respondents reacted to media's biased portrayal of women and in particular to how commercial sex workers are covered in the media. Young women (barmaids, house girls, and female youths) are particularly concerned with the frequent and humiliating stories about sex workers. Some of the girls blame women engaged in this business rather than the journalists who report sometimes blunt stories. *"In fact, the media show women negatively. I feel embarrassed and am not pleased to see such things, but I think it is because of the problems they have, that is why they are doing such things. And I am sure she does not enjoy doing it"* (barmaid #6). Other interviewees pointed out: *"The media is oppressing us in this aspect; you find them writing about Changudoa (prostitute), while men are doing terrible things but not reported as harshly. They are raping small kids, but still the issue is not reported equally"* (female secretary # 15). These statements reveal a resistance against the media images of women as a source of moral decay. Nonetheless, it is also common among the female respondents to blame women themselves for being involved in prostitution rather than men. This duality in the construction of meaning is clearly expressed in the following: *"On the one hand, it is good because when they report badly about women they are warning those who want to do the same. On the other hand, it is bad because it gives bad reputation to women. Being portrayed like that in the newspapers, a girl might be harassed by boys/men who have read such stories in the newspapers and mock her"* (female youth #21).

The strong focus upon women as a source of moral decay can be seen as a sign of general societal distress as Tanzania makes the transformation to a modern,

capitalistic, and open society. The opening of the country to the outside world has been associated with an increase in drugs, crime, and prostitution. As pointed out earlier, public anxieties concerning social change tend to be channeled through a focus on contrast, and women and sexuality (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993). As such, using women as a 'tool' to think with is strongly reflected in Tanzanian media. The negative effects of globalization and commercialization are also seen to affect local media coverage where sensationalism and increased competition among newspapers (and other mass media) are seen as the major reason why women have become the object of sensational news reporting (Mtambalike 1996; 135). In particular, the Swahili press has been criticized for focusing upon nudity, sex and violence, which are believed to contribute to moral decay.

At the center of the debate on globalization and commercialization is an increase in sexual abuse, rape, and defilement of women and children. My analysis revealed that the most common representation of women in the news is in relation to gender-based violence and sexual harassment. Excluding love/sex fiction stories and extraordinary events (the deaths of Princess Diana and Mother Theresa), gender violence and sexual harassment constituted 43 percent of the articles. The substantial reporting of gender violence and sexual abuse is also not unnoticed by the interviewees:

“There is one thing that has been very common in the papers of this nation: On every first page of almost every newspaper, nowadays, you find news about rape, small children are being raped; girls like me... this pains me very much” (secretary #13).

The articles about gender violence and sexual abuse draw on both a feminist and a commercial discourse, which make for abundant meanings in the construction of gender. This unpredictability in the construction of meaning can also be spotted among audiences. *“I heard recently in the radio a child was raped and her reproductive organs destroyed; worse still those who did the act are not to be seen. It is painful to listen to such things. I would advise the government to provide heavy punishment to rape crimes”* (house girl #1). *“The media should make us aware – let’s say somebody is raped – but I don’t know the way they are helping. It is like harassing them”* (female teacher #11). On the one hand, the news coverage of gender violence and sexual abuse is crucial for women’s liberation by making it clear that rape, sodomy, and defilement are not acceptable in society. The first statement supports this view, which reveals some kind of resistance. Such recognition of oppressed positions can trigger cultural resistance to the prevailing gender ideology. On the other hand, women are typically portrayed as victims, which seem to match with a commercial discourse in which women are reduced to male pleasure, sex, and violence. The second statement supports this interpretation, which involves a subject position of women as

valued socially lower than men. The frequent images of women as victims might therefore contribute to a disempowering position and channel development in the interest of a male-dominated society.

All in all, the new context of social problems has a doubled-edged impact on a cultural level, including ideas, values and norms, and identities. The news coverage entails plural meanings in the construction of gender, sometimes producing contradictory cultural definitions of femininity, which affect how audiences position themselves in the discourse. My analysis reveals that relations between men and women are changing; the roles they perform are no longer clear-cut, which leaves an opening for redefining gender. However, women are blamed for moral decay and 'everything' that goes wrong when modernity clashes with traditional values, which is reflected in widespread news coverage of women as prostitutes.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Alternative images of women: NGOs as a force in gender transformation

States in this region have been silent over issues of rape and sexual harassment... The existing violence against women and children is not well documented. Governments have to be made aware of the nature and degree of the violence, which women and children have been subjected to, so that they can take measures that would protect women and children from such acts of violence (Meena 1992; 17/22).

My analysis of how women are represented in the news shows that in no other way are women more visible than in relation to gender-based violence and sexual abuse (c.f. Chapter 6.1). The analysis also showed that representations of women as victims of men's actions dominate, where women appear as someone who is raped, beaten, killed, harassed, and so forth. In order to encompass the flexibility of the news in representing alternative and perhaps challenging definitions of women, I have chosen to study the news coverage of a major event carried out by a prominent women's organization: The Tanzanian Media Women Association's Symposium on Gender Violence. The Symposium aimed at sensitizing Members of Parliament to the magnitude of gender-based violence and child abuse in Tanzania, and to win their support for amending laws that discriminate or deny women and children of their basic human rights.

The following discussion of rape and sexual abuse rests on the assumption that such offenses have increased in recent years: Some of the articles refer to the increase as a "wave of rape" or "mushrooming of sexual harassment practices." However, few statistics and research are presented to support this rise over a longer period of time, and what is available could be misleading. Since sexual abuse used to be a taboo, it was not common to report such violent acts to the police and therefore these offenses would not be registered. Even today, there is fear of the social stigma and shame that are heaped on rape victims and their families. It might therefore be rash to draw the conclusion that gender-based violence and sexual abuse against women and children has exploded. Rather, it might be that media's attention has brought such incidents to the fore.

7.1 Gender violence & sexual abuse: The TAMWA Symposium



The Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) is at the forefront of women's struggle for liberation in Tanzania. The group has been fighting to change the political agenda to recognize the problem of violence against women and children; the group's main tools for this have been conducting research and organizing awareness seminars for different groups in society (i.e., medical practitioners, religious leaders, policemen, and journalists). A major event was the Symposium on Gender Violence held for the Members of Parliament in Dodoma in July 1997, which was offered as a part of TAMWA's three-year program: "Sensitization, Advocacy and Lobbying to Break Free of Gender Violence 1997-1999" (TAMWA leaflet 1997). The program aims to eradicate violent acts by sensitizing people to the problem, and providing information on gender-based violence and sexual abuse. TAMWA, consisting of professional media workers, has also said it will use the media as a tool for sensitization purposes. As such, TAMWA is an important vehicle in producing and carrying the message of an emerging women's movement in Tanzania. However, the event I have chosen is just one moment in the formation and growth of a women's movement.

During the symposium, TAMWA used plays, poems, and songs to introduce the themes, followed by presentations and discussions. The plays focused on difficulties facing women and girls, such as wife battering, denial of land and inheritance rights, harassment of female children and being denied the chance to study. The presentations focused on the problem of violence against women and children, and included presentations of statistics and surveys, information on the existing laws on domestic violence and sexual abuse, and the weaknesses in these

laws in protecting legal and human rights of women and children. The event can be seen to address strategic needs in development by providing women with space and flexibility to make decisions affecting them and society.

TAMWA's continuous struggle against gender-based violence and sexual abuse is an example of successful interaction, lobbying, and advocacy. The symposium created an arena for TAMWA members, MPs, ministers, and others to share their views on the issues involved and to discuss solutions to the problems. It resulted in a dialog among the policy makers in society, which subsequently contributed to a new "Sexual Offences Special Provision Bill 1998". Nine months after the symposium, a Parliamentarian committee called 'Women and disadvantaged groups' organized a three-day seminar and invited TAMWA and other woman/gender NGOs to discuss the new Sexual Offences Bill. During the following April Parliamentary Session, Parliamentarians unanimously approved the 'The Sexual Offences Special Provision Bill 1998'. The bill's primary goal is to safeguard personal integrity, dignity, liberty, and the security of women and children¹. The passage of the bill was seen as a victory for TAMWA and other activist organizations. For the first time, an organization pursued an issue relentlessly, put it on the national agenda, and gathered support from different sectors around it. It was also the first time that civil society was able to actively influence the legislative process, thereby marking the beginning of the crystallization of the democratic process in Tanzania. As Tanzania prepared a new land policy as well as a new NGO policy, activists had lessons to build on.

According to Maoulidi (1998), TAMWA's success was due to a focused strategy, coalition building, and effective use of the media in sensitizing the public and lawmakers regarding acts of violence against women and children. The mass media represents a wider cultural arena for these events; the underlying ideas, understandings, and issues have a reach far beyond the actual time and place of action. Major and minor news about TAMWA's activities are continually reported in the media, but at the time the media coverage of the TAMWA Symposium on Gender Violence received more media coverage than any prior event. Contributing to TAMWA's media success was the group's own efforts in mobilizing journalists in the coverage of the event. In order to have a collective media response, TAMWA used a technique called 'bang style team', which involved 12 journalists. The team was created to directly and purposefully mobilize coverage of the TAMWA objectives (TAMWA report 1997a). In addition, a Radio Tanzania production team and a television team prepared

¹ The Sexual Offences Bill and TAMWA's role in the process is based upon a paper presented by Salma Maoulidi at a workshop organized by TAMWA to commemorate World Media Day, April 29, 1998: "Forging a partnership between Activist Organizations and the Media."

special programs². The Sexual Offences Special Provision Bill was given even more attention by the media with more than 80 articles in the time before, during and after it was approved³.

The following analysis is based on the newspaper coverage of the TAMWA symposium on gender violence and sexual harassment. TAMWA put a lot of work into mobilizing journalists to cover the event. The result is coverage in 12 newspapers with a total of 35 articles, 6 pictures and 3 cartoons⁴. Ten articles appeared before or on the day of the Symposium, while twenty-five articles were published after the debate. In addition, radio and television stations followed the event, as seen in frequent reports in news bulletins and special programs about the Symposium and TAMWA's objectives in general (TAMWA report (a)).

7.2 Alternative representations of women in the news

For analytical purposes, I have divided the articles into groups according to common journalistic categories. The first group of articles focuses primarily on WHAT is happening; what the debate is about, the problems, issues, et cetera. The second category is occupied with HOW TAMWA carried out or planned to carry out the event. The third group of articles focuses on HOW to deal with the increasing incidents of rape, defilement, and sodomy and measures to be taken. Finally, I have included a section focusing on WHY the problem is happening and WHO to blame. Pictures and cartoons will only be used for illustration.

I The struggle for women's rights is legitimate

Ten articles focus mainly on WHAT the TAMWA symposium was about and the issues involved. There are two editorials, two commentaries, one reader's letter, two interviews with TAMWA members, and finally three news reports. In other words, the majority of the articles are written in genres that aim to be pervasive or argumentative, which is an indication that the newspapers took an active role in framing the event. In terms of the narrative model presented in Chapter 3.3 (p.63), the articles follow a general pattern based upon process statements, in which TAMWA is portrayed as the agent enacting upon the debate on gender violence, rape, and sexual harassment. The positioning of TAMWA is illustrated in the example below:

² For more information see "Report of media coverage of 1. Gender Violence 2. Kongamano," compiled by Selemani Mkufya –Bang Style Team, Part of TAMWA's core programme: Sensitization, Advocacy & Lobbying to Break Free of Gender Violence in Tanzania 1997-1999.

³ See Appendix E for an overview of the media coverage of The Sexual Offences Special Provisions Bill.

⁴ See Appendix D for complete inventory listing.

HEKO July 24 1997 The editor says...

BEST WISHES TAMWA

In the efforts to fight for woman liberation economically, politically, socially and mentally the message from Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) for next Saturday is a debate about harassment and rape of women and children, which will be held in Dodoma.

.....

The director of the Dodoma debate, Mrs. Maria Shaba should use her status and act as a hero for millions of women who are being harassed and undervalued. Maybe after the Dodoma debate, women and children harassment and rape will decrease. Good wishes for the debate (last paragraph).

TAMWA's action is foregrounded, as reflected in the heading and lead paragraph. TAMWA is not only portrayed as the group that is conducting the event, but is shown as being motivated by a wish for the social good, with intended positive effects for women and children and for society at large. This is evident in the last paragraph cited above. Other news actors are Members of Parliament (MPs), who are the main participants in the debate, and who are portrayed in their position as lawmakers. They appear as objects or targets of the event who are asked to take action against gender violence and sexual abuse.

The journalists take an active role in framing the event by openly expressing their viewpoints, but also indirectly by the way events, actors, and settings are bound together. The headings summarize the main point or opinion, followed by arguments that support this view. In the last paragraph, the authors repeat the open support for TAMWA (see example above) or indirectly by requesting MPs to take the issue seriously and to amend laws to allow for strict measures against the offenders (see example below). The authors are present in the texts using the pronoun "we," making interpretations, judgments, and generalizations that encourage a positive view of TAMWA (actor) and their cause (event). This can be seen in the example below, in which the author uses generalizations, such as "no one can object" and "it is obvious", which are attempts to give legitimacy to the issue.

Mtanzania July 27 1997 Editorial

TAMWA has lit the torch, our duty is to chase it

Yesterday for the first time in the history of our nation there were processions and later debate in Dodoma town about the practices of rape, sodomizing and sexual harassment against women, male and female children, which are now common in the country. The Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) organized this event, which involved citizens, public institutions, international and private institutions. The problem of rape is big; therefore there is no reason for writing a lot about it. It is an issue that requires deep investigation and undoubtedly no one can object that it is necessary to fight against it by any means. It is not only that rape is an act, which

is inhuman, but also it harasses and humiliates, that is why in most cases the victims end up in problems.

.... A stern punishment might not be a permanent solution for this problem. But it is obvious that strict laws will help to reduce the extent of criminality, especially rape, sodomizing and harassment against women and children... We should be serious and take sufficient measures (last paragraph).

Additionally, the language and choices of vocabulary confirm to the positive stand the newspapers have taken regarding the symposium. As one commentary states: *“It is very sad to hear or read about the horrible stories of male adults, some of them aged more than 50 years, engaging in forceful relationships with minors. This is a queer habit, which not only embarrasses our country, but spoils our national culture”* (Daily News 28/7/97). As this quotation shows, the stories are full of strong adjectives. Rape and sexual harassment are described in negative terms such as *inhuman, evil acts, terrible problem, dangerous game*, and in one article the offender is termed a *killer*. The TAMWA debate is described in positive terms such as a *brave event, which awake people from sleep* (Reader’s letter).

An ideological implication to draw from this coverage is that women are not only able to participate in a public debate, but are capable to organize and even manage to convince MPs (mostly men) to participate. Due to the large number of MPs attending the debate, it has been called an historic event (see example above). Women are shown in an active role, willing and able to take action in their own hands in order to influence the country’s political and legal processes to improve the lives of women and children.

The articles draw upon a feminist discourse by viewing gender violence and sexual harassment in a larger context, stressing the magnitude and importance of the issues, and elaborating upon causes and effects for the victims. The problems are specifically linked to women’s low economic, political, and cultural status. For example, one article states: *“The psychological, emotional and economic conditions of women subjected to physical and emotional abuse may in fact have altered their perception of reality in such a way that they perceive themselves as completely helpless and unable to make choices or escape”* (commentary: Daily News 28/7/97). The context shows that sexual offenses are one of many interrelated important issues for women’s liberation, such as education, land, inheritance, cultural norms and values.

Some of the articles also draw upon a broader liberal feminist framework in which they place TAMWA’s struggle against gender violence and sexual abuse in relation to women’s rights, which is evident in the two interviews with TAMWA members. The articles cover TAMWA’s objectives, historical background, achievements, and the methods of implementation. In one interview

the TAMWA director, Leila Sheikh Hashim, explains about TAMWA's 3-year program, aimed at reducing gender violence in the country, which puts the symposium into a broader context for potential readers. She draws upon a framework of human rights, basic and legal rights, and laws that discriminate against women in terms of inheritance, land tenure, education, and cultural heritage. Equality, economic empowerment, cultural norms and prevailing attitudes and beliefs about women have also been identified as critical in order to eliminate gender violence. For example, the last paragraph states: "*Women are not aware that there are stipulations within the law that protect them against abuse, most women do not have access to legal processes, and worse many have been watching their mothers and sisters being abused and grow up believing that it is a way of life and ought to be expected, therefore the passive acceptance of violence against women is part of our cultural heritage, which has contributed largely to women withholding evidence against gender-based violence*" (Sunday Observer 22/6/97).

In contrast to editorials and commentaries, the authors in news reports are minimally present and a broader framework is usually not apparent. The three news reports covering the symposium record nothing other than the speech of the news actors. However, the articles indirectly support TAMWA by the order and selection of sources and statements. One of the news reports stresses the magnitude of rape, sodomy, and wife-battering by using TAMWA sources and source texts: **2400 WOMEN HAVE BEEN RAPED: TAMWA REVEALS IN DODOMA** (HEKO, July 27 1997). Hence, the article gives precedence to TAMWA and their conceptualizations, and thereby indirectly supports TAMWA's efforts. Statistics and research are also forms of generalization that give legitimacy to the issues. In another news report, the focus is on a TAMWA statement warning MPs that if they didn't take the issue seriously they would lose their seats in the 2000 election. TAMWA's statement is foregrounded in the article, which is backed up by quotations that provide an explanation and elaboration of the statement. The background for the warning was that some of the "*MPs were giving their contributions out of fun claiming that women are being raped or harassed due to putting on short dresses and due to not trusting themselves.*" According to TAMWA, gender violence and sexual abuse are criminal offenses and thereby societal problems, and should not be reduced to a women's problem. Blaming women themselves for wearing mini-skirts is therefore not at all an appropriate suggestion. Also, one female and one male MP's statements are used to support TAMWA's view. Negative reaction from the MPs is first reported in paragraph 5. All in all, the article favors TAMWA's voice and point of view, while giving little attention or relevance to the negative reaction from MPs.

The different levels and dimensions of my analysis create a coherent pattern of discursive features that support in both an open and direct and a less overt manner

TAMWA's objectives and fight against gender violence and abuse. Thus, the coverage gives legitimacy to the issue of gender violence and sexual abuse as a struggle for women's rights. Another implication of the coverage is that it contests the dominant gender dichotomy. Women are making headlines due to their social status, as social coordinators in the public sphere. These representations of women contradict traditional beliefs of women as subordinate, weak, passive, and dependent and thereby contribute to a more modern and positive perception of women as able to participate in society and in the development of the country. Hence, these newspaper articles can be characterized as empowering. However, grassroots women have a strictly limited voice in these articles, and are generally positioned as victims of gender violence, rape, and sexual harassment. In an indirect manner it might be said that there is a distinction between women activists (and female MPs) on one side, and ordinary women on the other. This positioning is probably partly a result of news practices that attaches news value first to elite groups before ordinary people. Nevertheless, the underlying distinction could affect the ways in which individuals take up positions in the news, and thereby limit the effect of alternative gender representations.

II Bringing private destinies to Parliament, not acceptable

Eleven articles are concerned with HOW TAMWA planned to carry out or conducted the event. As the discourse turns from emphasizing WHAT to HOW, TAMWA has to share the role as the agent or textual subject with the MPs. Along with this shift, the majority of the articles result in a more negative image of TAMWA by openly or inherently foregrounding accusations and criticism against TAMWA's methods. To a great extent, the criticism is reported without TAMWA having a chance to explain or defend their actions. However, it is only TAMWA's means or methods that are criticized, and not the objectives of the symposium or TAMWA as an organization in general. On the contrary, several of the articles express direct support for TAMWA's objectives for the symposium.

Two major issues recur. The first issue concerns TAMWA's plan to bring rape victims to 'testify' before the MPs. The articles have slightly different focus, but they are all based on the same chain of events: TAMWA wanted to bring rape victims to Parliament (X); MPs reacted by refusing to attend if TAMWA goes through with their plans (Y). As a final consequence TAMWA decided not to bring live testimonies before the MPs (Z). According to the newspapers, the MPs refused live testimonies because it would further harass those women by shaming them and exposing them to the social stigma attached to rape victims. Telling their stories in public could cause the victims major social problems, for example, with respect to marriage. The following statement illustrates the newspapers' position: "*What jolted my mind were the proposals to parade*

victims of rape and defilement to testify before the MPs. Thank God this did not happen. One up for the Parliament, which I am told, shot down the idea. Having said that, I must acknowledge that the Symposium stirred the right reaction from MPs" (Editorial: Daily News 28/7/97). TAMWA's action may be interpreted as an act of self-interest with possible harmful consequences for those female victims involved, while the MPs reaction is seen as motivated by a wish for social good and with positive effects. An implication is that it is not acceptable to bring private stories to the Parliament; they should be handled in court. This one-sided view eliminates the opportunity to give rape victims a face, which in turn could contribute to reducing the social stigma attached to rape victims and their families.

The news coverage can be interpreted as drawing upon two different discourses. On the one hand, it can be read as a feminine discourse, relying on emotions rather than facts, and using personification rather than sticking to the issues. On the other hand, the discourse can be related to commercialization, in which TAMWA tries to make a show and entertainment out of politics. As one reader's letter states: *"The objective of the debate is very nice and deserves congratulations, but the method which has been used to collect women and children who have once been abused sexually before the MPs is not morally suitable. This is because, bringing a group of women and children before them will not increase the MPs knowledge about those practices, but it will be like a show of harassment methods"* (Mtanzania 26/7/97). A possible implication is the reinforcement of an attitude that women are too emotional to participate in public matters and decision-making.

TAMWA was also accused of providing false witnesses, which is shown in the example below. The article gives readers a negative image of TAMWA, which is reinforced by foregrounding the accusations in a way that states the truth.

ALASIRI 17/7/97 By Correspondent

DEBATE ON RAPE IN THE COUNTRY: TAMWA ACCUSED TO PREPARE PLANNED WITNESSES

... TAMWA is making underground movements in the city, bribing some women so that in the presence of the Members of Parliament they will claim to have faced actions Tyson did to Desire. Our sources have proved that TAMWA members approached some women and they were asked to go to Dodoma to give a false rape witness.

Instead of writing TAMWA is "making underground movements ...", the journalist could have written that it has been claimed or x claims that TAMWA ... Also, the journalist chose to use negative laden words that contribute to frame the event. For instance, bribing (payment) is associated with corruption. The journalist backs up the statements by using quotations of anonymous sources who supposedly had been approached by TAMWA to testify falsely. In sum, the

journalist draws the conclusion first, which signals his/her opinion. One implication might be that TAMWA's honesty and credibility is called into question on insufficient grounds.

The second issue concerns the payment of MPs and journalists, which appeared after the event. These articles represent a split view of TAMWA. Three of the articles focus on TAMWA's good intentions in the struggle against sexual harassment and rape by paying MPs in order to convince them to attend the symposium. It is understood in the texts that this action would benefit women and children. One editorial goes further by suggesting that the MPs should not take the money, but ought to have put it to better use for women and children. TAMWA's action can therefore be interpreted as have been done out of a desire for social good. Another fact that is foregrounded is that TAMWA is willing to sleep in tents to economize, which strengthens the credibility of TAMWA members, who sacrificed their own comfort for the campaign. However, the issue of payment also raises harsh criticism in other articles in which TAMWA is condemned for discriminating against debate members (see example below). TAMWA is partly criticized for paying the MPs allowances while the journalists had to sleep in tents, and partly for paying some journalists while others didn't get paid. The complaints came from both MPs speaking on behalf of the journalists and journalists themselves.

HEKO 29/7/97, by correspondent in Dodoma

MPs CONDEMN TAMWA FOR DESPISING THE JOURNALISTS

Several Members of the Parliament have complained against the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) for paying them big allowances in the women debate and forgot the journalists, even the ones they came with from Dar es Salaam...

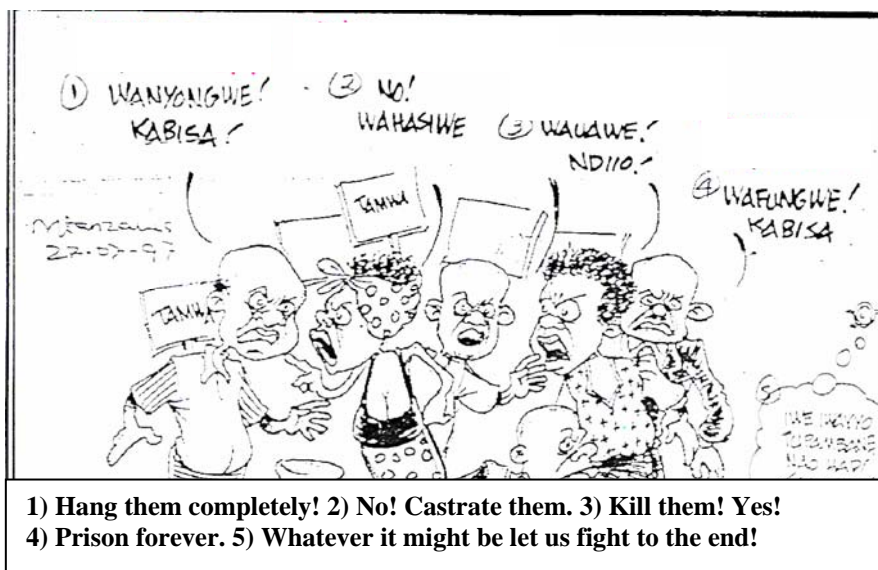
MPs said that they were astonished by the decision made by TAMWA officials to keep journalists and other people who came with them in tents in order to save money for paying the MPs. Honorable Juma Akukweti said that keeping people in tents while they had preserved money for paying the MPs was not wise and does not confirm to Tanzanian customs and traditions. He said, Tanzanians are used to cooperating in everything when they are in trouble or harmony.

The articles are written from the point of view of the journalists who were involved in the conflict, and might be said to signal the journalists' opinions. This is reflected in the foregrounding of the accusation and statements based upon the journalists' own observations or supported by MPs statements in favor of the journalists, as seen in the example above. The concerned journalists' opinion becomes even clearer in the following statements from the same article: *"Most of the journalists who met with HEKO in town here and even after the debate, they looked sorrowful while complaining of bankruptcy."* Choices of negative vocabulary confirm this position, such as *condemn*, *despising*, *sorrowful*, and *bankruptcy*. Alternatively, rather than featuring the complaints of

what the journalists didn't get, the article could have stressed that the journalists attending the debate traveled and ate at TAMWA's expense and had the opportunity to sleep in tents for free. It is the journalists'/media's job to cover important events and issues in society. In only one article does TAMWA get the opportunity to respond that paying the MPs allowances was a request from the Parliament's office, and because of this TAMWA had no other choice than to economize.

Overall, the tone has changed in these articles, with TAMWA placed in a negative light by portraying their organization's methods regarding two different issues as emotional, unfair, improper, immoral, dishonest and disrespectful, either directly or indirectly. A possible ideological implication is the reinforcement of the prevailing attitude that women are too emotional and not fit as organizers or social coordinators of issues of public concern, which undercuts the positive image of TAMWA described in the first part of this analysis. From a broader perspective, such a definition of women or femininity could restrict women's participation in politics, decision-making and resource allocation, and thereby in the development of the country as a whole.

III *Castration, hanging, injection or shot to death*



How to deal with the increasing incidents of rape, sodomy, and defilement against women and children is the main theme in ten articles. Most of the articles are in form of news reports, which reproduce informants' suggestions, views, and opinions. The news discourse has shifted to portray MPs as the major agents, who want to take action against "evils," while TAMWA is figured more in the background. As reflected in headings and leads, about half of the articles foreground serious propositions that were presented during the debate on behalf

of TAMWA, and thereby indirectly support TAMWA's ideas. These measures include amending existing laws, special courts for sex offenses, the establishment of a human rights committee to facilitate such issues, and changes to the police form (PF3) that is said to be inadequate for proving rape, sodomy, and defilement. Articles that focused on serious propositions can be illustrated by the following title: **MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AGREE WITH THE IDEA OF SPECIAL COURTS FOR RAPISTS** (Mzalendo 27/7/97). Another suggestion supported by the MPs was to hold such cases *in camera* (hear cases privately), so victims could speak freely due to victims' fear of shame and social stigma from testifying in public.

The other half of the articles focus on MPs' lighthearted suggestions, such as hanging or shooting the "culprit" in public, castration or injection with drugs that would weaken sexual desires. This can be illustrated by the following title: **RAPING: WHICH PUNISHMENT IS SUITABLE - CASTRATION, INJECTION OR DEATH BY A GUN? Members of Parliament are still meditating on this issue** (Mtanzania, July 30 1997). Another suggestion in the same category is separate apartments in jail, so the rapists can "rape themselves." These kinds of remarks are often given big headlines in the newspapers, but are not very serious or useful for the debate. The entertainment aspect in these suggestions is illustrated in the cartoon above, which suggests that MPs don't take the debate seriously.

A couple of these articles question the seriousness of MPs statements: *"If you examine these MPs statements carefully you find that some of them were not serious, but just making fun of it to pass time. A situation of making fun out of the debate started when the MPs showed that they were neither ready to listen to some of the themes nor to follow procedures which were prepared by TAMWA"* (Dar Leo 15/8/97). The correspondent (female) in another article, who attended the symposium in Dodoma, portrays the opening of the debate as follows: *"Laughter, murmurs, protests, complaints, and disapproval full of proverbs colored the debate that was organized by TAMWA. The person who opened the debate with laughter was the Defense and the National Building Minister, Mr. Edga Maokola Majogo, who proposed that men who will be found guilty of raping, defiling, or sodomising should be given injections to weaken their sexual power"* (Alasiri 29/7/97).

As the main participants in the debate, MPs are naturally the main news actors and sources. Male sources outnumber female sources, and there is a tendency to give male sources better play than female sources. Both tendencies can partly be explained by the fact that the majority of the MPs and ministers are men, and partly, by the fact that the press either consciously or unconsciously values a man's opinion over a woman's opinion. Still, female MPs are represented in almost every article and in some articles they compete with their male peers.

Also, both male and female MPs are represented as sources in the more serious and educational articles as well as in the more entertaining articles that contain emotional outbursts. One implication to draw from this is that women to a certain degree are portrayed as subjects who act upon events in order to change the conditions of women and children. It shows that women are able to take part in public life, to hold important posts such as MPs, and participate in the development of society. Moreover, the coverage demonstrates that men's actions are not always based on reason, but also are influenced by feelings that are hard to hide when an issue touches your heart. One article states in the title: **THE WAY TAMWA FIRED IN DODOMA - Members of the Parliament weep** (Dar Leo, 15/8/97), referring to MPs who started to cry under some of TAMWA's plays. The only name mentioned is a male MP, while no female MPs are specified. This is probably due to the fact that it is a bigger surprise, and thereby news, if men cry in public than if women do. However, this outburst of emotion is not portrayed as a negative thing, but rather as a successful effort on behalf of TAMWA, which "wanted to convince the MPs to amend laws through compassion."

There are also examples that illustrate that it is possible for newspapers to choose alternative sources, a choice that can result in very different proposals and views. One article is based on a random survey among Dar residents, which provides the news discourse with a fresh perspective and alternative ideas regarding the issues of stricter laws and punishment. Among the suggestions were to change complicated court procedures and to improve the salaries of court officials, whose salaries are so low that they can easily be bribed. In another article, two female "witnesses" supported the same view (backgrounded). Based upon their own experiences, they blame the police and court for not playing fair, which they allege leads to offenders who go free and "fake imprisonment."

Overall, newspapers tend to rely upon a commercial discourse that inflates certain views or stresses an angle that is attention-grabbing, rather than a feminist discourse that could be more informative and educational. There are at least two possible implications from this. First, this approach turns a critical issue that should be treated with care and respect into a laughing matter, which might also indicate that the MPs are not taking the organizers of the debate (read: women) in a serious manner. Secondly, more important arguments and solutions for the problem of sexual harassment and rape get less attention from the newspapers and possibly from their readers.

IV Women in miniskirts and mentally ill men

While law and court procedures are society's attempts to combat rape, sodomy, and defilement, moral decay is a recurrent theme introduced to explain causes for the increase in these offenses. This theme corresponds to the journalistic category

WHY is it happening, which is usually backgrounded in news reports, if even taken into consideration at all. However, in most of the articles discussed in the previous section, one or more attempts to explain the causes for the increase in rape, sodomy, and defilement are made. Additionally, moral decay is the main topic in four articles. Recurrent issues are women's clothing choices, the influence of television and Western culture, and mental illness. Blame is directed against "sexually starved men" for raping women and for having "a strange mental illness that drives a man to assault a toddler the size of his sexual organ." TV is repeatedly blamed for teaching youths a western culture and lifestyle, for example, by showing "half-naked women dancing in seductive ways," which can elevate men's emotions and lead to rape. However, attacks against women in mini-skirts and "certain behavior" are made into a major issue, which overshadow other explanations framed under the broader framework of moral decay.

In total, 10 articles touch upon the issue of how women dress. When the issue is treated as a sub-theme, the articles simply give an account of the MPs' divergent views on the issue. Some articles claim the way women dress inflames men's emotions and leads to rape, while others say that this is not a reason and should not be used as an excuse for rape, defend women's right to dress as they wish, and say that men have to cultivate self-discipline in order to earn respect. Both views are represented in most of the articles, and male MPs present both views, while the one female source (MP) supports the view that miniskirts do not contribute to rape.

HEKO 11/8/97 By the editor

TAMWA SHOULD NOT SWERVE FROM TANZANIAN MORALS

The Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA) has come on the front line in the struggle for women's rights. ... The struggle for children's rights; the female child's right to education; sexual harassment within the Tanzanian society are the efforts that have given TAMWA very high respect. ... According to the moralities of our country, we did not expect women who are required to awake the society and to stand firm, like TAMWA, defending dresses that are not respectful in our society. ...The event that was reported upon in the media yesterday about mocking of a woman in such dressing is enough testimony that the society does not accept it. ... Following the misunderstandings seen in the streets about TAMWA, there is no doubt that they will need to level or change their stand regarding dressing so as to clear a way for themselves for their work within the society; otherwise, they will give a negative impression and this may cause their basic claims to be ignored.

The issue of dressing is a good example on how the movement from socialist to capitalist principles creates conflicts between traditional and modern values in which the media becomes an arena for these conflicts. Part of a modern understanding of gender is having the freedom to dress as you like, which is a

right that is defended by TAMWA, but it collides with traditional perceptions. Articles where moral decay is the main topic feature a one-sided critique against women in mini-dresses. TAMWA is the main news actor in two of these articles in which the organization is criticized for defending women's freedom to dress as they wish. As can be seen in the example above, the editor (male) is explicit about his views in warning TAMWA about defending short dresses, which might shape values, norms, and beliefs in the interest of a traditional perception of women and femininity. TAMWA is seen as going against Tanzanian moralities and culture and thereby contributes to moral decay in Tanzanian society. The way the media handled the issue of dressing as well as TAMWA's role in it can be seen to bring conformity to the prevailing system by labeling alternative views as deviant or oppositional elements in society. As such, the mass media symbolizes an ordered and public meaning system that provides a benchmark for what is normal and what is not (McQuail 1994; 100), rather than giving women and men a critical account of oppressive elements in society.

A similar view is presented in an open letter, which calls upon TAMWA to consider the way women harass men, dress up in mini-skirts to hunt men down or trick them with love. In addition, the author (male) claims that women themselves invite being harassed and humiliated. The letter ends with a suggestion: "*I request TAMWA, mothers, and sisters to cooperate with men, if not they will not succeed in the fight, which is necessary and important against humiliation and sexual harassment practices that are mushrooming in the country.*" Both of these articles support TAMWA's efforts to fight against rape and sexual harassment as reflected in the lead paragraphs. Yet, a feminist discourse is undercut by focusing on women as the main source of the problem of rape and sexual harassment.

The last statement in the editorial above refers to a news report from the previous day: **A WOMAN MOCKED IN DAR FOR PUTTING ON A SHORT DRESS** (paper unknown 10/8/97). The event is based upon a chain of events. A woman had put on a very short dress (x); and after being mocked at with insults and accusations by a group of people in the city (y); she ran around to buy a *kitenge* to cover up and disappeared in a taxi (z). In other words, the woman is both the subject and victim of other people's actions, which she has brought upon herself due to her own selfishness. However, the story doesn't stop here: "*When people were rounding her (the woman mocked), some were heard singing a song, some of the words were TAMWA, TAMWA, the words were not clear ...*" Unlike the editor, the journalist makes no explicit judgments, but a link between the singing and the TAMWA symposium leaves a gap to be filled in by the readers. The structural logic of the text explains and normalizes a sequence of events, which implies that dressing up in miniskirts is morally wrong and that society will not accept such behavior. The journalist underscores this point by stating that women were included in the group doing the mocking. This interpretation is

evident in the editorial above in which this story is used as a testament that society does not accept such behavior. Embedded in the discourse is also the implication that TAMWA is wrong to support such immoral acts. This is backed up by a statement in the last paragraph in which the journalist airs the views of two lawyers who claim that, “*within the law there is a notion of being in a dignified situation and that all shameful practices should be groaned at.*” The story represents an example of what will happen if you don’t confirm to society’s rules.

The focus on moral decay, in particular mini-dresses is echoed by readers. A male reader’s letter congratulates the MPs: **CONGRATULATIONS MPs, IT IS TRUE THAT MINI DRESSES MISLEAD THE RAPIST** (Dar Leo, 6/8/97). The author claims that the increase of rape cases is due to moral decay, and that women who wear minidresses contribute to the increase in rape cases. The author also draws upon a male MP’s statement warning TAMWA to be careful, because inflicting heavier punishment upon the culprits will not help much. According to the author, “we should look at where we stumble instead of where we fall,” this refers to women in miniskirts.

All in all, the four articles focusing on moral decay imply several ideological assumptions. First, the overall message is that if you break with the dominant cultural codes you will face the consequences both as individuals and organizations. Second, both the direct and indirect transmission of the news stories favor a view that moral decay is a major cause for the increase of sexual offenses and thereby fail to grasp underlying gender-based power relations, cultural attitudes, and social structures. Third, due to the one-sided focus on women, the problem is assigned to women (the victims), who are seen to have brought such acts upon themselves. While women are blamed for moral decay in society because of the way they dress and behave, men’s contribution to this situation is absent. This biased focus not only frees men from responsibility, but also avoids pinpointing underlying gender-based power relations. Both the authors and the sources in the four articles discussed here are males and could therefore be said to signal a male attitude that favors a specific ideological perspective geared towards men’s interests, which supports and legitimizes men’s power.

7.3 Discussion and conclusion

My analysis of the symposium demonstrates that TAMWA is to a certain extent able to use the media to create a space for women’s empowerment in the struggle for women’s liberation. It supports the results from Chapter 6.3 that women’s/gender NGOs are emerging as an oppositional discourse in challenging dominant cultural codes and representations of women, which in turn might

affect dominant culture. At the same time, the analysis also reveals that fighting for women's liberation is a difficult road with lots of turns and potholes, involving both those who like to challenge the dominant definitions of gender and those yearning to maintain the old and predictable dichotomies. The interaction between TAMWA, MPs, and journalists, representing different institutional and personal interests, plays an important role in the struggle over the meaning of gender.

Media coverage of the event starts out with articles that focus on WHAT the debate is about, which supports TAMWA's efforts and allows for a feminist discourse (I). TAMWA is portrayed as a group of freedom fighters who are at the forefront of women's struggle for liberation. The newspapers draw on TAMWA as an important source, which is not only significant for the acceptance of TAMWA's objectives and ideas, but also represents an important moment in a women's movement in challenging the dominant discourse on gender. An important dimension in the news discourse is that women are portrayed as the agent carrying out the event, driven by a motivation for the good of society, with the intention of improving the conditions of women and children. The discourse contests the boundaries between male and female identities and spheres of action by portraying women as actors in the public sphere and as social coordinators defined in terms of role categories aligned with culture. The news discourse implicitly embodies ideas and values that challenge traditional beliefs about women as subordinate, emotional, and unable to participate in public debate and decision-making. The news media can therefore be said to act as a cultural agent in the struggle over the definition and status of women, which might channel development so that women are incorporated as subjects and so that women and children benefit. This stands in sharp contrast to the news discourse in Chapter 6.1, where women were mainly represented as existents, who are raped, harassed, and so on, which places them in a passive position subjected to men's actions.

However, in articles concerned with HOW the event was conducted, TAMWA's ability to organize is disputed on several issues, which undercuts the first impression of TAMWA as capable of social coordination and able to organize of public debate. Even though there are different views on the issues involved, TAMWA's position is contested. (II). As news actor and agent, TAMWA is now competing with MPs, and the majority of sources are males, as are the journalists. In articles concerned with HOW to deal with the increase of sexual offenses Members of Parliament take over as the main news actor (III). At this point, male sources outnumber female sources. Compared to the articles in the first category, which are concerned with the objectives of the symposium, a feminist discourse now recedes into the background and is replaced by a commercial discourse which turns the coverage into a description of punishment methods. Still, in contrast to Chapter 6.3 in which women were absent in the field of national or local politics, female MPs are present in most of the articles, which

ties women to the public sphere. The results therefore strengthen my earlier assumption that female politicians are more visible when issues of special concern to women are being debated, which is crucial in the struggle of gender transformation. The following statement supports this postulation: “*Our fellow women are defending us, for example, woman MPs are talking about raping issues. This is an important issue. Women harassment by husbands, in inheritance women are harassed, but through the mass media they are defending us and they talk about these issues*” (nursery school teacher #8).

In the last category, WHY is it happening and WHO to blame, TAMWA seems to have ‘lost’ all influence over the debate, which has turned into a question of moral decay. The strong focus upon miniskirts takes attention away from the deeper social and cultural explanations. The main impression from these articles is that they portray a negative image that could cause TAMWA’s basic objectives and ideas to suffer. The development of the discourse raises an essential issue: Why did the discussion turn from supporting TAMWA’s efforts in its fight against gender violence and sexual abuse to blaming women themselves for the increase in rape?

At first, TAMWA was used as the major source in articles concerned with WHAT the symposium was about and attempts were made to help readers see rape and sexual harassment in relation to women’s low societal status as well as a human rights issue. As the event evolves the MPs (mostly males) take over as the main sources in which a feminist discourse is undermined. In the end, it is the journalists’ interpretations that color the articles in an attempt to make sense of the increase of rape, sodomy, and defilement. This shift in the discourse reveals that the struggle to find meaning takes place within existing frameworks for power relations in society. As the event evolves, the MPs and a male perspective are given priority and this hijacks the agenda, which reflects the fact that males have better access and more power to engage in the process of defining reality. The one-sided focus on women in miniskirts inscribes a reader position that privileges a meaning that women are the ones to blame for moral decay in society, who have misled men, and thereby also to hold responsible for the increase of rape and sexual abuse. Hence, the possibility that rape and sexual harassment is a question of prevailing gender and power relations in society is eliminated and the topic can be discussed without being a threat to men and their position.

There are close links between articles concerned with prostitution (c.f. Chapter 6.2) and articles focusing upon women in miniskirts. Articles touching upon the question of women’s choice of clothing are based upon a presupposition that women dressed in miniskirts signal “certain behavior” associated with prostitution. A reasonable interpretation is that a focus on women in miniskirts (implying links to prostitution) meshes well with an already established

commercial discourse as well as moral decay as frames of interpretation. Moreover, the way female representations are constructed in the discourse echoes and reproduce an underlying male attitude. This is reflected in the fact that none of the articles acknowledge that without customers, there would be no prostitutes, and thereby there would be less of a reason for women to dress up in mini-dresses in order to 'tempt' men. Also not stated is why some women and girls end up in different forms of prostitution, which could be due to a number of circumstances, such as a lack of inheritance rights in the case of a husband's death, or lack of education or capital. The unstated (absence) and the already stated (presuppositions) are embedded implicitly in the meaning of a text, which might legitimize certain views and reinforce relations of domination through assurance of a consensus that doesn't exist. It is likely, that traits associated with prostitution could rub off on women in general as naive, ignorant, and self-deceiving. These are traits that are not valued by society, which would make women less fit for taking an active part in politics and society.

While women dressing in miniskirt are represented as deviant, TAMWA is portrayed as an oppositional element as long as it defends these women. TAMWA is explicitly warned not to break with the dominant cultural codes or the group would face the consequences. Hence, the press acts as a cultural agent that contributes to bring conformity of the present system; that is, the press reinforces traditional gender definitions (which involve the obedience of women), and thereby legitimize, justify, and preserve the dominant ideology of gender. As such, the media discourse carries elements towards the assimilation and subordination of deviant and oppositional elements in society.

To a certain extent there is a resonance among my interviewees in their willingness to blame women, even among women: "*I would advise girls and women to not wear short clothes, it seems to be a reason for a number of rapes*" (housegirl #2). "*Women who put on mini-dresses lower our dignity and they are very often shown on TV, I would advise women to stop the habit of easing themselves because they harass their fellow women*" (barmaid #5). These statements can be seen as an expression of women's internalization of men's image and the adoption of their guidelines. As discussed in Chapter 4.4, one of the basic elements in the relationship between oppressors and oppressed is prescription: "Every prescription represents the imposition of one individual's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed into one that confirms with the prescriber's consciousness" (Freire 1997; 29). However, there are also voices that resist the media image of female sex-workers: "*It is not true that most ladies would like to live the kind of life that we read about in the newspapers; it is only life difficulties that force them to behave this way. I really sympathize with them when I meet them going to this kind of activity*" (female secretary #13). Yet, none of the interviewees seem to resist to the interpretative framework that dressing up in mini-dresses is a cause for rape.

The newspapers have taken an active role in the debate, not only in regard to the objectives of the symposium and how it was conducted, but also in defining what the issues were to be and how they should be understood. The power of discourse is visible in defining what is considered a social problem. Among the various themes that were presented at the symposium three specific issues are foregrounded in the news discourse; those of rape, sodomy, and defilement. Other important themes and issues that were introduced during the symposium got little attention, such as wife battering, land and inheritance rights, social and cultural norms discriminating against women and girls. This choice might be interpreted as being geared towards commercial interests where women have become objects of sensational news reporting.

Moreover, it is given that rape is an issue that should be understood as a human rights issue within a liberal feminist framework. Mainly, what is being contested are women's equal rights, access and opportunities based on an idea that women desire equality rather than subjugation. This observation supports studies claiming that liberal feminism has had the greatest impact on development strategies and approaches to women in Southern Africa, while radical feminism has met with hostility in the region (Mannathoko 1992). In contrast to liberal feminism, the radical alternative locates women's oppression in the social institution of gender and puts sexuality, reproduction, and patriarchy at the center of the political arena, and thereby making these issues appear more threatening to men. Liberal feminism also seems to fit better with a commercialized press and the nature of news conventions than radical feminism. As a consequence, the news discourse lacks social and cultural analysis and avoids explanations that pinpoint gender-power relations.

As discussed in Chapter 5.2, the strong focus upon moral decay in the media discourse can also be seen as an expression of fear of losing important values, and even as a sign of an identity crisis. With the movement from socialism to capitalism, Tanzania has opened the country to Western influence and the departure of state control. Television, as the newest and most international mass medium, is blamed for teaching youths a Western culture and lifestyle that is bringing moral decay to Tanzanian society. The analysis of the TAMWA symposium reveals that the media discourse legitimizes a view in which moral decay and deviant acts such as mini-dresses, mental illness, and TV influences are major explanations for the increase of sexual offenses. Such explanations isolate the cases of rape, sodomy, and defilement from the rest of the society, making them like cancerous tumor that must be removed. The medicine prescribed is the abandonment of Western culture and television, and going back to the original African culture.

However, such an interpretation eliminates the possibility that rape and sexual harassment are a question of prevailing gender and power relations in society,

and as such the topic can be discussed without being a threat to men and their position. In journalists' attempts to make sense of a changing and at times threatening world, consciously or unconsciously, 'women' appear to come in handy as a construction of the ambivalences embedded in this process. The world appears threatening in at least two ways. First, Tanzanian culture and morals are falling apart, prompting public distress as Tanzanian society is increasingly becoming integrated into a modern, capitalistic, and open society. Second, men's manhood and position as superior to women is threatened by women taking on traditional male roles, which challenges the boundaries between men's and women's sphere of action and identity.

Nonetheless, the practice of blaming women in short dresses, or television and Western influence, or mentally ill or sexually starved men are superficial explanations for the increase in rape, defilement, and sodomy. The debate never examines the issue of whether there is any evidence that women in short dresses are more likely to be raped than women who dress according to Tanzanian customs. Also, there is no indication that rape is more widespread in areas where exposure to television is relatively high as compared to areas where it is barely available. In addition, neither television's influence nor women's choice of clothing serves as explanations for the increase of sexual abuse against children. Such claims could therefore stem from a 'moral panic', which has been accelerated by the recent introduction of television. Overall, an investigation for the reasons behind these problems have to go deeper into society's other problems, while highlighting social and cultural practices and attitudes that affirm a male dominated culture and prestige structure.

Commenting upon the news coverage of the symposium a TAMWA member said: "*We were happy because there were different angles and reactions, both positive and negative, which give us an insight of what we should do, what are problematic areas, for example supporting commercial sex workers and defending women's rights to dress in short dresses if they like*"(interview⁵). According to the same TAMWA member, the organization was especially satisfied with the way the media covered the symposium in follow-up news, because what came before the symposium was partly the group's own efforts to mobilize journalists, but what came after was from the media's own initiative. However, my analysis shows clearly that what came before the symposium represents the most positive position for TAMWA, which underlines the importance of mobilizing journalists and getting involved in the news as agent and source. What came after the Symposium represents a risk of hurting TAMWA's objectives. As a result of the newspapers' attacks, TAMWA seems ready to adjust its strategies in order to avoid a negative image. However, changing its strategy might backfire on TAMWA, because the change might

⁵ This statement is taken from my series of personal interviews, which were conducted after the event.

result in the group ignoring other basic objectives and ideas. Overall, this illustrates that the media's interpretations have wider implications for the formation of an identity for a women's movement.

All in all, my analysis of the media coverage of the TAMWA symposium reveals that the implications for gender might be of both an empowering and disempowering character. Gender is constructed and reconstructed through various and sometimes contradicting ideas, values, and definitions of femininity, which support a feminist post-structuralist view of the construction of gender as a discursive construct. Women are portrayed as both fit and unfit as social coordinators, as both active subjects acting on events and victims of other people's actions, as both freedom fighters and immoral temptresses. The news discourse carries multiple ideological positions or gender positioning, which in turn gives the individual reader heterogeneous and competing perspectives.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Gender representations in TV drama: Marriage and kinship

I like to watch plays that show how women are being oppressed by men; the woman is beaten, she is not given family needs and you might find that the husband gives money to girls while he has left nothing at home and the kids are crying of hunger (secretary #15).

This chapter examines how gender is constructed in local television drama. As the example above illustrates, the discourse that people draw upon in understanding gender is much broader than news. I have chosen Swahili plays that are realistic everyday drama rooted in the Tanzanian urban reality, which thereby focuses on issues that are highly relevant to local audiences. Television drama differs from news because it tells a story about the world in which human destinies are depicted in concrete space and time. While news generates themes of public interest or engages our attitudes towards society, Swahili plays are more important in the development of individual identities or mediating between individual and culture (c.f. Chapter 4).

The Swahili plays can be seen as a continuous discourse of moral behavior and dilemmas people face when pulled between traditional norms and values and modern urban life (Lange 2002; 172). The classic themes of the Swahili plays are domestic conflicts and tensions that unfold between husband and wife (e.g. unfaithfulness), between parents and children (e.g. parental authority, upbringing) or other relatives (e.g. individual versus collective values). At the heart of the plays is a continuous discussion of **love marriages versus arranged marriages**, which often contrast a rural 'legal' wife against an urban 'informal' girlfriend. Also, parental control is played out by contrasting arranged marriages versus love marriages, often with a contradictory outcome. The contrast between the **country and the city** is a consistent theme in these plays representing respectively traditional and modern values; typically played out with the juxtaposition of an innocent and obedient country girl and a beautiful, greedy, and selfish city girl. The gold-digger (a woman who pretends to love, but who is only after a man's money) is another enduring image in these plays (Lange 2002; xii). On a more abstract level, these plays can be viewed as focusing on **female strategies for social mobility** that often display an opposing image to the strong self-confident woman (Lange 2002; 18).

Informed by contemporary ideological criticism, my analysis will examine the ways the media produces positions for its audiences (c.f. Chapter 2.2). From a feminist standpoint, it is an issue of how narratives position the female subject

and how ideas, values, and beliefs embodied in the narratives contribute to a definition of femininity. Swahili plays are produced in a specific social and historical context and thereby articulate, support, and sometimes contest dominant values, beliefs, and ideas in relation to the context in which they are created. The plays represent a good window on cultural understandings, conflicts and contradictions of gender and kinship. Thus, I view these plays as an important contribution in understanding how male and female values are structured and expressed in popular discourses. On the one hand, the plays can symbolize a conservative social force by reassuring audiences with traditional values and thereby preserve cultural status quo. On the other hand, the plays can challenge audiences to re-examine dominant values and beliefs, oppressive structures, and attitudes towards women by portraying alternative gender roles, values, and ways of living that are at odds with older traditions and beliefs.

Basically, I use the same model in analyzing both news and fiction in terms of events, characters, and setting (c.f. Chapter 3.3). In contrast to news, the narrative format typically involves a chain of events rather than a single event, and the characters are more developed, making it possible to identify character traits. The narrative format is richer than news, which also allows the analysis of the basic arrangement of plot and characters. Swahili plays can preserve a static view of the world with a lack of plot/character development, or they can promote a dynamic view of the world in which problems are solved and worked on or by showing that characters have come to a new awareness. The struggle for women's liberation is possible because oppression of women is not a given destiny, but the result of an unjust order, which entails a world view that is dynamic and open-ended (c.f. Chapter 4.4).

The narrative strategy also allows for a stronger focus on gender representations rather than images of women. A shortcoming in feminist media studies is the strong focus on images of women rather than gender relations as manifested in narratives and other textual structures. In this chapter, I pay particular attention to gender representations and how these representations are built into the structure of the narrative texts. Addressing both male and female representations can help to identify obstacles to the realization of women's liberation as manifested in the characteristic relationship between men and women, as well as characteristics of men and women (c.f. Chapter 4.4). One way to approach this is to identify the 'archetypal' narrative, which refers to the narrative system behind individual texts, consisting of a limited number of central opposed characters and values. Viewing characters as a series of opposing characters and values can expose limitations in the number of themes, sequencing, and interactions (Eco 1984; 147). Furthermore, such oppositions can function as expressions of beliefs and symbolic associations that naturalize the order of human relations, and thereby support a male-dominated ideology.

The following analysis includes five plays produced by Cable Television Network (CTN) and Independent Television (ITV). Both CTN and ITV are privately owned commercial television channels based in Dar es Salaam. The plays have a half-an-hour format, a narrative mode, are scheduled on a weekly basis, and are usually not in continuing serial form. The themes and characters change from week to week. However, the basic setting for the plays is domestic, usually within a family home's four walls in an urban neighborhood. The themes in the plays discussed below are modern/traditional marriage, husbands cheating on their wives, and women who want to marry for money – all of which are typical for the Swahili genre. Other issues in these plays are the upbringing of children and treatment of house girls, which are less frequent, but still familiar in the Swahili genre (cf. Chapter 3.2). Some of the plays appeared in different versions during my fieldwork with contradictory endings, which signals that these issues are under continuous discussion. As I shall discuss later, the first play, “The telegram marriage”, has been produced by the same group with different endings.

The play's plots, which essentially portray daily life events, are often dramatized and exaggerated in order to engage the audience. Both the reception interviews and the personal interviews show that the plays are highly relevant to local audiences¹. During the personal interviews, my female respondents identified with the issues portrayed in these plays; when asked about women's situation in society they stressed women's relations with men, men's unfaithfulness, and the problems that result in regards to wives and children. Many grassroots women also underscored that women are oppressed and regarded as lower than men, which is reflected in women's lack of education, inheritance rights, and the fact that women are sometimes forced to behave in certain ways (sex workers). *“Men regard themselves very high above women and due to this aspect they despise women. So I would like men to change this attitude”* ... *“I have a feeling that our partners oppress us much, because they are not faithful and go to other women”* (female secretary #14). Teenage pregnancy and early marriage are also mentioned as problems in society. *“The difference comes when a girl becomes pregnant. You find that the girl is dismissed from school, but the boy is left unquestioned. If the girl is chased by her parents she will face big problems. So you find that men and boys causing these problems don't suffer at all”* (teenage mother #16). These statements illustrate that Swahili plays take up themes and issues that are relevant to grassroots women and the problems they experience. A key question is whether the plays reinforce or challenge dominant social beliefs, oppressive structures,

¹ See appendix F for an overview of the Swahili plays included in this research, and reception groups of the plays.

and attitudes towards women. In the following discussions, I draw upon statements from the reception interviews from the specific plays.

8.1 Modern versus traditional marriage

The transformation of society generates tensions between modern lifestyles and traditional customs related to marriage, bride price, and parental authority. Modern versus traditional marriage involves the issue of the right of the individual versus the right of the collective in choosing a spouse. Traditionally, the selection of marriage partners was of great concern to parents and it was unheard of that young people would take such decisions themselves. The bride price institution plays a central part in choosing a wife for one's son, which gives elder men control over young women as well as resources (Caplan 1975; 34). However, it is becoming increasingly common for young men and women to start relationships without parental advice, and thereby disregard of formal marriage and the bride wealth institution. The idea of romantic love has become an ideal for most urban youth. The Swahili plays offer contradicting solutions to this dilemma, which is reflected in an ambivalent use of the rhetoric of the country versus the city. In the following play, a young man opposes customs and traditions by living with a city girlfriend and ignoring the village wife his family has chosen for him.

The telegram marriage (I)

The protagonist of the play is a young and handsome man, Chain, who unintentionally ends up with two wives - one modern town girl he has chosen himself and one traditional wife his father has chosen for him to be married to. The conflicts unfold between Chain and his self-chosen wife-to-be, Janet; between Chain and his traditional wife, Mbamba; and between the two wives (modern town girl/traditional rural girl).

The play starts with an overview of a town (Dar es Salaam), which gives the audience a clue that the play takes place in an urban setting. Then the picture shifts to an office where we see a woman secretary typing. A young woman, Janet, enters the room, she wants to speak with the boss about employment, but the secretary tells her that he is busy. Janet tries to convince the secretary, and hands over a letter. An employee, Chain, comes into the room, and the secretary asks him to help her out. After taking a look at the letter, he glances at Janet, a look that she knows how to return. Chain invites Janet to his office. In the next sequence, Chain is talking to the secretary (Irene) again, and we can infer that Chain has invited Janet into his office with the intention of asking her out:

Chain: Did you look at that girl properly?
Irene: Yes I did, she was very beautiful.
Chain: I was very excited when I just glanced at her.
Irene: You do so always.
Chain: We discussed everything, we arranged to meet at the beach tomorrow, if things come my way, I will take her permanently.

In scene 2, there has been a change of circumstances; a new situation where Janet has moved in with Chain and they are now living together. Janet is home dusting and decorating in the house, and then she sits down at the couch next to Chain, who is reading a newspaper. Somebody knocks at the door. It is Chain's friend Morani, who has come to discuss a work-related issue. When this matter is settled, Chain wants to discuss a problem of his and asks Morani for advice. Chain has to inform his parents about his marriage plans. Morani advises Chain to go to the village to see his father and tell him what is going on. This is the biggest turning point in the story, which determines the direction of the story (kernel event). Chain has at least two possibilities. Either he can go to the village and inform his parents about his marriage plans or he can send a telegram. Chain decides to do the latter. Chain's decision leads to another event in the next scene. Chain's uncle has come from the village to bring a wife that Chain's father has chosen for him to marry. As a result, Chain ends up with two wives, a modern that he has chosen to live with and a traditional that his father has chosen for him. The three of them end up living together.

In scene 4, the three of them continue to live together. Janet and Mbamba are home alone when their husband is at work. Janet treats the rural wife, Mbamba, badly. She commands the rural woman to do all the housework and makes her go outside when she is sewing: *"Yes, you are dirtying here, I told you already, take your sandals out of here! You are primitive, can you see how beautiful I look. We are town ladies, not you, primitive person from the bush, Okay? Go out. You are just a house girl."* The event unfolding in this scene is a minor event (satellite), because the players work out the choices made at the kernel. It goes into detail about the difficult situation affecting the two women, which is a consequence of Chain's decisions to send the telegram, and then later to keep both of the women. The scene shows that Janet's way of dealing with the problem is to harass the other girl in an effort to be rid of her. There is a clear internal ranking between the two wives, where Janet has situated herself above Mbamba.

In scene 5, the harassment of the rural wife continues. In Janet's struggle to be rid of the traditional wife, the husband takes Janet's side, as illustrated in the following dialogue that took place when Mbamba was bringing food:

Janet: Put it here. Heh! Why are they dirty?
 Chain: Why are plates dirty?
 Mbamba: I washed them.
 Chain: Heh! You washed them and they are dirty like this.
 Janet: Please, take it away.
 Chain: Take it away! Plates are so dirty like... What kind of woman is this?
 Janet: That is your wife, a bush woman. After all you don't love me.
 Chain: Ah! I don't love you Janet?
 Janet: I don't like your bush woman!
 Chain: So you want me to abandon her?
 Janet: Yes.

The statements in scene 4 and 5, as shown above, can be characterized as 'static statements', which are in the mood of 'is'. They tell the audience something about how the characters should be perceived. Whereas the town woman, recurrently, is described as "beautiful," the country girl is described as "primitive," "dirty" and as a "bush woman." While Janet is dressed in western clothes and has a modern hairstyle, the country girl wears *kanga* covering her hair and down to her ankles (traditional clothing that covers the body). The ranking between the two women seems to be grounded in a modern/traditional dimension, where the former provides prestige and a basis for harassment over the latter.

In the final scene, Chain and Janet have left the house for several days, and Mbamba is left in the house alone. Mbamba is arranging the dishes, when a neighboring woman comes to visit and to invite them to a traditional *Ngoma*. This is the first time Mbamba is involved in a real conversation, but even now she is on the defensive side.

Neighbor: Yes, you are supposed to participate! Will you come?
 Mbamba: I will wait for my husband, if he gives me permission I will participate.
 Neighbor: Ah! Halloo... what a woman! You can't go out without your husband's permission? But he is away? (out eating and dancing)

The dialog above underscores the fact that the rural wife is inferior and obedient. This is not expressly stated anywhere in the text, but is built into the deeper structure of the text. For Mbamba the course of actions has problematic consequences over which she has no influence or say. The need for women, especially from rural areas, to get permission from their husbands can be seen as a direct way of controlling and keeping them in an inferior position. Town women, on the other hand, consider themselves to be more liberated. The neighbor is actually laughing at her for being too traditional.

Cultural representations and female stereotypes

Chain is portrayed as the agent that moves the story forward. He acts upon the kernel events advancing the plot. First, he initiated the relationship with Janet. Second, Chain's decision about sending a telegram instead of going to the village

and inform his father gave rise to a node, a branching point in the direction of the rest of the story. In other words, Chain is portrayed as the decision-maker and the social coordinator in the story, a position he shares with other males in the narrative; his father chose his legal wife, and the uncle brought her to Chain's place. These decisions and actions have consequences for the female characters, most problematically for the rural girl. The reception interviews also revealed that the participants blame the male characters; the father and, partly, the son and the uncle. Yet, few of the participants took issue with the structures or system behind these decisions in which the central female characters are excluded from wider social coordination.

Except for Janet's attempts to make life hard for the traditional wife and trying to force her out, actions clearly driven by self-interest, the women stand on the fringes without being able to influence their own situations. Even though Janet takes part in the harassment of the rural wife and is represented as more liberated and modern, she is at the same time living in a male dominated culture. The discussion Chain had with his friend Morani underscores the males' role as social coordinators. Chain chose to turn to his friend to discuss and get advice about what he should do about informing his parents about his marriage plans, and sent Janet out of the room. Even a modern town girl is excluded when the issue being discussed is an issue that concerns her. In terms of the gender dichotomy, the male character is tied to culture while the female characters are aligned with nature.

The play provides stereotypical representations of the traditional woman and a new modern type of woman. This juxtaposition between 'good' and 'evil' limits female representations and interactions. Furthermore, the play symbolizes the traditional assumption that the main task for a woman is to get and keep a man, and in this respect other women cannot be trusted. This is evident in scene five in which Janet insults the other woman to keep Chain's love for herself. In the beginning of the scene, Chain has just arrived home from work and both women approach to greet him. Mbamba asks her husband about work, but Janet pushes her to the ground and tells her to go and get food. Janet's behavior stirred several reactions among the participants, as illustrated by the following statement: "*That town lady had no love for the rural girl; she humiliates her and pushes her away when she was trying to receive her husband. We women should value each other. Some women even oppress their own children*" (small scale business woman #7).²The play defines a woman's life through emotions: While jealousy and

² The statements in this chapter are based upon reception-interviews of the respective texts conducted during my fieldwork. "The Telegram Marriage" was used in the discussion with small-scale business women, which includes two different groups. The respondent in the first group, age 30-40, are numbered 1-4; the respondents in the second group, age 50-60, are numbered 5-8. Also, male tourist

possessiveness are the driving force behind Janet's actions towards the rural wife, Mbamba is defined through devotion for her husband. Using different means, they both try to attract their husband's attention.

Obedience is a recurrent trait tied to Mbamba. When she first came to Chain's house, as his wife, she was kneeling down at the floor in front of her husband, not looking directly at him, not speaking before she was spoken too. She sat down at the floor, and Chain told her to sit on a chair. Her body language throughout the play signals an inferior position, with her shoulders bent slightly forward, her eyes looking downwards, and kneeling in front of her husband. In contrast, Janet is portrayed with confidence; she carries herself in proud manner, with her back straight, head raised and a direct look. Lack of confidence and self-depreciation are characteristics that continue to keep Mbamba in an inferior position, which is also recognized by one of the respondents: *"In fact, the play shows how I would be devalued if I move from the village to town due to being traditional. My fellow girls know how to beautify and dress themselves nice. The rural girl looked very traditional, she didn't even have a handbag and she had put on only a 'kanga'"* (small-scale business woman #4).

However, all sympathy is with the rural girl from the point of view that is related to her well being, which probably undercuts any liberal potential in the positioning of the town girl as more liberated. Although the audience doesn't have any direct access to what Mbamba feels or thinks, the chain of events stands in relation to how it affects her interests. This is further underscored in the last scene, during which all concerns remain with the rural wife's well-being. The group discussions revealed strong identification with the rural girl, and several of the participants drew upon similar events from their own lives. *"The rural girl is actually a person who would live very close to her husband as per customs and tradition. The ways she was ill-treated made her feel very lonely, she is regarded as a sub-human, and she is valueless. This pains me very much. I was told that my grandfather was like a chief. He had 12 wives. During this time my grandmother was very much oppressed; she had to do all the work alone"* (tourist coach agent #1).

Even though the play represents a strong conservative force, it triggers cultural resistance among the recipients. The point of view can be read to contain a liberating element in so far as the play helps in perceiving one's personal or social reality. As discussed in Chapter 2.2, even recognizing oppressed positions can be liberating and evoke a form of cultural resistance. The participants who come closest to a cultural critique in this study are the small-scale business women,

coach agents, age 20-30, were exposed for the same play. There are no correspondents between the numbering of the respondents in the reception interviews and the personal interviews.

which also distinguished themselves by using the media in selectively seeking knowledge and motivation. As noted in Chapter 5.3, Swahili plays are in particular popular among small-scale business women, and they seem to learn from the symbols in the plays. This is also expressed during the reception interviews: *“This is what we have been fighting for, we women should be free to choose the spouse we like, I should be free to choose a husband and a man should be free to choose a wife and not just loaded”* (small-scale business woman #2). Implicit in this statement is an association between the right to choose one’s spouse and the struggle for women’s liberation, which also can be seen in the following comment: *“I think the parents are responsible for whatever problems the rural girl gets. It is for such reasons that we women argue that we are facing sexual violence. If the man doesn’t love you we end up being harassed, and this is not a strange thing, it is something familiar”* (small-scale business woman #4).

The function of the advisor, Chain’s friend Morani, makes us think through values and behavior, and right and wrong. He can’t really be described as a character, he is more like a discursive device functioning as an interpreter of the situation based upon value judgments; more specifically he makes an evaluation of Chain’s problem and advises him what he should do. Yet, the characters do not seem to change due to what happens to them in the problem-solving process. Still, as a discursive device the friend offers a convincing voice, not only advising Chain but telling the audience what the right thing is to do, which is reflected in the following statements: *“The parents and that man should be blamed. He didn’t bother to go home and tell his parents about his marriage plans; if the boy had followed his friend’s advice to go to the village and inform his parents about his plan to marry, that girl wouldn’t face those oppressions”* (small-scale business woman #7). *“I think that man did a mistake when he wanted to send a telegram to his parents, had he gone to the village all this would not have happened* (tourist coach agent #2).

The ending is important because it shows whether or not there has been a change since the conflict(s) arose. The analysis of the play shows that there is an overall lack of plot/character development, which might serve to reassert the cultural status quo. There is no real change in the characters’ attitudes or life situations from the beginning of the conflict in scene 3 to the end of the play. As we watch the final scene, the problem has not been solved or worked on. The last scene is an elaboration of the misery Mbamba (rural wife) is left in. She is trapped in the house alone; she cannot go out without permission. Mbamba is a victim of other people’s actions, which is a disempowering situation. There is no hope for a better life for the rural girl; rather, the suffering and oppression continues. The play can therefore be said to preserve a static view, a given reality or destiny, which the characters must accept and adjust to. Still, the dialog between Mbamba and the

neighboring woman leaves some ambiguity. In a protesting manner, the neighbor shares her thoughts: *“Your fellows are eating chicken and fried potatoes, and you are eating the food you cooked the day before yesterday! Why? ... They are dancing. And you are just here alone! Hah!”* The neighbor seems to make Mbamba aware that the way she is treated is not right, and she offers to take her to the husband’s workplace. Hesitantly, Mbamba listens to her and accepts the offer.

Modern versus traditional values and the rhetoric of the country

The theme in this play is well-known not only in Tanzanian plays, but in other African plays as well as other popular narratives (e.g. novels). From his studies in Zambia, Ferguson (1992; 86) argues that this is a familiar theme in African morality plays; that of the “arrogant young man who rejects the counsel of his rural elders and learns only through his urban misadventures.” It is interesting to note that in an almost identical story, Lange (2002; 186) finds a very different outcome. The first part of the play is the same, but it ends with the young man returning to the country after destroying everything for him in the city. While the city girlfriend has left him, the rural wife endures the hardship and follows him to the country. The return to the country (and traditional ways) is offered as a solution, just as in the era of socialism (and colonialism). The contrasting endings offered by the two plays show that Swahili plays don’t constitute a coherent discourse in favoring modern or traditional marriages. In Lange’s (2002; 190) research, which includes four plays of this type, two are conservative with respect to the right of the father to interfere with his son’s choice of life partner, and two of them advocate the opposite view.

The ambiguity of the play in question, and perhaps also the fact that the plot has appeared in different versions, allows for various and at times contradicting interpretations. On the one hand, the play favors love marriages and thereby encourages resistance to parents’ rights to interfere with their children’s choice of life partners. On the other hand, the play also uses the rhetoric of the country idealizing the village woman, who stands for patience, obedience, and morality, while the city girlfriend represents modern evils like selfishness, greed, and lack of morality. The group discussions revealed a negative attitude towards forced marriages and most of them blamed the parents (the father) of the young man for the oppression brought upon the rural wife. *“The parents had no right to bring the girl to town for the boy. This is not good, because the boy has to love his wife. Boys of these days like to have up-to-date girls. They don’t like a girl because her father is a good farmer or she is good at milling. Those are outdated things. If you bring a girl like a parcel the result is like in this play; the rural girl is being oppressed and harassed”* (small-scale business woman #7).

However, some of the respondents have a different point of view, which influences the interpretation of the play. As can be seen in the following

dialogue, the play provoked different reactions in one group, reactions which seem to at least partly depend on prior identifications:

Tourist coach agent #1: First of all, I realized that we have to respect and practice our customs and traditions; that man got all those problems because he ignored his tradition. Secondly, I noticed that the traditional girl was taken as a slave, down trodden, a creature that cannot live like a man. I was really annoyed by that behavior. If that man knew his custom and tradition, I think he would not do such a thing.

Tourist coach agent #3: You would not find such a thing in our tribe. Nobody will choose a spouse for you. You will choose a spouse you love. It is not your father who will marry on your behalf. For us, if you fall in love to a person, you agree to marry each other, and then you inform the elders.

Tourist coach agent #2: The message here is that we should not allow our parents to choose spouses for us, it is not good at all. As we saw in this play, the village girl was much oppressed that she might run to practice prostitution.

Even though most of the respondents who saw the play found fault with the father for bringing a wife to the son without his consent, they also tended to think that the rural girl would be a better wife than the city girl. The respondents tended to take the story further emphasizing that the town girl will leave Chain as soon as there are financial problems, while the village wife would stand by her husband. *“They have shown us two types of love; first the love to a person you choose yourself and forced love. From these two messages, I have realized that forced love is not good, though; the girl who is being oppressed would become a very good wife for this man in the future. A person with dignity would not do what that town lady has been doing against the rural girl”* (small-scale business woman #5). *“That family was not in good mood and at any time if that man becomes bankrupt the town girl is likely to abandon him. If for instance, he is retrenched, the town lady will not manage to live a poor life. The girl brought to him by his father is the one that can tolerate whatever situations they face in life. She is the right person to marry whom they can build a future together. The town girl is there because life is sweet”* (tourist coach agent #1).

An aspect that is integrated into the conflict between traditional and modern marriages is respect for elders, which constitutes a central idea in African culture. Intergenerational conflicts are not new, but have intensified starting with the social and economic changes following colonialism and later capitalism (Lange 2002; 178). Wage labor transformed power relations in favor of young men, who became economically independent from their fathers. Increasing migration of young people to the cities reinforces disintegration of family ties between parents in the country and their children in the cities. The father/son relationship in the play embodies this disintegration, which entails a conflict between traditional and modern values. The following statement embodies this conflict: *“Traditional marriages existed from the past, but the*

children of today want to go with time – now these two things oppose each other. Therefore, there is a conflict between tradition and modernity. The parents are traditional while the children are modern” (small scale business woman #1).

With this as background, the play can be read that Chain pursues and captures a girl without informing his parents, but his strategy fails because he didn't respect tradition. Moreover, he could have abandoned the rural wife, but that would be going against his father's decision, and would thereby show his father disrespect. This can be summed up as father knows best; rebellious children are wrong and thereby don't represent a threat to authority, power, and stability. In this way, the play symbolizes a conservative social force, which might reassure audiences about what's old and known is safe in a fast changing world. The authority wins (father) and consequently traditional values, a situation that is reflected in the following statement. *“According to me, I have noticed the youths in this time are different from youths in the past and today's marriages are different from the past marriages. In the past, the parents were looking for spouses for their children. It was the parents' grace after receiving the girl they chose for their son; and they lived happily and peacefully, the life was quite sweet. But, these days I really wonder whether we bring up our children the way we should. Youths want to abandon past traditions and customs; they want to be up to date, which will eventually lead us astray. Youths these days they don't value us”* (small scale business woman #6).

A related issue among the respondents, especially among the women, is communication or rather the lack of communication between parents and children, which reflects the disintegration of the relationship between parents and children as the latter move from the village to the cities. *“Parents and children should be one thing; if you want to do something you should seek advice from your father. The parent should have communicated with his son first; then the boy could have either accepted or refused her. I think, though, they are saying that they are going with time, the relationship between a parent and a child is extremely important”* (small-scale business woman #7). *“This play has taught me a very important lesson, that most of us in town here have very little communication with our parents and some of us are given into marriage traditionally. These things are really happening, even in various families here in town, not only in pictures. Sometimes young people commit suicide, which is happening very often here in town, because they are not content with the situation”* (small-scale business woman #4).

All in all, the play entails both conservative and liberal elements, which have mixed implications for gender transformation. On the one hand, the images in the play differ from the idealized vision of the country by associating the father

with backwardness and the son with the modern city in its argument against traditional authority and support of love marriages. On the other hand, the play also uses the much-used dichotomy between the country girl and the city girl that favors an idealized picture of traditional women. The ambivalence in the play also reverberates in its reception. In reviewing the respondents' statements, the older women and the men appear to be slightly more conservative than the younger females. The older ones are more concerned with children's upbringing and lack of respect towards the elders, but not necessarily in favor of forced marriages. The young men are quick to judge the city girl favoring an idealized picture of the village woman (respect for her husband). The younger women are most concerned with communication and love in the family.

8.2 Marriage organization – conflicts and negotiations arising in the process of modernization

The economic restructuring that is underway in Tanzania has put an economic strain on most families, which has intensified conflicts within the family – between husbands and wives as well as between parents and children (see also Creighton and Omari 1995). On one level, the conflicts are about distribution of resources, which often concern who a man should spend his money on - his wife and children, or girlfriends (or relatives). In Tanzania, as in many other African countries, it is common to have girlfriends besides a wife, which involves entertaining and showering them with gifts. Even though the ideology of socialist state feminism supports gender equality, polygamy is legal and as many as 28 percent of Tanzanian men take co-wives. It is therefore 'understandable' that many men find it reasonable to have girlfriends outside marriage, which involves less commitment than having several wives. However, the image of love marriages is a strong influence, especially among young people. In the middle of these contradicting forces women have gained considerable economic independence over the last two decades as a result of their economic engagement in the informal sector, which has given them more bargaining power within the household, or even the ability to leave an unsatisfactory marriage (cf. Chapter 1.3). Nevertheless, the image of men as breadwinners is still strong among men as well as women, and with that, men's control over women economically and sexually.

The contradictory forces give rise to the question of how marriage relations should be organized. Should women still tolerate an inferior position including beating in their relationships with men and put up with men who go around with other women, spend their money on beers and girlfriends and even their drinking buddies; or should women stand up for their rights and demand equality? These are issues that Swahili plays try to deal with, often with a contradictory message or outcome. In the following play, the good and proper wife is juxtaposed against the

greedy girlfriend. Similar to the rural wife in the previous play, the wives sit home and wait for the husbands to be reformed, but as Lange (2002; 233) notes, different and contradictory solutions are offered in other plays.

Christmas play – Infidelity (II)

The play has two parallel story lines displaying similar conflicts, which merge to one story towards the end. The conflicts unfolding are between Chema and her husband, Tulasi, and between Kadada and her husband, Sikumbili. The conflicts are about values that regulate the relationship between husband and wife. In contrast to the previous play as well as the following plays in this analysis, which can be characterized as event-oriented, the plot in this play is character-oriented. It is, therefore, difficult to identify a straightforward chain of events following in a logical or chronological order in terms of cause and effect (one event x happens, followed by a response y because of x, and with z as a final consequence).

The play starts with a picture of a town, the same as in the previous play, placing the action in an urban setting. The first couple we meet is Tulasi and Chema. Chema is home cleaning the house and preparing for Christmas, when her husband, Tulasi, comes home. They start arguing over a number of things, including a new Christmas dress for Chema. It seems like the importance of a new dress is a symbol of love: “*My husband, the heart never gets old, I want a new dress.*” The atmosphere is tense. In order to keep peace in the house Tulasi promises to come back later with the items she asked for.

In scene 2, the setting has shifted to the home of Sikumbili and Kadada. Sikumbili gives his wife a new beautiful dress for Christmas, and promises to bring one for their daughter too. The atmosphere is good, until Sikumbili tells Kadada that he is going to a party. Kadada gets very disappointed, and tells her husband: “*Ah! Yes, you have given me food, you have given me drinks, but one thing is missing in this house... Love.*” Kadada is left alone, and to underline her disappointment the scene ends with a close-up picture of her hands folding the new dress. While Tulasi and Chema live in a modest home, Sikumbili and Kadada have a better outfitted and beautiful home. Although, the setting is different in terms of social status, the problems are in both cases related to love and lack of commitment. A new dress is seen as a token of the husbands’ love, though not a sufficient one. For Sikumbili, there is self-interest in giving his wife beautiful dresses, because it gives him prestige. In the sequence below it is also worth noticing that Kadada depicts herself in relation to her husband (self-image):

Sikumbili: I tell you Kadada, everybody will be looking at you.
 Kadada: Sure! They will say Oh! Sikumbili’s wife!
 Sikumbili: They know I am rich (laughter)...

In scene 3, Tulasi is waiting for his mistress, Betty. He glances at her, smiling and nodding, clearly happy with what he sees when she approaches him. Tulasi has brought Betty a beautiful dress for Christmas. He doesn't like to see her dressed in *kanga*. Tulasi tells his mistress that he is going to Manzese to buy a second hand dress for his wife, but she tells him to go to Tandale where they have the most rejected clothes:

- Betty: Don't go to Manzese, prices for second hand clothes are very high there. You better go to Tandale, they are selling 50 Tsh. per dress. You can buy a lot of them for her there!
- Tulasi: The most rejected ones.
- Betty: Exactly, buy her those ones.
- Tulasi: Okay don't worry, I will come to you on Christmas day darling, don't worry at all!
- Betty: Heh! (laughter)
- Tulasi: You know, I am Tulasi! I can't go out with Chema; she doesn't look beautiful if she puts on trousers.
- Betty: After all she looks quite old, don't you see?
- Tulasi: That is why on Christmas day like this one, I have to spend with a babe like you ...

The sequence can be read as an expression of an internal ranking between the two women, whereby Tulasi's mistress sees herself as having greater status than his wife based on a traditional/modern notion. She insults and degrades Chema by convincing Tulasi to buy his wife the cheapest clothes, which can be seen as a symbolic act in a rejection of his wife in an attempt to win the man. Also, Tulasi is more proud of his girlfriend than of his wife. It seems to be important for Tulasi's self-esteem to be seen with a modern woman who dresses in western clothes and acts in a more liberated fashion.

In the next scene, Sikumbili is having a discussion with a male friend, Kitunguu. The discussion centers on the rising conflict between Sikumbili and his wife. Sikumbili tries to blame his wife and to win acceptance from his friend, Kitunguu, by making a generalization about women: "*You know women are never satisfied.*" But Kitunguu doesn't accept this argument and starts to question Sikumbili to find out where the problem is. At home, Sikumbili had told his wife that he was invited to a party with his colleagues, but now he tells his friend that he wants to spend time with his mistress, Ritha. From this we can infer that Sikumbili lied about the party and his real intention is to spend time with his mistress. His friend advises him to stop playing around with other women, and enjoy his legal wife: "*Besides the fact that you have given her food and drinks and you have brought her expensive clothes, there is still something missing! That is your legal wife; you are supposed to stay home with her, which is love. Love is very important in the family; she must feel dissatisfied. Why should you leave her alone? Will she eat alone? Dance alone? Be careful Mr. Sikumbili, this is Dar es Salaam!*" Concerning the last statement, this is Dar es Salaam, it is unclear what Kitunguu

had in mind. I interpret this as a warning: In Dar es Salaam the barrier for women to leave is lower, there are other possibilities and the women here will not put up with everything. If you don't treat your wife right, she might leave you.

In the same scene, Tulasi joins Sikumbili and Kitunguu, who we learn is his in-law. They are talking about how Tulasi helped his in-law with a job, which reflects the fact that men value talking to each other and helping each other out. Furthermore, Tulasi invites his friends over to his house for a Christmas celebration. This scene is the only one that gives rise to a decision point: Whether Tulasi and Sikumbili will be participating in the Christmas ceremony together with their wives or go with their mistresses, leaving their wives alone.

In the last scene, the celebration takes place in Tulasi's and Chema's home, but Tulasi is not there. Also, Sikumbili's wife, Kadada, is there, but Sikumbili has not shown up yet. Their friend, on the other hand, is attending the celebrations. He tries to keep up the spirit among them, but the two women look very disappointed when they realize that their husbands will not show up to celebrate with them.

Gender representations, power, and exclusion

The husbands carry the story forward and make decisions that influence their wives in a negative manner. They are also the social coordinators, and responsible for the social arrangement for Christmas. Although it is not expressively stated, the husbands are depicted as breadwinners while the wives are portrayed as housewives operating within the domestic sphere and occupying the sub-units of being coordinated. This dichotomy forms the basis of a dominant characteristic in the relationship between husbands and wives, which prevents the latter in becoming equal and free subjects. As such, the play reflects a patriarchal attitude concerning marriage relations in defining the relationship between the sexes; however, the message of the play appears to be the opposite. *"This play shows very clearly that in most families men are the controller of family situations, he makes decisions as he plans, and he doesn't plan with his wife. He would just leave his wife at home while he is going to a party, but ideally they should be together as one thing"* (male banker #1). *"I think what they want to show us is when youths marry each other there is normally one-sided communication. Men are more powerful than women. Even within our families, communication is often one-sided. Decision-making is one-sided, a woman cannot give her opinion; her husband will see it as a progressive idea. That is why you could see that woman was explaining something, but the husband had the decision-making power. He had already made a decision to go out. Communication within the family is very important; everybody must give his or her opinion before making a decision"* (male banker #2). These statements show that a recognition of patriarchal relationships results in expressions of cultural resistance to it among male readers.

Money is seen as a powerful symbol of power relations, defining ‘proper’ gender relations where men are supposed to have the final say, as well as an internal ranking between the same sex - defining social status and relationships among men (Lange 2002; 204). The wives in the play depend on their husbands in acquiring new dresses, food to cook, and social arrangements. In other words, both material and social resources are controlled by their husbands. As a result, the wives are assigned to a disempowering position in which they are subjected to their husband’s actions and decisions and end up being sad and unsatisfied. *“I think that play is showing us the importance of taking good care of your family and the negative effects of having mistresses when you are married. That man gets personal satisfaction, he thinks he should personally get this and that entertainment, he forgets that his wife wants entertainment too”* (male banker #2). While the husbands are portrayed as independent and their essential nature is to be for themselves, the wives are dependent and their essential nature is life or existence for others (c.f. Freire; Chapter 4.4). The wives in the play stay home devoted to their husbands and families, whereas their husbands have the freedom to go out playing with other women. *“It is only men who have the right to go out to spend like men (and to have affairs). The play reveals clearly when we men have money, we use it to oppress women even the ones who take care of our families”* (male banker #1).

A related characteristic that is reflected in the male characters is that they tend to transform everything surrounding them into an object of their domination (c.f. Chapter 4.4). Not just their wives, material goods and time, but even their mistresses are reduced to the status of objects at their disposal. For instance, in scene 2, Sikumbili tries to buy his wife’s consent to go to the party by giving her a beautiful dress, food, and drinks. However, she is left alone to ‘enjoy’ those things. Sikumbili seems to give things to his wife more out of self-interest than out of concern for her. Also Tulasi tries to use his purchasing power in keeping and turning his mistress into an object. He brings her a beautiful dress for Christmas, because he doesn’t like to be seen with her dressed in a *kanga*, which symbolizes a traditional lifestyle. In both cases, the husbands’ behavior can be seen as a demonstration of what is important for them is to have more for themselves at the expense of their wives having less or nothing. While Tulasi gives his mistress a nice dress, his wife gets a cast-off dress. Sikumbili tries to make his wife look bad by presenting her as ungrateful towards his generous gestures. Both the husbands are out playing women, while the wives suffer a lonesome Christmas celebration.

The husbands’ behavior may be explained by a notion of prestige. Control and independence are important elements in a prestige structure. If a man is perceived as controlled by his wife his status is lowered. Therefore, the act of having many women can be viewed as a sign of control and independence. Keeping mistresses or many wives is also associated with wealth. *“My mother was doing a lot of work,*

but the dues were going to my father. The men were competing to marry as many wives as they could so that they could have more resources. The man owns the land, the wife and children cultivate it. Men just go out to drink” (male banker #2). The importance of keeping mistresses can also be seen as a way of defining or reinforcing a sense of manhood - while the women must be controlled, sexually, and otherwise. The prestige factor is reflected in Sikumbili’s response to his friend where he defends his actions by saying that other men will take his mistress if he abandons her; “do you think it is a joke?” he asks his friend. This reflects a fear of losing face, which is underlined further by the way he talks about his mistress in contrast to his wife. Sikumbili addresses his mistress in a similar manner as Tulasi: “A day like this one, I need to spend with a babe like Ritha, do you think I will go with... (interruption).” Mistresses seem to have a higher status than the wives do, perhaps because mistresses have a certain degree of independence. They can walk away anytime, while wives are more or less seen as men’s property. “Many people don’t go out with their wives, especially educated men, even ministers. Special ladies will often be prepared to entertain the big potatoes. Some people marry women from rural areas who have not gone to school, if they take their wives out they will imitate things you dislike. So, this is our culture, which is not easy to abandon” (male banker #3).

Even though mistresses might see themselves as more modern and liberated than wives, their actions actually support a male-dominated order or gender ideology as much as the wives who put up with it. The mistresses make it possible for men to play around with other women, and if the men find someone ‘better’ or if their lovers become pregnant and a burden they can dump them any time. Although a female lover might have some independence or power to end the relationship, her married lover has usually the upper hand. If he is abandoned by his lover he still has his wife to go home to. “In trying to make his girlfriend satisfied he has to buy her nice food, clothes, a house and so on, because if you fail to maintain her, she will easy look for another man and abandon you. But your wife at home she is always there, whether you maintain her or not” (male banker #2). If it is the other way around the lover has nobody, which probably causes emotional dependency and caters to jealousy. By not recognizing this unjust order the mistresses might become aggressive and jealous and perceive the wives as enemies and competition. The only way to try to influence the situation is to insult the wives and talk condescendingly about them in an attempt to make themselves look like the better choice (e.g. the dialog between Tulasi and his girlfriend, Betty, where she asks him to buy the most cast-off clothes for his wife).

Cultural resistance and gender transformation

The play ends with the two wives celebrating Christmas without their husbands and portrays their unhappiness with the situation. The ending symbolizes the fact that there is no promise or hope for the suffering wives, for a new life or society at

large; rather it signals that the oppression and dehumanizing continues. The play lacks plot/character development that would involve a reversal of the male characters' thinking and behavior or the wives taking action against their husbands, which either way would change the wives' situation. The play represents, therefore, a static view of the world in which the wives have had to accept or adjust to their destiny or at best wait for their husbands to be reformed. However, according to Lange (2002; 253), in a number of Swahili plays wives whose husbands keep concubines or take second wives, either choose to leave their husband and are shown to have success on their own, or they are thrown out by their husband but manage well by themselves.

Nevertheless, in at least two ways the play leaves an opening for a reexamination of the set of values forming the background against which the husbands act. First, the narrative events stand in relation to the wives happiness. In other words, the story is constructed from the wives' point of view; how the husbands' behavior affects the two wives' well-being. This discursive device creates identification and sympathy with the wives throughout the play. Then, it is a question whether recognizing oppressed positions can result in cultural resistance, and thereby release a liberating force. At least, for the group that I interviewed the reception points in that direction. *"The play has a very good message. The first message is for us men who have families; that is to be close to our families. We have to have love in the family. The second target is that it shows the mistresses that we entertain outside our families; they have no good intentions for us. We will love them, but in fact they will be wasting our time. Just imagine, that man wanted to go to Manzese to buy his wife at least some nice clothes, he was trying to respect both sides. Even though the girlfriend got first priority, she advised that man to go where he could get the cheapest (and most cast-off) gowns. Just think about it; this person you have given first priority is advising you to devalue your wife. They are actually not good persons. We should do away with them"* (male banker #3).

Moreover, the discussion between Sikumbili and his friend, Kitunguu, invites the audience to rethink dominant cultural values and beliefs mediating in the relationship between husband and wife with a big impact on gender relations. The friend gives advice about the 'correct' way of doing things by telling Sikumbili how to treat and relate to his wife, and to stay home with her and abandon his mistress. The advisor interprets the situation based upon moral values and norms for behavior in favor of the wives, which could raise women's social status in general. Even though Sikumbili doesn't listen to his friend, it calls attention to an alternative way of living and relating to others, which is based upon equality between the sexes rather than a patriarchal order.

However, as the statements below illustrate it is not easy to change cultural ways and it takes time. *"Today, I cannot go home and ask my mom; 'Why is dad*

preparing himself to go out alone, why don't you accompany him?' She will think I am crazy... 'Where do you want me to go with your father? Is he not going to discuss business issues with his fellow men, what will I contribute? We women discuss about cooking, making clothes, and taking care of the children'. This is why I believe it is hard to convince the society that a man and a woman are equal. We, who have gone to school, have started to realize the need for men and women to be one thing. Our parents did not see this, but we want to change. That person left his wife at home, she was left there lonely and depressed, but what could she do? She couldn't go back home; her parents would beat her if she said she came home because her husband refused to take her out" (male banker #1).

"I would like to add regarding customs and traditions. If a woman moves around with her husband, some might mock at her; 'How can you move around with your husband everywhere!' Women have grown up perceiving it that way. I will give you my own experience. My father got a new wife – a modern woman who used to cook and eat with him. By then he had three wives. My father's first wife couldn't believe it, she was asking people to come and witness it. For her it was bad manner to share a meal with the husband at the same table. Therefore, you find that she will get problems if she goes against tradition, people will rebuke her. But, these days due to modernity, I want my wife to learn new things; that is why we go together, even if I am going to an entertainment I will take her, she is a human being like me, she also wants to enjoy. In civilization, a woman has to go out; she has to expose herself to a new environment" (male banker #2).

The emphasis on love and family commitment (or rather lack of it) in this play can be seen as a response to the increased hostility and gender antagonism in hetero relationships, which both have accelerated with the economic and social transformation. This is clearly a strong message among the participants who watched the play, as can be seen in the following dialog:

- Male banker #3: I think that the message here is just like that woman said; 'You have given me everything, clothes, food, and drinks, but one thing is lacking, which is love'. Everything is there, but there is no love. Therefore, that woman had no peace in her mind.
I can just add, this was the strongest message in the whole program. The message expressed is lack of love. Therefore, this play portrays the current situation and there are some elements with men to oppress their wives and spend with their mistresses. If the husband has money, he will always cheat and spend a lot of money on expensive clothes, drinks and chicken, which he might not be buying at home.
- Male banker #1: message expressed is lack of love. Therefore, this play portrays the current situation and there are some elements with men to oppress their wives and spend with their mistresses. If the husband has money, he will always cheat and spend a lot of money on expensive clothes, drinks and chicken, which he might not be buying at home.
- Male banker #2: That is normal life, which I have also experienced. There is no social responsibility for the family.

All in all, the play holds both conservative and liberal elements that allow for different interpretations. While the story line is conservative, in that the wives sit home waiting for their husbands to be reformed, it still allows for rethinking the

dominant values that mediate the relationship between husband and wife. The reception interviews reveal that the male participants who are shown the play recognize the oppressive situation many women find themselves in their relationship with their husbands, and as such, the play entails oppositional readings that can trigger cultural resistance against the dominant ideology. Yet, there are deep-rooted cultural barriers that work against gender transformation – even within women’s own mentality. The group discussion shows that gender transformation will take time, depending on education, generation, customs and traditions, and rural-urban identification.

8.3 Female strategies and social mobility

Women’s increasing independence and mobility (or rather men’s inability to cope with these changes) can be seen to generate hostility, lack of trust, and gender antagonism in the family, rather than trust, affection, and cooperation (cf. Ferguson 1999). Since the mid-1980s, women have entered the informal sector in great numbers and often earn more than their husbands, which stands in sharp contrast to the 1970s, when most women were economically dependent on men (Tripp 1997). In addition, women who go against traditional marriage are a provocation against their elders who are ‘cheated’ for bride price money. The greedy urban woman who is after a man’s money is one of the most common plots in Swahili drama. In Lange’s sample, 9 out of 59 Swahili television plays were concerned with women who pretended to love, but only cared about a man’s money, also called *shangingi* plays³ (Lange 2002; 233). The strong gender antagonism found in these plays probably mirrors men’s anxieties over women’s increasing independence and mobility, which tend to channel images of women whom behave in a ‘masculine’ way. As such, gender antagonism in Swahili drama can be seen as a reaction to recent social changes in Dar es Salaam. In general, there is a sense that modernism has entailed immoral sexual behavior and moral decay – often blamed on negative influences from the West. Similar plots about the dangerous urban good-time girl are found in popular narratives across the continent (e.g. Barber 1997; Newell 2000).

The gold-digger girl (III)

The main conflict in this play is between Rich and his fiancée, Waridi, who starts cheating on him. A second conflict that is more in the background is between Rich and his friend, Bishanga, who begins a relationship with Waridi. Later, a new conflict between Waridi and Bishanga evolves, when Waridi learns that Bishanga has no intention of marrying her. The conflicts can be characterized as both

³ *Shangingi* is a slang expression for a sophisticated and unpredictable beautiful woman who specializes in fooling wealthy men (Lange 2002; 243).

emotional and economic, which form the backdrop of a discussion or evaluation of values.

The play starts by Rich introducing his fiancée to his sister, Aisha.⁴ When Aisha is welcoming Waridi she says, *“This is my home place,”* which indicates that she is independent. Aisha tells Waridi that she and Rich are just friends and advise each other, which is why he has brought Waridi to her place. Aisha explains to Waridi that Rich is a wise and understanding person and she explains Rich’s concept of love. She advises Waridi: *“He is a person who knows what love means. So love him with all your heart; okay!”*

In the next scene, Rich brings Waridi to a close friend, Bishanga. Bishanga’s place is very nice and through the conversation we learn that he is quite rich. He is a businessman and owes expensive things like a car and a mobile phone. While the three of them are talking, Waridi is clearly impressed and she starts flirting with Bishanga. Rich goes into the house for a while to make a phone call, leaving Bishanga and Waridi alone. Bishanga tells Waridi that she shouldn’t stop coming there because Rich does not bring her. This is the first branching point in the story. At this point Waridi has at least two possibilities: She can turn down Bishanga’s invitation and leave things the way they are, or she can accept his offer. Behind Rich’s back, Waridi chooses to make an appointment with Bishanga, which is the start of a new relationship.

In scene 3, which is three months later, Rich is paying Aisha a visit. He is confused and hurt, because Waridi has been avoiding him and he doesn’t know what is happening. As an audience we have been filled in by a short sequence between scene 2 and 3, where we saw Waridi and Bishanga coming out together from his house and entering his car. From this we can infer that Waridi is cheating on Rich. In the discussion Rich has with Aisha we learn that he suspects Waridi of visiting Bishanga, and that his feelings of hurt regarding this are as if he had been *“knocked down by a car.”* Aisha tells him that such a thing shouldn’t be a big issue. Rich decides to go and see Bishanga.

In the next scene, Rich has gone to Bishanga’s house to investigate the situation. He finds the two of them together talking in the backyard. Rich learns that Waridi has abandoned him, and they start to quarrel:

Waridi: I am tired of wearing my shoes, I have no doubt with Bishanga, he has a car and...
 Rich: Okay you mean you want men with cars... I have nothing... That is jealousy.
 Waridi: Why should I harden my legs?
 Rich: Okay go on with Bishanga, but your jealousy will lead you astray.

⁴ It is unclear whether Aisha and Rich are biological siblings or just grew up together close as sister and brother.

Waridi: You are just a poor person, what do you have? Do you think I can live with a poor person like you? I am with Bishanga.

In the last scene, Waridi is paying Aisha a visit. She has come to Aisha to get help in order to convince Rich to forgive and take her back, because Bishanga has abandoned her. Waridi is crying and begging Aisha to help her, but Aisha shows no sympathy for Waridi.

Aisha: Do you remember what you told me when I came to advise you?
 Waridi: Just forget about that aunt.
 Aisha: Rich cried like a baby because of you!
 Waridi: Bishanga is the source of all this, aunt!
 Aisha: Not your jealousy?
 Waridi: No. Do you know why?
 Aisha: You are jealous of rich people/men.
 Waridi: I beg you aunt, I am begging you!
 Aisha: You have brought yourself back. For you information Rich is marrying next month.
 Waridi: Don't tell me aunt.
 Aisha: I don't have reason to cheat you, I cannot sympathize with you, what you did pained me very much.
 Waridi: Don't argue like that...
 Aisha: What else can I tell you? He got somebody who is ready to walk on foot, somebody who is not after luxury dresses...
 Waridi: Don't argue like that aunt, such things are normal for us women.

From the last sentence in the dialogue above we can see that Waridi has tried to explain or justify her behavior by referring to gender, but Aisha doesn't accept this explanation. Waridi has allowed jealousy to destroy everything for herself, and as such the play can be read as a warning to young girls who would behave the same way. Shortly after, Rich comes to Aisha's place as well. Waridi tries to ask for forgiveness from Rich, but he tells her it is too late. In the end, Rich leaves and Aisha chases Waridi away.

Female agency and consequences of breaking the rules

This play differs from the previous plays in several respects. One major difference is that a woman, Waridi, is the agent carrying the story forward. Waridi takes action in her own hands, but she is not presented as a role model for others. Her behavior is depicted as inappropriate. However, it is interesting to note that participants who watched this play (male carpenters) blame both the woman and the male friend. *“What I have learned here is, that girl has shown a very big weakness, because she has fallen in love to a friend of her fiancée just because he is rich. Also, it is not only that girl who needs to be blamed but also that guy; he showed a great weakness. Generally speaking, the play showed a weakness with young people”* (male carpenter #1). *“I think the message here is that we should be faithful to our lovers, and not be jealous. That girl was jealous and that guy was also destructive; it seems that he is very immoral. During the introduction, he looked very arrogant, but the girl was too jealous to notice it”* (male carpenter #4).

In contrast to the protagonists in the previous plays, Waridi has to pay a lesson for her mistake. While Waridi's action has made her miserable, the husbands who cheated on their wives didn't suffer any consequences. A line is drawn between what kind of behavior is 'acceptable' among men, but not among women. The play provides a set of values, and when Waridi violates those norms she is constrained by them. Either she has to learn to adjust or she will suffer the consequences. However, Lange notes in her survey that it is common to portray greedy city girls who get away with their immoral behavior without being punished. She reports that one-third of the plays have this outcome (Lange 2002; 242). The opposite endings, therefore, signal an incoherent discourse for the values guiding females in their pursuit of male relationships. This is underscored by the fact that the same group, *4 for You*, has produced similar plays with opposite endings, where the greedy girl is punished and plays where she gets away with her bad conduct. It is interesting to note, that in Ghanaian novels the gold-digger girls are always punished or reformed in the end, and the same appears to be the case for Yorùbá drama (Bame 1974, Barber 2000, Newell 2000, in Lange 2002).

Waridi shares some features with the male protagonists in the previous plays, such as disrespectful, immoral, and selfish, as expressed through the relationship to their partners. However, unlike the male protagonists, Waridi is not independent; rather she is portrayed as dependent on men for her living (e.g. car and luxury clothing), which might explain why the consequences of her actions are bigger for her. The last point undercuts any liberal potential in the plot that could have been enabled by having a female agent. However, there is a possibility that this plot can be more empowering than politically correct plays, which tend to depict women who lack agency of their own and who stand by their man through infidelity, drunkenness, and abuse" (Lange 2002; 260).

Another major difference in this play is that the advisor is also a woman, who has a more prominent part than the advisors in the previous plays. The relationship between Rich and Aisha cuts across gender lines, which shows that it is possible for a man and a woman to be just good friends who are advising each other. This situation encompasses an alternative female representation as well as relations between women and men as non-sexual. However, Rich and Aisha are related, and have grown up together like sister and brother, which might undermine this observation.

As a discursive device, Aisha's role is to make a judgment of the situation based upon moral values not only in relation to her friend, Rich, but for the audience as well. The plot leaves little ambiguity regarding Waridi's character and that her behavior is not acceptable; she has gotten herself into a miserable situation due to jealousy and has to face the consequences. The sympathy lies with Rich. The events stand in relation to his point of view of how Waridi's behavior has affected

Rich's feelings and well-being. The participants' responses also point in this direction; however, they are more concerned with the 'offender' than the 'victim'. *"In spite of the advice she (Waridi) got from her sister-in-law that Rich is a good person, she still fell in love with Bishanga after a very short time"* (male carpenter #3). Also, Rich has to take part of the blame: *"I think Rich failed to protect their relationship, which is why that girl decided to betray him"* (male petty trader/carpenter #2). I think this interpretation reflects a masculine reading of the play. Nevertheless, Rich is portrayed as sympathetic and big-hearted, but unlike the female 'victims' in the previous plays he is depicted as able to rise up after a downfall. He doesn't sit back paralyzed, but makes new moves with an empowering effect on the course of his life (new fiancée). In other words, the play contains plot development that reverses Rich's situation in which he solves his problems, and thereby represents a dynamic view of the world.

Female strategies, class, and social mobility

Traditionally, marriage has been seen as a contract in which economic transactions are more important than love. In simple terms, the tradition of bride price puts a price tag on a woman. Ironically, a man can decide to 'sell' his daughter to the highest bidder, but it is not acceptable that a woman sells herself. Women should sit back and be controlled and let men make the arrangements and organize their lives - for good and bad. In terms of the nature/culture dichotomy, the division of spheres of action reflects a strong gender ideology based upon binary oppositions. While men are tied to social and cultural roles, women are aligned to their biological nature. During the personal interviews both male and female interviewees underscored again and again that there is a link between women's low status and the institution of marriage; that is, women are set aside to be married:

In Tanzania, a woman is oppressed actually. You know, it's a mentality that has been for a long time. They are inferior; they are supposed to be married. A woman is to be seen not heard, so you find woman's rights in trouble. A woman is not free to decide, even in marriage, she cannot decide which man to marry her. It is decided by the parents; and some of the decisions are made when she is as young as three years, she is already married (male banker #38).

The portrayal of the female protagonist of the play as jealous – a woman who can't be trusted – supports the nature/culture dichotomy. Waridi uses her sexuality in an instrumental way to better her economic and social status, which breaks with prescribed female behavior. As others have noticed, women are certainly aware of their sexual worth and the importance of controlling their reproductive capacities. *"The bride wealth institution, and the fact than married men are willing to shower their mistresses with money and gifts, give Tanzanian women a sense that their sexuality and reproductive capacities are indeed something they should not just give away without recompense"* (Lange 2002; 252). Aud Talle and Jo Helle-Valle

(2000; 193) argue that women who choose to be “free women take control of the economic surplus that their sexuality generates.” Traditionally, it was the male elders on the side of the young lady who had control over this surplus. Women who try to take control over this surplus, therefore, can very well be seen to have created antagonistic gender relations as well as generational conflicts. However, in a society where there are few other possibilities than marriage for women to better their social status, the protagonist in the play can be understood to be acting rationally. Waridi sees an opportunity to increase her price range. As such, the plot can be read as standing in opposition to the traditional society and its patriarchal system, which tends to keep women in an inferior position.

In popular consciousness it is believed that girls and women will not enter sexual relationships before evaluating the economic side of it, while men’s desire is associated with several female partners, which creates hostility and lack of trust on both sides (Lange 2002). While females complain that they can’t trust males, males complain that females are only with them for material items (Schifferdecker 2000). Among my male respondents, there is a tendency to call this a “normal event”. *“This is a normal event, especially for the people with low living standard. Most African women would not value you, if you don’t have money, even if she loves you she will show some discontent”* (male carpenter #4). Yet, they are careful in generalizing this behavior to all women and they blame men as well as women, which is a far cry from what Ferguson notes on the Copperbelt in the 1980s, where most “men seemed absolutely convinced that women were by nature greedy and selfish creatures who could not under any circumstances be trusted” (Ferguson 1999; 188).

One of the participants who saw women’s strategies as leading to instability in love relationships related this to women’s dependency on men. *“I think in most cases girls are the source of breaking up love relationships, because normally in our African societies women are very much dependent on us. Since they are dependent on men, they prefer to be with a person who is rich. So if a girl has a boyfriend who is poor she will become dissatisfied when she meets a man who is better off. Such things make girls have no stability in love. This is because most women are dependent on men. I think girls who are self-reliant don’t end up in relationships like that”* (male carpentry #2). In other words, it is implied in this statement that both men and women would benefit from more equal gender relations where women are less dependent on men for their social status. Another of the respondents planned an alternative strategy: *“On my side, such behavior is there and it won’t stop, so before I get engaged with any girl, I will first make sure that I am financially fit. Also, it is good to establish friendship with somebody at the same level as yourself unless you were friends since you were young. You should at least be close in terms of wealth, not that you have only a bicycle and your friend a*

Mercedes Benz. That kind of relationship will normally end up difficulties like this one” (male carpenter #2).

Overall, love, commitment and marriage have been a central theme in all three plays discussed so far, which indicates that these values are not only essential in people's lives but also part of a continuous and incoherent discourse. The Swahili plays can be read as a popular discourse of what should be the 'correct' values of the society by involving the audiences emotionally where they typically identify with the innocent village girl and against the greedy and untrustworthy city girl. It also explains what happens to women who breaks with the society rules or prescribed behavior. Most often urban women are punished for their 'wrong' doings, but sometimes they get away with it. Male practitioners have considerable power to define representations of women, and there is a strong tendency to view moral decay in the society through gendered spectacles. For men who are stuck in traditional conceptions, changing gender relations might feel threatening to men's authority, social value, and self-esteem (see also Silberschmidt 1999). Hence, gender antagonism found in Swahili plays can be seen to mirror men's anxiety over women's increasing independence and mobility. However, complexity and ambiguity in the plots make these plays open for different interpretations. A play can at the same time argue for love marriages and, conversely, against city girlfriends. The play in question addresses what kind of values guide or should be directing the choice of a partner - economic or emotional reasons - and reflects the fact that love between two people has become a strong value in marriage.

8.4 Kinship organization and upbringing

Teenage pregnancy is a common problem in Tanzania, and many girls end up in a terrible and hopeless situation. Pregnant students get expelled from school, and it is not uncommon for girls to be thrown out of their homes due to the social stigma associated with pregnancy outside marriage. It is also commonly known that boys/men who impregnate girls often avoid taking responsibility for what they have done (Haram 2000, Mluma 1991). However, these things are contested, as can be seen in the following play. The play shows that female liberation starts at home and the way you bring up children. In this play, Mama Bichema's actions or lack of action has a disempowering effect for her daughter. In Lange's study (2002) only three plays addressed this problem, which stand in contrast to the frequency of the *shangingi* plays. The following play is in two parts, but the respondents only were able to see the first part.

The way you bring up a child (IV)

In contrast to the previous plays, which have focused on marriage relations, this play centers on kinship. The main relationship and conflict evolving is between Mama Bichema and her daughter, Kadada. Other conflicts that arise are between Kadada and her boyfriend, and between Mama Bichema and her husband. The differences arising are based upon moral values in upbringing, especially of the female child.

In the introduction, Mama Bichema is home cleaning the house when her daughter comes home from school. Kadada gives her mother a present, which she claims some friends gave her. Her mother has at least two alternatives: She could either accept the present without worrying where it came from, or she could investigate where the daughter got it from and why anybody would give it to her. Mama Bichema chooses the first alternative: She doesn't make any further inquires as to where the present came from, but is happy with her new beautiful *kangas*.

In the next scene, Kadada meets her boyfriend, Sikumbili, in a park. In order to meet Sikumbili, Kadada has lied to her mother about going to tutoring. Kadada is able to meet her secret lover without her mother's interference by lying and supplying her with small presents. We also learn that Kadada's father is away. Kadada suggests to her boyfriend that she stops school and live with him, but Sikumbili tells her it is too early and that she should finish her studies first. He is just a student himself and depends on his parents. This is a minor event. It fills us in on how Kadada lies to her mother in order to be together with her boyfriend, whom she gets the presents from. This is what happened in the park when the two young lovers met:

Kadada: Yes! What about that watch? You promised to buy me one!
 Sikumbili: Oh! I forgot, I was in town today... but I forgot to buy it.
 Kadada: He! So...
 Sikumbili: Not bad, can you put on this of mine? Should I put it on your hand?
 Kadada: Yes, no problem, it is much better!

In scene 3, Kadada's uncle comes to their house, initially to discuss a matter with her father. He witnesses Kadada giving her mother a present, a pot, and she accepts (again) without any further inquires: "*Thank you my daughter, may God bless you, keep on giving me presents.*" The uncle asks Bichema where her daughter got the present. He warns Mama Bichema to be careful: Kadada is just a student and has no income. The uncle takes on a role as an advisor and tries to convince Mama Bichema to check out the source of these presents, but Bichema is not ready to listen. She accuses him of being jealous, bewitching her and tells him to leave. This is also a minor event. It doesn't lead to a change of state, but rather elaborates on the difficulties that might arise due to Mama Bichema's behavior. Still, it raises

some expectations that something will happen to Kadada if Mama Bichema continues to close her eyes and let her daughter do as she likes.

In the next scene, Kadada is visiting her boyfriend at his home place. He is surprised to see her, because she has come without notice. Kadada tells him that she is pregnant, and has been forced to leave school and has been chased away by her mother. She turns to her boyfriend for support, but he doesn't want to have anything to do with her: "*Go back home, I am not going to stay with a girl who has been chased by her parents. After all you are pregnant, I still rely on my parents, they give me money for food, et cetera. Do you think I will manage to take care of you?*" Kadada finds herself in a hopeless situation (crying).

In scene 5, Kadada arrives back home. Mama Bichema could have forgiven her daughter, assumed some of the responsibility for the pregnancy and tried to find a solution. Instead she starts shouting at her and tells her to get out. As Mama Bichema chases her daughter away for the second time, the uncle comes to visit again. He tells Mama Bichema that if she accepted all those presents, she should accept the pregnancy as well. It is noteworthy that Mama Bichema, when defending her actions, uses an argument based on what she should tell Kadada's father. She is more concerned about what will happen to herself than her daughter. As the uncle is chased away again, he tells Bichema: "*I told you before, in-law! THE WAY YOU BRING UP THE CHILD!*"

In the meantime, the uncle gets in touch with Kadada's father, Tulasi, in Nairobi, and fills him in on what is happening at home. Tulasi travels home right away and gets very upset when he learns from his wife that she has chased their pregnant daughter away from home. He gives his wife two hours to go out and find Kadada, and tells her: "*What you are doing is exactly what makes children commit suicide. Now I am giving you two hours, I want to see Kadada in this house.*" The End.

Female agency – motivated by self-interest with harmful consequences

From the chain of events, we learn that it is the female characters, the daughter and her mother, who carry the story forward, but as in the previous play they are in no way depicted as role models for others. Both female characters are making mistakes, and they have to pay for them and learn a lesson, which are also recognized by the respondents. "*Though the mother was wrong, the daughter is also wrong, because she should not involve herself in love affairs when she is still a student*" (female secretary #4). Although, the events are partly carried out by Kadada, they stand in relation to her well being. The interest point of view lies with Kadada. She might be described as naive and disrespectful for her mother, yet, she is a child who needs guidance from responsible grown-ups. Mama Bichema, on the other hand, is portrayed as selfish, irresponsible, and even immoral. Her actions are guided by jealousy, motivated by self-interest, and with

harmful consequences for her daughter. When Kadada became pregnant the mother tried to save herself, running away from responsibility. We are presented with a one-sided negative image of a mother unworthy of the task of bringing up children. *“That woman did not behave like her mother, and if she had made a follow-up on her daughter she would have noticed the changes. The mother did not seem to bother with her daughter’s life”* (female secretary #4).

The advisor, as played by the uncle, adds emphasis to this interpretation of Mama Bichema’s character. He is the interpreter who makes a moral judgment of the situation, in which he places the responsibility for the course of events upon the mother. As a discursive device, this offers the audiences a particular way of understanding Mama Bichema’s character and actions, which can be seen in the following dialog:

- Secretary #2: The source of all the problems was from the mother. The daughter went out and brought things at home and the mother was just happy with her. She knew her daughter was a student and had no income. So in this play, the mother is the one to blame; she spoiled her daughter.
- Secretary #3: She would have understood what was going on earlier if she had listen to that person (uncle) who was warning her not to accept those things; she would reason and try to investigate, but instead she found that man to be jealous and chased him away. If she had made a follow-up, the daughter might not have become pregnant.
- Secretary #1: In fact, the mother is the jealous person here by accepting those presents; what that uncle said was the truth.

The advisor’s role also invites the audience to rethink beliefs and values with respect to the task of bringing up children, in particular the female child, which the following statements illustrate. *“From this play, I noted the importance of upbringing of children in the society. That mom was supposed to rebuke her daughter, that’s why I say that the way you bring up a child can contribute at spoiling her”* (female secretary #4). *“Some parents don’t know the importance of school. In most cases, women stay with their children, therefore, she is supposed to be careful with the children. If the mother had followed her up she might have noticed that her daughter didn’t go to tutoring and maybe not even school. The mother didn’t seem to make a follow-up on her daughter’s performance in school. The play gives a good education that we should bring up our children well so that they can have a good future”* (female secretary #2). *“I noticed something else, that is, African families like to conceal things. The families don’t often sit down together to discuss family matters. There were no positive relationships in that family”* (female secretary #4).

We also find resonance regarding the nature/culture dichotomy: Both Mama Bichema and Kadada are defined in relation to kinship (mother-daughter), to men (wife; girlfriend), and reproduction. In a sense they both also depend on men/boys

for their well being. As such, they are not very different from the female characters in the previous plays, which show that life is about finding and keeping a man. Even for a girl as young as Kadada, this is what life is about, which is evident in scene 2, where Kadada suggests to her boyfriend that she should stop school and come and live with him. The dialog from this scene, as illustrated above, reflects upon how children learn from grown-ups about how they should conduct their lives. To take this to its extreme, the girl gives away her body and in return she expects the boy to give her presents. From this perspective, girls/women will always be dependent on men, and consequently are always in a potential situation for harassment. At the same time, men know that if they stop giving presents or having anything to offer, the girls/women might leave them. Seen from the viewpoint of prestige, men's/boy's worth is tied to material resources, while girls/women are reduced to objects of male prestige.

Mama Bichema is apparently a housewife and is depicted as a mother. She is left alone with the responsibility for their daughter, but she fails. Bichema's husband is not only portrayed as the breadwinner and a businessman (on a working trip to Nairobi), but his actions as a father are also for the social good. In the end, it is the male characters, the father and the uncle, who try to fix the situation. The father's actions represent a plot development that reverses the play, which saves Kadada from total misery that could have even ended in suicide (according to her father). *"She had been refused from each side and had nobody to help her, which could make her commit suicide because the society had isolated her. The same thing happened near our home area. A female student became pregnant and was chased away from home and school. She took 12 chloroquine tablets and passed away"* (female secretary #4).

Traditions, customs, and change

The respondents' statements show that audiences draw upon their own experiences in interpreting the plays, which indicates a high level of identification with the characters and situations. They also generalize and elevate the discussion from the events within the plays to more overarching issues in society. In this play, the plot brings out a discussion of values and beliefs regarding the upbringing of children, in particular the female child. A central frame of reference or interpretation is the intersection between tradition and modernity, reflecting the social changes the society is undergoing. *"I think this is an issue from the past; it was a very bad thing for a daughter to become pregnant before she married. Such a lady in our tribe was drawn into sea to drown. Customs and traditions directed that way; if you got pregnant outside marriage you were drowned in the sea and that was the end of you. It was a very shameful thing for the family, which would be regarded as contaminated and not accepted in our African culture"* (female secretary #2). *"According to the play, I think it was ignorance. Of course, according to our African traditions a daughter was not supposed to become pregnant, but things*

have changed. We go with time. These days a parent may decide to let her daughter abort if she becomes pregnant so she can continue with her studies or whatever she is doing; these are changes in the society, it is not like in the past when a girl was not allowed to talk to a boy. Therefore, I think it was not right to chase away that girl” (female secretary #1).

In the second part of the play (not shown to the respondents), Kadada’s father went to talk with Sikumbili, whom finally admits responsibility. Kadada is also allowed to continue school, and the play ends with everybody celebrating the baby. The ending strengthens a liberal element in regard to Kadada’s situation and entails a dynamic view of the world; the girl is allowed to stay at home, continue with her studies and the boy has to take responsibility. Yet, the play is pulled in another direction by the way the events unfold (narrative strategy). One interpretation of Mama Bichema’s character might be that a woman is good for nothing, which encourages a view that a man is the one who knows and is able to run things. As one of the participants noted: *“I noticed that men deserve to regard us (women) as brainless creatures, because that girl became pregnant and her mother chased her away. Where should she go? She had nowhere to go. But then, the father came back home, and he said ‘bring my daughter here. It would have been better if the mother had let her daughter stay at home; she could have counseled her and maybe changed her behavior. Therefore, a woman’s decision sometimes makes her be regarded as a person who doesn’t use her brain”* (female secretary #3). In other words, the narrative strategy strengthens a belief that men are better suited to be social coordinators and decision-makers, which makes rational the order of human relations that supports a male dominant ideology. Therefore, the play can be seen to reassure the audience regarding traditional values that reflect and sustain a patriarchal ideology, and thereby presents a conservative force.

8.5 The rhetoric of the country and the city continues

The following play is a continuation of the discourse about the country and the city, and can be read as a warning for girls wanting to escape the hardship of village life in favor of the city. *“When we watched it, we saw how house girls are oppressed. If a girl watches this play in a rural area, I don’t think she would dare to come to town to look for problems”* (house girl #2). Most Swahili plays are concerned with the city and urban life or people who are coming from rural areas to the city. In some plays, going back to the country is suggested as a solution to the hard realities of urban life (Lange 2002; 111). The country-city contrast is an important rhetorical device in handling the contradictions and moral concerns of the city and modern ways, often ending up with an idealized picture of the country, or at least village girls. As such, it is not uncommon for the plays to carry elements from popular culture in the socialist area in which the authorities used popular

culture to campaign for the *ujamaa* policy and socialism, which favored rural areas and idealized village life (cf. Chapter 1.3).

In the following play, three siblings living together hire a house girl who has just arrived from the country. In particular, the two youngest ones make fun of her country-bumpkin background, but the sympathy lies with the village girl. According to Lange (2002; 112), this is a common feature in Swahili plays in which the urban characters mistreat the newcomer with abusive language related to their country background.

The house girl (V)

The main conflict evolving in this play is between a rural girl, Waridi, who has come to Dar es Salaam to work as a house girl, and her employers, consisting of two brothers and a sister living together. Bishanga is the older brother, Rich the younger brother, and Aisha is the sister. The play focuses on the harassment the siblings expose upon the rural girl. The relationship between Aisha and Waridi is foregrounded in the play, which seems to be rooted in a modern/traditional conflict. A tension that is more in the background is one that evolves between the two brothers and the sister based on gender.

In the introduction, Waridi has just arrived in town and she has been told to go to Bishanga's house. Aisha and Rich show a strong patronizing attitude toward the rural girl. The sister is particularly mean, using every opportunity to insult and laugh at Waridi. She makes fun of her home, her looks (nails, hair, and clothes), and her way of speaking:

Rich: But the girl herself is saying she comes from strange places.
Aisha: She should cut her nails.
Bishanga: Let me see! Oh, she has been painting them.
Aisha: Ah! A bush girl!

Beneath the surface there is another battle going on, between Aisha and her brothers. Aisha used to be the 'oppressed one', the one who had to do most of the housework, but she is not comfortable with that situation. She therefore asked her brothers to help out in the kitchen. At the end of scene 1, the brothers were left alone for a moment and started to discuss Aisha's behavior:

Rich: Ah! At last. This woman is very problematic, she asked me to cook?
Oh! Some people are very strange.
Bishanga: Ah! My young sister has been asking me to cook? This is dangerous. I was about to slap her. She is lucky to get an assistant.

The brothers' reaction in this dialog shows that Aisha is challenging some gender boundaries. Traditionally, a woman's place is in the kitchen. A man doesn't want

to be associated with that kind of female work, which would lower his status as a man. Furthermore, the last statement indicates that by breaking down the female and male spheres of activity, the brothers felt threatened by giving up some control or male power. Bishanga almost hit his sister in order to maintain control of his position. As can be read between the lines, the brothers are happy to hire a house girl in an attempt to solve the conflict that smolders beneath the surface.

In scene 2, age comes into play in an internal ranking between the siblings. We learn that the oldest brother is the head of the family and in charge of making the rules. All the three siblings have a need to maintain their position, but Bishanga corrects his siblings:

Bishanga: This is my home place.
 Aisha: Our home place.
 Bishanga: These are all younger than I am... Your home place with whom? My home place.
 Rich: Are you saying it is your home place because you are older?
 Bishanga: Yes.
 Aisha: It is our home place, let us be realistic brother.

The dialog shows that age intervenes along with gender, together with a modern/traditional dimension, in a hierarchy of prestige. Age can be seen as a factor that establishes a rank between the brothers. The oldest brother takes precedence over the younger one (age), the brothers before the sister (gender), and lowest on the ranking latter is the rural girl (age, gender, traditional, and social position or class). Coming from a rural area is associated by being poor, and for women to be traditional, obedient, and inferior. This assumption explains Rich and Aisha's behavior. Instead of standing up for themselves, they take their frustrations out on the weakest person. In the continuance of scene 2, the younger siblings are firing away; this makes the house girl's conditions even worse:

Bishanga: And then, I don't want to see you in the living room. I, Rich or Aisha will put on the radio and TV. When we are eating, you will eat in the kitchen; you are not supposed to come to the dining table. Heh! You will obey Rich or Aisha's commands; you shouldn't come here...

Aisha: Let me add something! If you are asked to come to the living room, you should not sit on the coach; you have to sit on the floor, okay? You are likely to dirty here. Do you understand? Okay! Go on!

Bishanga: And also toilets.
 Aisha: She doesn't know what toilets mean! Latrines. (laughter)
 Bishanga: Okay, you should not use those latrines inside, you will use the latrines outside.
 Rich: We will be getting important visitors here! If they find her sitting here, they will think we are dirty like her, is it clear...?

In scene 3 and 4, Aisha and Rich's harassment of the house girl is further elaborated on. These are minor events in the sense that they do not lead to a change of state, rather a continuance of the oppression. In scene 3, Aisha misuses her

position and harasses the house girl. As seen in the dialog below, Aisha orders the house girl around, degrades her, makes her kneel, and beats her without reason.

Aisha: Do you think you are very clever? Stop that, stop, put it off and follow me here! I will give you some exercise, then you will learn ... Okay, kneel down... kneel down; raise up your hands; up ... up... do like this! ... Up!
 Waridi: I am tired!
 Aisha: Tired what... raise your hands! Are you despising me?
 Waridi: I feel pain sister.
 Aisha: Raise your hands up, side, down, are you crying? (She beats her); will you do it again?
 Waridi: No sister.
 Aisha: You came her yourself, I never asked you to move from your home place ... Okay, bring me milk ... Where is the glass?

In scene 4, Rich tries to force Waridi into his room in an attempt to sleep with her, but she refuses. He also talks down at her. After being rejected sexually Rich shouts at her: *“Go away to do your job, you came here few days ago and you are acting as a town girl! ... A bush girl ... we just received you here few days ago!”* From this reaction it seems that Rich expected the rural girl to have sex with him, because she is assumed to be more inferior and obedient than town girls, who are portrayed as more liberated and aware of their rights.

The play ends with Waridi being tired of all the insults and wanting to quit. She goes to the eldest brother and tells her story. He gets angry with his siblings, who treat the girl like a “camel,” and decides to send the girl back home. Bishanga also assigns all the work around the house to his younger siblings, which can be seen as a lesson for mistreating and oppressing the rural girl. Aisha has to go back to do all the housework while Rich has to take care of things outside, such as feeding the chicken and cows.

Gender, class, or country style

All the main characters carry the story forward, but most influential for the course of events is the interaction between Waridi and Aisha. The play reflects the fact that it is not only males who harass females, but females who also harass their fellow women. The harassment is not only based on her low status as a house girl, but is also reinforced because the house girl is a traditional girl from a rural area. Much as in the first play, the modern town girl, as represented by the sister, uses a traditional/modern dimension as an internal ranking factor between her and the house girl in an attempt to elevate herself as the better one. She insults and degrades the rural girl by calling her a bush girl, dirty, and so on. The events stand in relation to the house girl’s well being, a situation that creates sympathy for the house girl throughout the play.

The message of the play seems to be clear: *“There are some well-off persons, when they see you just coming from the village they want to make you whatever they want, a concubine or a slave! If you are better off, it is not good to oppress your fellow human beings, but you have to try to find means to help her. That girl left the village because she had problems, her parents failed to accommodate her problems”* (house girl #1). *“Employers should not oppress their employees. They should not isolate their house servants, but regard them as family or their children; not forbid her to sit on the coach. If they find her dirty, give her water and a dress to change into. Nobody wants to be dirty. She is also a human being”* (house girl #2). *“I can say the play was well constructed, because this is happening in our society. If I was oppressing my house girl and happened to watch such a play, I think I would change myself”* (barmaid #1). From these statements, the play not only presents a warning for girls wanting to escape the hardship of village life, but involves a recognition of oppressed positions that invokes resistance to the way house girls are treated.

In contrast to the oppressed female characters in the other plays, Waridi makes a liberating move towards the end. She refuses to put up with the harassment and decides to leave, which can be seen as an example for others to follow. In other words, the play contains plot and character development that reverses the course of events, and thereby promotes a dynamic view of the world. However, the progressive force is undercut by the fact that going back home does not necessarily represent a promise of a better future. It can be assumed that she left home to seek a better life. Yet, it is implicit in the narrative that returning to the village is better than the harassment she has been exposed to. *“A girl being oppressed like this one may start roaming in the city looking for a man. She may get pregnant or a disease. Girls in such situations should not look for immediate solutions, but tolerate and seek advice from their friends and if she fails, it is better to look for another kind of job or go back to the village”* (house girl #3).

Unlike in the other plays, it is one of the characters, the elder brother, who takes on the role of advisor and evaluates the situation. Embedded in his reaction is a moral judgment of the situation, which helps to establish Waridi's story as convincing for the audience. It is implicit in the narrative that she did the right thing. Another implication of the role of the elder brother is that it supports or reaffirms traditional values, such as respecting elders. The siblings' relationships or hierarchy is based on age and gender in which the oldest brother is the authority. The elder brother knows best, the rebellious siblings are wrong. The play provides a set of values that form the background for the siblings' behavior and actions, including what are acceptable modes of behavior and what will be punished. Both Aisha and Rich have to pay the price for mistreating the rural girl. Aisha has to go back to all the housework, which is a reminder that she is still living in a man's world. However, there is no

indication that Aisha or Rich have come to a new awareness or changed their attitude.

One of the respondents noted that the characters were individualistic, which might suggest that the younger siblings were trying to challenge traditional values and authority. A central part of a traditional society is collectivism, in which everybody looks after each other. As such, the play can be viewed as a critical account of modernism (including individualism) following recent economic and social changes. In scene 2, we could see from the dialog between the three siblings how they were trying to establish their positions, and how age, gender and modern/traditional tensions play out in the relationships between the siblings.

Whenever modern and traditional values are in conflict, the plays seem to support traditional values, for instance by putting a modern town girl (sister) against a rural girl (house girl). While Aisha, who represents the modern and more liberated woman, is portrayed in a negative manner as disrespectful, loud, and patronizing, Waridi represents the traditional girl and is portrayed as subordinate, respectful, and timid. This particular way of depicting the female characters is a product of the chain of events, which naturalizes a view that supports traditional values and thereby a male dominated culture. An alternative explanation for Aisha's behavior (other than class exploitation) could be that even Aisha lives in an unjust situation. The brothers take precedence over their sister. She used to do all the housework, cook, and clean for her brothers. Suffering under the restrictions of this pecking order, she manifests a type of horizontal violence and strikes out at her fellow woman for the pettiest reasons (cf. Freire 1997; Chapter 4.4).

8.6 Discussion and conclusion

The first three plays are all concerned with marriage, love, and commitment: Modern/traditional marriage (I), Christmas play; infidelity (II), The gold-digger girl (III). These plays expose gender relations and conflicts between husbands and wives or between fiancées in the relationship between the sexes. The last two plays are oriented towards kinship. The way you bring up a child (IV) centers on a mother-daughter relationship, while the central characters in the last play consist of three siblings and a house girl. Discussions of everyday problems constitute an important aspect of these plays. The conflicts displayed are value-oriented rather than social or political, which form the background for a continuous discussion of values, beliefs, and acceptable modes of behavior or ways of life. Similar to Brunsdon's (1981) analysis of the British soap-opera *Crossroad*, I find that the Swahili plays are concerned with the ideology of

personal life and relationships, which introduces the viewer to a particular ideological and moral position regarding gender and kinship.

However, as we have seen through the analysis of the five plays, the discussion is not coherent; there is no simple yes or no answer to whether the plays represent a conservative or liberal social force. Lange (2002; 262) arrives at the same conclusion, which strengthens the results of my own analysis⁵. The inconsistency in the discourse reflects the great economic and social changes that Tanzania is undergoing. The privately owned cultural groups of the 1980s have used the space created by the withdrawal of the state to escape political control and to deal with issues that are of concern to urban people in times of modernization and restructuring of the state. As a result, there has been a move away from the idealization of rural life; however, this development is also filled with contradictions that sometimes support traditional ways and warn against the evils in the city, and sometimes degrade village life.

I could have ended the analysis here, but the uncertainty in the discourse drives me to dig deeper into the narrative strategies to see if there are certain patterns that might give me a more definite answer. The following is a discussion of the different levels of analysis in a systematic manner with the division between story and discourse, and events and existents as major markers. However, the different dimensions in a text are analytical abstractions, which constitute a complex and interrelated web of meanings. Any discussion of the different elements will therefore to a certain degree overlap. The key question is whether the different levels of analysis, narrative strategies, and discursive devices form a coherent structure that may have a particular impact on gender ideology, and thereby privilege certain meanings in the understanding of gender.

Cultural representations, gender, and narrative strategies

The analysis demonstrates that there is a significant pattern between **male and female agents** behind the events. On the one hand, when male agents carry the story forward, their decisions and actions have harmful consequences for female characters. This is most evident in the first two plays, in which the husbands made a series of decisions with a significant impact on the lives of their wives. The wives are left in a disempowered situation with no influence or say regarding their life situation. Even though the husbands' actions might be viewed as morally wrong, these decisions did not result in any consequences for their lives. On the other hand, when female agents take major actions, more often than not, harmful consequences result for other female characters in the

⁵ Lange and I were in Dar es Salaam in the same period of time doing our fieldwork (1997/98). We met a couple of times; however, we never exchanged notes after we returned to Norway. We both came to the same conclusion without knowing details about each others work, which strengthens the validity of the results.

stories (play IV and V). The power of women in action-oriented roles is undermined by the fact that these roles are almost exclusively negative. In contrast to their male counterparts, female agents who are portrayed as acting improperly or violating dominant social norms are nonetheless constrained by them and have to learn to adjust, or suffer the consequences (III, IV, and V). Hence, the plays can be said to provide a limited set of values and norms guiding the lives of women and men that reinforce dominant social beliefs, oppressive structures, and a patriarchal attitude towards women.

In terms of **plot or character development**, the narrative strategies can roughly be described in two ways, depending upon the sex of the agent. In the first two plays with male agents, there is a lack of plot or character development that would reverse the situation or change the characters' behavior. The endings show that oppression and dehumanization of women continues. Hence, these plays can be said to preserve a static view of the world by positioning female characters as victims who adjust to or accept a given reality. Following Freire's (Chapter 4.4) approach, women's liberation is possible because oppression is not a given destiny, but the result of an unjust order. The narrative strategy in these plays can therefore be described as supporting a male dominated order that conserves the cultural status quo. In contrast, the last three plays with female agents who carry the story forward contain character or plot development that reverses the plays. However, the outcome for the construction of gender is similar. As the events evolve, it is a male character that rescues the situation, which undercuts a potential dynamic view of the world from a gender perspective. For example, in Play IV, it is Kadada's father who reverses the play by saving Kadada from misery from her mother's misguided treatment. The only female victim that takes action and leaves harassment behind is the house girl in Play V, but the play still doesn't promise a good future in the end. Again, it is a male character, the elder brother, who intervenes and tries to fix the situation. Men are only portrayed as the victim in one play, and in contrast to most of the female counterparts, this character takes action that changes his life in a positive direction (Play III). From a male's perspective, the play might represent a dynamic view of the world in which problems can be solved or worked on, but from a female's perspective this is not necessarily the case.

Female characters are typically involved in minor events that result from the working-out of major events or kernels. In particular, women are represented as female rivals, often fighting over a man, based upon **internal ranking** rooted in a modern/traditional notion (I, II, III, and IV). The plays show that the main task for a woman is to get and keep a man, and in this respect other women cannot be trusted. This is similar to McRobbie's (1982) observation in her study of the British teenage magazine *Jackie* (c.f. Chapter 2.1). Even for a young girl like Kadada in play 4, life is about finding and keeping a man. She is even willing to

give up schooling in order to live with her boyfriend. In the course of these events a woman's life is defined through emotions and driven by jealousy and possessiveness or devotion. By focusing on romance and emotions the plays can be seen to articulate the centrality of personal life for girls/women.

Moreover, in several plays female characters strike out at their fellow women for the smallest things (I, II, and V). The conflicts that evolve can be seen as driven by self-interest and with harmful effects for the female victims. This type of horizontal violence might reflect upon the unjust or oppressive situation women live in (cf. Chapter 4.4; Freire 1997). By not challenging this unjust order, the plays are likely to reinforce an environment in which women fatalistically accept their situation rather than become aware of their condition that has resulted from economic, social, and political domination.

Gender dichotomies and identity

In reviewing the **portrayal of the characters**, a general pattern evolves in which women are defined in relation to men, sex, or reproduction – as wives, lovers, girlfriends, and mothers - or in kinship roles as sisters and daughters. The female sphere of action is tied to the home or the private sphere and is focused on domestic tasks. Even though men are also defined in relation to women and kinship, in roles such as husbands, fathers, uncles or sons, it is clear that men have other business to attend to and roles to play. The male characters are also portrayed as breadwinners, employees, businessmen, and social coordinators. There is a clear resonance in the material of the masculinity/femininity dichotomy.

In terms of nature/culture, the male characters are tied to culture and wider social coordination, while the female characters are tied to nature and the domestic sphere. There is a definition of sexual differences by drawing boundaries between male and female spheres of action, and by exclusion, entering into the construction of gender identity. By retaining their positions as breadwinners, heads of family, and social coordinators, men retain control over economic, social, and sexual resources. Men reinforce their manhood by controlling the family's resources, their women and children. The plays do not directly state that a woman's role is to be a housewife and to be controlled or that a man should be the breadwinner and take care of broader social roles and coordination. Rather, these kinds of statements are embedded in the implicit meaning of the texts. A conclusion to draw from this is that the subject or viewer position inscribed in the plays might legitimize and reinforce relations of domination by affirming a consensus that doesn't exist.

Another implication of aligning male characters with culture and female characters with nature might be that men are defined by their actions or what

they do, while women are defined in regard to what they are. For example, we have previously seen that there is a strong tendency to define a woman's life through emotions, such as jealousy, possessiveness, or devotion within the code of personal relationships. This might also explain why the 'advisor' appears to be more judgmental of a female agent, focusing upon character traits such as jealousy, while the advisor is more likely to question a male's actions rather than his character.

In terms of **oppositional characters and values**, two distinct couples or oppositions appear; these are between husband and wife and between town woman and rural woman. While the typical husband is portrayed as superior, independent, selfish and disrespectful, the common image of the (traditional) wife is subordinate, dependent, devoted and respectful. This opposition of male/female representations might function as expressions of beliefs and symbolic associations that make the order of human relations that supports a male dominated culture seem sensible and compelling. It sustains rather than questions an unjust order that is tied to a patriarchal structure. The central male characters are portrayed as independent, and by and large their essential nature is to be for themselves, while the female characters are dependent, and typically their essential nature is life or existence for a man. This is in line with Freire's observation of the characteristic relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed working as an obstacle to women's liberation (cf. Chapter 4.4). Lack of confidence and self-deprivation in the oppressed are characteristics that continue to keep women in an inferior position. The oppressors of the plays treat the female characters as if they are good for nothing, which can contribute to convince women of their own worthlessness and make them feel emotionally dependent on their male partners. In this context, the female agent in the gold-digger girl might be read as empowering.

Support for traditional values also finds its expression in the portrayal of the relationship between the modern town woman and the rural or traditional woman, which constitute the two main female representations provided by these plays. The modern girl is described as having more confidence, but any liberal potential is undercut by portraying her as superior, loud, commanding, selfish, and patronizing. In contrast, the traditional woman is presented as inferior, timid, obedient, and insecure. In the female/female antagonism it is the town women who oppress the traditional women. For instance, in the first play the rural girl is mocked for no reason; she is even attacked for not doing dishes right. In the second play, Tulasi's mistress asserts her social position above his wife. In both cases the modern women harass traditional women based on a modern/traditional notion in which the former assigns prestige over the latter. This is reflected in the description of town women as beautiful whereas rural women are portrayed as primitive and dirty.

In the relationship between modern and traditional women, all sympathy lies with the traditional women or rural girls from the point of view that relates to their well being (I, II, V), a perception that was also reflected in the respondents' reactions. As a consequence of setting up these two particular representations of women against each other, the plays support traditional values that sustain a male dominated ideology and cultural status quo. This view leaves no viable alternatives to the obedient and timid representation of womanhood. As such, this particular narrative invention can be seen as an obstacle for gender transformation. It exposes strong limitations in themes, sequencing, and interactions that mediate the relationships between as well as within the genders. None of the respondents ever attacked the stereotypical oppositions used in the plays; rather, they embraced the good female characters (e.g. rural wife, rural house girl) instead of the greedy and selfish city girl.

Even though town women are presented as oppressive in their relationships with traditional women, they also live in a male dominated culture and are oppressed in their relationships with men. In spite of being assigned with more confidence they still depend on men, who takes precedence and restrict their relationships with other women. This is reflected and reproduced in the structure of the plays: A female character is typically involved in minor events, which follow kernels (major events), and behind these major events are usually a male agent. As has already been discussed, the type of violence and harassment between women might reflect on the unjust order or oppressive reality women live in and cannot fully comprehend. Also, by representing women as enemies, the plays undercut a feminist position in which women would stand together.

In an attempt to generalize from the narrative patterns that emerge, the main impression is that the Swahili plays symbolize a conservative social force, which might work as a barrier in the cultural struggle of gender transformation. The plots consist of a limited set of narrative agents, plot development, and oppositional characters with more or less fixed features and spheres of action, which generates a limited set of themes, interactions, and definitions of femininity. The sequencing of events strengthens an image of men as action-oriented and as better suited than women to be social coordinators and decision-makers. Repeatedly, we have seen how female characters stand on the periphery without being able to influence their situation and excluded from wider social coordination. Rather than exposing the audience to a hope that the female characters might find a new life or new ways of living, women are portrayed as victims of other people's actions or as evil offenders. The endings seldom symbolize progress in which women emerge as free and productive subjects with a conscious self and able to take part in the transformation of their society. The support of traditional values finds its expression in the portrayal of husband

versus wife, as well as in the relationship between the modern town woman versus the traditional woman. As a consequence, the structure of the plays provides the viewer a particular ideological and moral position that mediates the relationship between the genders and provides norms for everybody's lives. As we have seen, when women violate the dominant social norms, they are still constrained by these norms, or they have to suffer the consequences of violating them. In short, the plays reinforce rather than challenge dominant social beliefs, oppressive structures, and patriarchal attitudes towards women.

Cultural resistance, reception, and social transformation

In spite of providing gender representations that are overtly patriarchal, the Swahili plays are popular; especially among grassroots women (cf. Chapter 5.3). A reason for the popularity of the plays might be that they have a reassuring function for the audience. Tanzanian society is undergoing major changes in its political- and economic framework as a result of external and internal pressure and the struggle towards development. These changes have also put a lot of pressure on the country's culture, in which traditional values are in danger of losing ground in favor of more modern values and ways of life. In a rapidly changing world, what is old and known might be perceived as safe and comforting. Freedom or change also demands a sense of responsibility; all struggles require some kind of risk, burden, and disruption of order, which can hamper women (and men) from participating in women's emancipation. As Freire (1997; 18) puts it, a person who is fearful of freedom takes refuge in an attempt to achieve security, which he or she prefers to the risks of liberty. In this light, the Swahili plays can be seen to provide audiences with a symbolic shelter from outside changes and pressures.

An alternative explanation for the popularity of the plays is the opportunity they offer for oppositional readings and cultural resistance. The reception of the plays revealed that a liberal message is conveyed with the recognition of oppressive relations, which might be more empowering than politically correct plays. The use of **point of view** helps to identify oppressed positions, which gives audiences an opportunity for symbolic acknowledgment of their own social subordination, which in turn provides elements of cultural resistance (cf. Ang & Hermes 1996; 329). The narrative events stand in relation to the female victim's well being. For instance, in the first play the events stand in relation to the rural wife's suffering, which creates sympathy on her behalf. The second play focuses on how the husbands' behavior affects the wives well being. This discursive device creates identification and sympathy for the wives throughout the play. The reception interviews also show that women (and men) appear to embrace the 'good' female characters, e.g. they identified with wives who were abused and oppressed.

Furthermore, the plays provide an opportunity for a reexamination of the set of values forming the background against which the protagonists act by detailing choice, complexity, and ambiguity. The plays include an **interpretative device** mediated by an advisor, which challenges the audience to reexamine dominant values and invites different interpretations by highlighting different choices, values, and ways of living. The discussion sequence between the agent and a friend or relative always follow a kernel event that has given rise to a nod, which underscores the fact that the protagonist has a choice in his or her actions. The adviser functions as an interpreter of the situation based upon value judgments. He or she not only informs the protagonist how to act in a specific matter, but challenges the audience to think through values, behavior, right and wrong. For instance, in Play II, the discussion between Sikumbili and his friend Kitunguu invites the viewers to rethink dominant cultural values and beliefs that mediate the relationship between husband and wife, including the concepts of love and marriage organization. Kitunguu tells Sikumbili that he should stay home with his wife, which represents love. Even though the characters do not seem to change due to what happens to them in the problem-solving process, which could limit the play's progressive function, the reception interviews show that the point is getting across to the audience.

Although the use of an advisor sometimes invites the viewer to contest dominant cultural assumptions, it has mixed ideological implications for gender. On the one hand, when the advisor relates to a male, he seems to be less judgmental of his character and more questioning of his actions (I and II). The advisor questions the actions and set of values that form the background for these acts; these values often favor the victims (mostly women). On the other hand, when the agent is a female, the advisor leaves little doubt about her negative characteristics. The advisor makes sure that Waridi (III), Mama Bichema (IV), and Aisha (V) are all indisputably perceived as undesirable characters. Moreover, the advisor is usually a male. Whereas males advice other males, females who advise each other are rare. This strengthens the impression of lack of female bounding.

A third explanation for the popularity of the Swahili plays, which does not preclude their functions in reassuring the audience of traditional values or cultural resistance against dominant (gender) ideology, is that they create shared cultural meanings. This is not in the sense that they provide solid answers as to how to handle the problems and tensions urban dwellers experience in their everyday lives, but as a shared symbolic space in which people can identify and negotiate the contradictions they encounter in a changing society and culture. As such, the Swahili plays have an integrating effect and fill an 'empty space' left by the withdrawal of the state and its cultural policy of *ujamaa*. The introduction of

multiparties represented the end for CCM's cultural policy advocating for socialism, and various national symbols had to be separated from the party. Little is left of the formal nationalist strategies that forged a dialectic relationship between the CCM and the nation with rhetoric, symbols, and the school system (Lange 2002; 289). Nonetheless, the privately owned cultural troupes are partly a continuation of and partly in opposition to the national troupes of the 1960s and 1970s. As Lange argues (*ibid.*), the role of the cultural troupes "in 'the invention of tradition' and in the 'imagining of the nation' is today more central for fostering national identity and for nation building from below than what the weakened state apparatus and the schizophrenic elite can offer." With the introduction of television, the Swahili plays are reaching new audiences, including the middle class, cutting across ethnicity, religion, and gender boundaries. As my analysis has shown, the Swahili plays have a high degree of identification among a diverse audience, and can therefore more easily contribute to the production of shared meanings than formal nationalism (*cf.* Eriksen 1993).

All in all, the Swahili plays address conflicts and negotiations that arise when urban dwellers are pulled between modern and traditional discourses. The country's social and economic changes have prompted public anxieties, especially concerning moral values in society, which intensifies the focus on contrast, women and sexuality (*cf.* Comaroff and Comaroff 1993). Masculinity and femininity emerge through binary oppositions – as a play of difference – between the sexes. The juxtaposition between the innocent rural girl, representing traditional values, and the greedy urban girlfriend, representing modern evils like selfishness and disregard for traditional obligations, shows that the Swahili plays present the world through gendered spectacles. However, the ambiguity and complexity of the plots reflects upon instability in culture, which leaves a space for redefining the meaning of gender and cultural identities. In so far as the plays help viewers in perceiving own personal or social reality, they can be seen to carry empowering elements, which allows the possibility of resistance against the dominant culture. The reception interviews revealed a high level of identification in which the audience related the plays to their own struggles in times of cultural transformation. Hence, I have characterized the construction of a gender discourse in these plays as having multiple ideological positions rather than singular ideological meanings, which affect the ways audiences take up positions inscribed in the media discourse. This is in line with feminist post-structuralism, which emphasizes a fragmented and multiple discourse (and identities) rather than a coherent and homogeneous discourse. Furthermore, it shows that feminist post-structuralism is relevant in a development context, particularly in reflecting instability in a culture strained by social and economic changes and outside pressures.

CHAPTER NINE

The construction of gender and cultural critique; The way ahead

As I stated in the introduction to this thesis, the purpose of this dissertation is to provide insights into the role of the media in the cultural struggle for gender transformation against the backdrop of the political and economic changes that have been taking place in Tanzania. A central aspect in this thesis has been the movement from socialist to capitalist principles, which has been shown to promote conflicts between traditional and modern values and ways of life that also affect notions and ideas of gender. Tanzania's new environment represents both new opportunities and risks for women's liberation on both a collective and an individual level. On the one hand, women have gained a greater level of independence since their entry into the economy with a force that was unthinkable just two decades ago. On the other hand, women are blamed for 'everything' that goes wrong when traditional values clash with modern values and lifestyles. The media has become an important cultural agent in this new landscape and an arena for conflicts and contestation. A key issue in this study has been how the media comes to grips with the problems and tensions that arise in the process of modernization.

In line with the research aims and issues in this thesis, it has been my ambition to produce a cultural critique that contributes to a better understanding of the construction of gender, relations of power, and exclusion in the media discourse. The British cultural studies tradition has been an important influence in producing a feminist media critique. In particular, Hall's (1973) model has stimulated the main issues in this study, which contain questions of how gender representations are manifested in the media discourse and how the media position the female subject as being responsible for engendering positions for its audiences (c.f. Chapter 1.1). Hall provided a communication model where the construction of meaning is framed between its producers and audiences based upon a continuous form of negotiation (c.f. Chapter 2.2). The tensions and contradictions in the production were acknowledged and reverberate in media texts, which can no longer be seen as a consistent entity carrying singular meaning. Texts were characterized as 'polysemic', that is, carrying contradictory, divided, and plural meanings. The possibility of plural meanings has raised the issue of whether a media text can be considered empowering in so far as it offers female audiences an opportunity for symbolic acknowledgement of their own social subordination (Ang & Hermes 1996; 329). Hence, a central issue in this study has been if the media discourse in Tanzania can be understood to present an openness and complexity that invites the recognition of oppressed positions,

and thereby triggers cultural resistance against the prevailing gender ideology that continues to suppress women.

Feminist post-structuralism provides a focus on the media as a site of conflict and contestation in which the definition of gender is subjected to a continuous discursive struggle and negotiation (c.f. Chapter 2.3). The emphasis on the multiplicity of discourse and contradictions in the production of meaning has been an important element in this study, as it illuminates how an oppositional discourse of gender can emerge in the context of a male-dominated culture. Consequently, I have focused on the flexibility of the media discourse, and the conflicts and contradictions within it, including challenging definitions of gender in addition to dominant representations. Using this approach, women's/gender NGOs can be seen to challenge established cultural codes and prevailing definitions of women, which might contribute to redefine women's role and status in society. Following in the wake of political liberalization, the advocacy women's organizations have created a new space that didn't previously exist under the one-party system. A central issue in this study has been how gender is negotiated in the interactions among media institutions, women's/gender organizations, and the state representing different interests and ideologies.

In an attempt to understand how gender is presented and confronted in an urban African city that is rapidly becoming part of a globalized world and where life has changed dramatically, I have found it important to focus on both public and popular discourses. In addition to news, I have chosen to concentrate on local Tanzanian television productions, known as Swahili plays. While news operates in the public sphere, generating themes of public interest (political and social phenomena), Swahili plays engage audiences in the context of everyday life, which is important in the development of individual identities and in mediating between individuals and culture. Gender relations are frequently used in these plays to express condensed urban tensions and problems that arise between modern and traditional discourses. Additionally, I have directed attention to the news coverage of a prominent women's non-governmental organization that is at the forefront of women's struggle for liberation in Tanzania. The sample covered a ground-breaking event that was conducted by the Tanzanian Media Women Association (TAMWA), which reflects my interest in illuminating alternative definitions of gender. Alternative and perhaps challenging definitions of gender as presented in the mass media may allow for new thoughts, perceptions, and actions in audiences.

Finally, the nature of this study has turned my attention to interpretative forms of inquires that can account for contradictions in the construction of gender and the ambiguous process of meaning production (c.f. Chapter 3.1). I have found narrative analysis as a useful starting point for an ideologically oriented analysis.

Narrative analysis is based upon a notion that every story is told by ‘someone’, and in particular ways, and at the other end, entails ‘someone’ to whom and for whose benefit the story is told (Allen 1992; 113). This is in harmony with an important assumption in this thesis, which is the idea that the construction of a gender discourse embodies particular interests that benefit certain groups and thereby channels or restricts the development of society. I have developed a model based upon Chatman’s narrative grid model (1978), in which the distinction between story and discourse is central. This distinction made clear that there are different levels in texts that produce variable and contradictory meanings of gender. I have built into this model a well-known gender dichotomy based upon the following oppositions: Nature versus culture; domestic versus public sphere; and self-interest versus social good (c.f. Chapter 3.3). In sum, the model highlights issues of gender representations and positioning of the female subject in the media discourse, the marking of boundaries, and exclusion.

The following is a summary of the results of the analyses in this thesis (9.1). The summary is based on the main research topics that have arisen throughout this thesis, and is divided into four parts, rather than presenting the analyses chronologically (Chapter 5-8). In the first part, I am concerned with how gender representations have been embedded in the discourse – in news conventions and narratives – focusing on gender, power, and exclusion, with an eye to how genre affects the construction of gender. The second part focuses on the media as a cultural arena for contestation and the conflicts and negotiations arising in the process of modernization. The intersection between development, empowerment and gender transformation is the main focus in the third part of the summary. Whether women’s/gender NGOs challenge prevailing definitions and status of women, which in turn might channel development in the interest of women and children, is a central issue in this discussion. Finally, I take up issues related to the text-viewer relationship. A central issue has been to illuminate how media use and reading strategies entail empowering elements for women (and men) that can be the seeds for change in the cultural struggle of gender transformation.

Subsequently, I discuss the implications of post-structuralism in articulating a cultural critique (9.2). Next, I reflect on the consequences of research design and methodology for generalizing the results, and point out possibilities and limitations with an eye to the way ahead (9.3). Finally, this thesis ends with a concluding comment centering upon the political and economic context in which these texts are produced, followed by some concrete suggestions for enabling a symbolic environment for gender transformation (9.4).

9.1 Summary

The main finding in this thesis is that the dominant discourse of gender in both news and plays represents a conservative social force, which might work as a barrier in the cultural struggle of gender transformation. Nonetheless, the analyses showed that there are elements that contest dominant definitions of gender, which allow for redefining the meaning of gender and feminine identities. The contradictions in the construction of gender were particularly evident when analyzing the different levels in texts by using the distinction between story (thematic) and discourse (structure). While story is occupied with what happens to whom, discourse is how the story is told. In analyzing the texts, I used the elements from the model developed in Chapter 3.3, which linked gender to events, agents and existents, and to spheres of action. Overall, these elements gave a good picture of the prevailing definitions of women, positioning of women in the discourse and relations of power, and exclusion.

I The construction of gender, power and exclusion

How gender representations are manifested in news conventions and narratives and the ways the media positions the female subject, both of which contribute to definitions of femininity, have been central issues in this study. In spite of different formats and purposes, news and Swahili plays share many comparable features in the construction of gender, which contribute to similar definitions of femininity. The analyses gave a firm impression that both the majority of the news articles and the Swahili plays echoed the **gender dichotomy** by defining women in association with nature - defined in relational terms to men, sex, and reproduction, which have their significance in the private or domestic sphere. There was a marking of sexual difference by drawing boundaries between male and female spheres of action, and by exclusion, entering into the construction of gender identity mediated through a system of prestige. The sphere of social activity predominantly associated with men encompasses the sphere predominantly associated with women, and is for that reason culturally accorded higher value. By keeping their position as social coordinators men maintain control over economic, social, and even sexual resources. Men reinforce their manhood by controlling the resources at every level from the household to the national economy. In this respect, the media is likely to sustain women's low status by 'keeping' them outside the areas of decision-making, social coordination, and resource priorities, thereby contributing to exclude women from taking an active part in the management of society and development.

The tendency to align men with culture and women with nature is a universal feature in cultural thought, which reverberated in the media texts included in this thesis, by portraying men in terms of agents and women as existents. By using the same analytical model in regard to both news and plays it is clear that the

dominant representation of women is as **existents**, which assign women a position on the outskirts of events, excluded from wider social coordination. In both news and plays there were few representations of women as agents making influential decisions that would improve their lives or acting out of the social good on behalf of society. When women were portrayed as **agents**, they were likely to be portrayed as acting out of self-interest, often with a negative impact on other females. In other words, the analyses illustrated that the gender dichotomy and the structure in media texts are interrelated elements. Media texts are not only products of the gender dichotomy, as part of a wider cultural context, but at the same time feed back into the same dichotomy and thereby contribute to sustaining the cultural status quo.

A societal discourse of gender is reflected and reproduced in the media not only with content, but in the ways of telling a story or discourse in a narrow sense (c.f. Chapter 3.3). According to Chatman (1978), discourse is said to ‘state’ the story. These statements were of two kinds – process and stasis – according to whether someone did something or somebody simply existed in a story. By portraying male characters in terms of process statements, men were defined by their actions leading up to an event, and were thereby associated with the sphere of wider social coordination. Likewise, by depicting female characters in relation to a stasis statement, and thereby in the form of exposing or presenting, women occupy the sub-units that are being coordinated. Hence, the dominant representation of women as existents limits or generates specific **themes**, kinds of **interactions**, and ways of defining **femininity**. It has produced a set of themes in which women tend to be defined in relation to men, sex, and reproduction:

Table 9.1 Dominant representations of women

NEWS	SWAHILI PLAYS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • traditional nurturing roles as mothers • passive receivers of development efforts • victims of sexual harassment and abuse • prostitutes or other sexual relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • housewives, mothers and daughters • receivers of goods • victims of harassment • lovers or mistresses

The analysis in Chapter 6 demonstrated that in no other way were women more visible in the news discourse than in relation to gender violence and sexual abuse. These topics constituted more than one-third of the articles. Together with articles focusing on love/sex relationships, these two categories represented more than half of the news flow concerning women or girls. In other words, the majority of the articles positioned women in some kind of relationship with men, which was of a violent or sexual character (voluntarily or by force). Additionally, the gender relations that were depicted were typically of an intimate character, and therefore associated with the private or domestic sphere of action. Even

when news stories were probably meant to empower women, traditional news conventions undercut the thematic that supported a sympathetic feminist discourse. Women were most likely to be portrayed as victims of men's actions, which reduced women to objects of male pleasure, or as victims of sex and violence in order to increase newspaper sales. This subject positioning could contribute to a disempowering position for women as being valued lower than men in a social context. This in turn hinders women's ability to contribute to the development of society.

The analysis in Chapter 8 revealed that the narrative strategies in the Swahili plays strengthened a belief in men as action-oriented, better suited as social coordinators, and decision-makers. The female characters were typically positioned as victims of other people's actions. Lack of plot or character development strengthened a male-dominated order that conserved the cultural status quo. By portraying women as people who adjust or accept a given reality, the plays undercut the female characters' hope for change or the promise of a new way of living. When female characters (agents) didn't follow the men's guidelines and violated dominant social beliefs, they were nonetheless constrained by them and had to learn to adjust or suffer the consequences. In contrast, male characters (agents) who were seen to act improperly or immorally experienced no negative consequences as a result. Therefore, the plays can be said to provide a limited set of values and norms to guide the lives of women and men that reinforce dominant social beliefs, oppressive structures, and a patriarchal attitude towards women.

The tendency to align women with nature, which has its significance in the private or domestic sphere, limits the possibilities of interactions between as well as within the genders (in both news and Swahili plays):

- relationships between men and women tend to be of a sexual or intimate character
- relationships between the genders are based upon hierarchy rather than equality, which gives rise to gender violence and harassment
- relationships between women tend to be based on their relations with men, and not independent from men, resulting in internal ranking, conflicts, and violence between women

The specific themes and interactions produce particular ways of defining femininity. Women are regarded according to what they are or character traits, while men are judged according to what they do or their skills. In the Swahili plays there was a strong tendency to define a woman's life through emotions such as jealousy, possessiveness, or devotion within the code of personal relationships. A possible implication of the media's predisposition to define women by what they 'are' and men by what they 'do' is the strengthening of a belief that women are subordinate to men and unfit to take an active part in society and development. For example, a female journalist working in one of Dar

es Salaam's newspapers told me that she, in spite of having a Master's degree in journalism and experience in the field, was being assessed based on her female position rather than her skills. As a result she failed to get promoted to a more responsible position while the male peers that she had trained got promoted and became her bosses.

Furthermore, the dominant representation of women as existents has produced yet another implication. As seen in both news and plays, women were typically involved in minor events, which result when major events, initiated by male agents, are worked out. As a result, when female characters acted on events, other females more often than not suffered harmful consequences. In the Swahili plays, women were depicted as striking out at other women for the smallest things and/or fighting over men. This representation of women as female rivals undercuts a feminist position in which women would stand together. The similarity to representations of women as offenders in the news discourse is striking (Chapter 6), in which it was common to focus on women who harassed other women or children with verbal insults, beatings, and other violent acts. The motives for the aggression were often unclear and seemed to be triggered by minor incidents. In line with Freire (1997), this type of 'horizontal violence' might reflect an unjust 'order' or oppressive situation women live in, which they cannot fully comprehend. While men's hold on women engenders violence in the oppressor, women's vulnerability often leads to a type of violence in which they assault their fellow women for the pettiest reasons. Either way this dehumanizes women. Rather than challenging this order, the media can be seen to strengthen it, at least partly, as a result of drawing on a commercial discourse that tends to use women as instruments for pleasure and entertainment for profit purposes.

All in all, the dominant discourse of gender symbolizes a conservative social force that might work as a barrier in the cultural struggle of gender transformation. Representations of women in the news might legitimize prevailing attitudes towards women, providing a base for generalizations and conclusions. In the Swahili plays, the dominant representations provided a specific set of values and norms that might reinforce existing gender notions and identities. However, as will be discussed, there are elements in the discourse that contest dominant definitions of gender in both news and plays, which might be a source for changing existing attitudes and dominant social beliefs regarding women and their place in society.

Part II The media as a cultural arena for contestation

Tanzania's political and economic reforms have had dramatic consequences for economic, social, and cultural organizations in urban areas. The economic crisis, starting in the mid-1970s has resulted in a remarkable increase in women's contribution to the family economy, which has been followed by a greater level

of autonomy and control in the household. This situation represents new opportunities for women to negotiate gender relations within the family, but also new risks in form of gender antagonism. An important issue, therefore, has been how the mass media comes to grips with the problems and tensions that arise in the process of modernization. The analyses showed that the mass media functioned as an arena for contestation and negotiation by reflecting that women were a force to be reckoned with in the economy and in business. Yet, women were extensively portrayed as a source of moral decay who were blamed for 'everything' that goes wrong in society when modern life styles clash with traditional values and customs. The support, solidarity, and trust among women in the economic sphere (cf. Chapter 1.3) stand in sharp contrast to media images of women as female rivals and selfish people.

Articles concerned with economic issues portrayed women as significant news actors and agents related to a variety of issues, thereby demonstrating women's potential as producers in the national economy. This news coverage can be seen to open a cultural space that might contribute to reformulate female identities associated with culture and status roles - as opposed to nature and reproduction roles. It contests the gender dichotomy where masculinity is associated with men's activities in the public sphere and production, while femininity is linked to women's role in the domestic sphere and reproduction. Furthermore, these articles challenged traditional conceptions of women as dependent on men, and obtaining status through marriage and kinship. The images of women in business reflected that women are no longer totally dependent on men, which paves the way for the negotiation of women's role and status in society. However, a man might perceive women's increasing independence as a threat to their manhood as well as their position as decision-makers. Men's feelings of disempowerment probably contribute to gender antagonism, which is expressed in various ways. In its most brutal form, gender hostility takes shape as violence and sexual abuse towards women and children.

The analyses in this thesis revealed a strong focus on women as a source of moral decay, which stood in sharp contrast to the positive female role models in business. The analysis in Chapter 6 showed that when women were represented as agents, they were more often than not portrayed as acting improperly or violating social norms, which undermined the power of women in action-oriented roles. Among the offenses reported in the news were stealing, drug trafficking, beating and killing, baby abandonment, and not at least prostitution. Representations of women as prostitutes were not only given more attention than any of the other topics within the same category (female offenders), but male customers were absent in the discourse and thereby not made responsible for their actions. The widespread and one-sided portrayal of women as prostitutes can be seen as a result of a male-dominated culture, which consequently

contributing to the restraint and sexual control of women. The analysis also demonstrated that the articles concerned with prostitution drew on a commercial discourse where women were used as instruments of entertainment for profit.

Additionally, the analysis of the news coverage of the TAMWA Symposium in Chapter 7 confirmed that women are blamed for moral decay in society due to the choices they make in the way they dress, as well as their immoral behavior, while men's contribution to this situation was not reported. The focus on women in miniskirts implied links to prostitution, which blended well with an already established commercial discourse, as well as a framework of interpretation of moral decay. The one-sided focus on women resulted in an interpretation that privileged the meaning that women were the ones to blame for moral decay and for misleading men, which in turn implied that women should be held responsible for the increase in rape and sexual abuse. Other recurrent explanations for the increase in rape, sodomy and defilement were the influence of Western television shows, and mental illness. This was supported by the commonly held view that a return to African culture while stopping the imitation of foreign culture would solve the problem. Hence, the possibility that rape and sexual harassment are a question of prevailing gender and power relations in society was eliminated and the topic could be discussed without being a threat to men and their position.

The focus on women as a source of moral decay can be seen as a sign of general distress in the Tanzanian society, as the country is increasingly part of a modern, capitalistic, and open society. In the cultural arena, Tanzania has gone from being almost completely closed off from the outside world to becoming part of a global and commercial culture. The negative effects of globalization and commercialization are seen to affect local media productions, in which sensationalism and increased competition among newspapers (and other mass media) is seen as the major reason why women have become the object of sensational news reporting (Mtambalike 1996; 135). Studies have shown that public anxieties concerning social change tend to be channeled through a focus on contradictions and women's sexuality (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993, Goddard 2000, Stokes 1994). The Comaroffs (1993) suggested that it is "the tendency to embody ambivalence that has made females particularly liable to personify contradictions in troubled times and places in the history of expanding capitalism". In the media's attempts to make sense of a changing and at times threatening world, 'women' appear to be a 'tool' for thinking, as urban dwellers are pulled between modern and traditional discourses. The world appears threatening in at least two ways. First, Tanzanian culture and morality is in a 'free-fall', prompting public distress as Tanzanian society is increasingly subjected to the forces of globalization. The conflicts and tensions arising from this process reverberate in the mass media as can be seen in the reports about

contrasts between Tanzanian and Western culture. Second, men's manhood and position as superiors is threatened by women moving into their territory, which challenges the boundaries between men's and women's spheres of action and identity. The Swahili plays can be seen as a discursive site where actors and producers engage in self-reflection about urban life and the conflicts and tensions that arise in the process of modernization (Lange 1997; 156). Stereotypical images of women and contrasts between the country and the city were recurrently constructed to make sense of a changing world, but in contrast to the idealized versions of country and village life found in the political discourse of the *ujamaa*, these plays don't represent coherent support for official ideology.

The Swahili plays can also be viewed as providing audiences with a symbolic shelter from outside changes and pressures on culture, in which traditional values are in danger of losing ground to modern values and ways of life. The support for traditional values and beliefs found its expression in the portrayal of husband and wife as well as in the relationship between modern town girl and traditional girl. The male/female opposition and associated values sustained rather than questioned the unjust order linked to a patriarchal structure. The modern town woman and the rural traditional woman constituted the two main female representations provided by these plays, which formed a base for internal ranking. In these plays, stereotypical images of the modern urban girl and her representation of the evils of the city such as greed, selfishness, and disregard for tradition were typically juxtaposed against the innocent rural girl and her respect for traditional values. In addition, the point of view stood in relation to how the events affected rural women's well-being, which formed the background for audiences' identifications. The reception interviews also showed that women and men embraced the 'good' female characters rather than the 'bad' female characters. As a consequence of setting up these two particular representations of women against each other, the plays supported traditional values and dominant social beliefs that sustain a male-dominated ideology. In spite of being described as having more confidence, the modern town woman still depends on men, a relationship that took precedence over and restricted her relationships with other women. This was reflected and reproduced in the structure of the plays: the female characters were typically involved in minor events that were the consequence of major events carried out by male agents.

The Swahili plays are likely to entail a high degree of audience involvement, which encouraged identification with characters and situations, the recognition of oppressed positions, and the triggering of personal memories. However, the effect of the plays in the larger scheme of things is highly unpredictable. On the one hand, the plays might work as a hindrance in the struggle to redefine the ways one perceives oneself in terms of gender. On the other hand, the plays give audiences an opportunity to have symbolic acknowledgment of their own social

subordination that could provide elements of cultural resistance. The use of **point of view** helps to identify oppressed positions. For example, in the first two plays, the narrative events stood in relation to the female victims' well-being, which created sympathy with the wives throughout the plays. The reception interviews also showed that female and male audiences identified and opposed the treatment of female characters that experienced abuse and oppression. Also, cultural assumptions were to some extent contested through an **interpretative device** conducted by an 'advisor', which allowed for negotiations and different interpretations in the interaction with symbolic constructions offered by these plays. The 'advisor' invited the viewer to reexamine dominant values by highlighting different choices, values, and ways of living. In turn, this might provide audiences with new understandings of self as well as the surrounding world and one's place in it. Hence, I have characterized the construction of a gender discourse in these plays as carrying multiple ideological positions rather than singular ideological meanings, which affect the ways individual viewers take up positions inscribed in the discourse.

Part III Development, empowerment and gender transformation

It has been stressed in this dissertation that development has to go hand-in-hand with gender transformation in society. An implicit goal in a receiver-oriented approach for development is the empowerment of women by giving them greater control over resources and opportunities to participate in decision-making and the processes influencing their lives (c.f. Chapter 4.2). In the symbolic struggle of gender transformation it is critical that women are visible in the economy, civil society, and the political system, as well as in social sectors such as education and health, which are all significant to development. An issue at stake has been how particular gender constructions and positioning of the female subject in the media discourse serve specific interests, and thereby restricts or channel development of the society. Hence, an important question has been whether the mass media contributes to the replacement of traditional attitudes towards women as subordinate and incapable individuals by exposing gender notions that promote equality and positive attitudes towards women as capable of making a living, making decisions, and participating in all areas of life and society.

The analysis in Chapter 6 showed that the reporting of various events and the debate of themes contributed to making women's lives and efforts visible in the public arena, which can be seen as an indication of an increasing awareness and acknowledgment of women's role in society. The news discourse supported a sympathetic liberal feminism by contesting equal opportunities and access in education and business and by raising awareness regarding the causes of women's health problems, oppression, and underdevelopment. Still, only one of four articles, or less than one article per newspaper copy, were concerned with women and societal issues. This confirms the scanty coverage of issues that link

women's role to society and the public sphere (Shariff 1991; Mtambalike 1996; TGNP 1997; Kayoke 1997). In the realm of 'local' **politics** women were essentially absent, which might reinforce and legitimize a prevailing attitude that women are not fit for politics and decision-making in society. On the contrary, representations of successful female role models in private **businesses** demonstrated that women are able to take action and influence their life situations for the better as well as benefiting society at large. Articles concerned with women in production as well as education drew on a feminist discourse by contesting equal opportunities and access, with the goal of enabling girls and women to participate on an equal footing in education, employment, and in the management of society. Nonetheless, articles concerned with different programs and arrangements that would improve access and conditions for girls in **education** positioned girls as objects of discussion, spoken on behalf of by official sources and experts (mostly males), which undercut a feminist orientation.

Outnumbering representations of women in politics, production, and education altogether is women's relationship to **social and cultural issues**. Among the recurrent themes were pregnancy, motherhood, and health-related issues. These articles supported a feminist discourse by foregrounding issues that are perceived as being of particular concern to women. On the one hand, this coverage contributed to raise awareness of the causes to women's health problems, oppression and underdevelopment, which might help women to identify and overcome problems facing them. On the other hand, women tended to be defined in terms of their role in reproduction, which align women with nature and the domestic sphere. Hence, this coverage didn't challenge the symbolic boundaries between men's and women's spheres of actions and identity. Women remained at the receiver end of the development efforts exposed in these articles, and thereby only visible as objects of development rather than subjects. This had its resonance in the fact that the majority of the sources were men who held posts in the government and other official bodies, local or international organizations.

In spite of the variation in the news coverage of women, some common features appeared which assigned women a particular position in the discourse. There were few representations of women as agents who made influential decisions that would improve their lives or who acted for the social good on behalf of society. When women are persistently portrayed as victims, passive receivers, or even offenders, it implies that women are not able to make influential decisions and take positive action for their own lives, community, or the country as a whole. The dominant representations of women didn't challenge the symbolic boundaries between men's and women's spheres of actions, and thereby did not contesting men's position in society – as social coordinators, leaders, and decision-makers. As a result, women might be excluded from wider social

coordination and taking an active part in society, thereby channeling development in the interest of a male-dominated society.

However, the news coverage of **women's/gender NGOs** contested the dominant discourse of gender, which signaled that these groups are an important force in the struggle over the meaning of gender. This coverage presented alternative representations of women, as agents acting upon events within the public sphere, driven by a motivation for the social good, with the intention to improve the conditions for women and children. Women were defined by status or role categories associated with culture, as social coordinators participating in public life. In this respect, the newspapers can be said to have acted as a cultural agent in the struggle over the definition and status of women, which might channel development to incorporate women as subjects and benefit the interests of women and children. Articles concerned with women's/gender NGOs made up just 7 percent of the total amount of articles, but constituted a considerable amount of the articles categorized under the broader 'heading' of society and women's issues (30 percent). Hence, I argue that women's/gender NGOs hold a key role in making women's/gender issues visible in society.

The analysis of the **TAMWA symposium** demonstrated that newspapers took an active role in defining the event, by supporting the objectives of the Symposium on Gender Violence and Sexual Abuse. Taken as a whole, the news media represented a wider cultural space for alternative images of women, which might allow for new thoughts, perceptions, and actions. The analysis revealed that newspapers drew upon TAMWA as an important source, which was significant not only for the approval of the organization's objectives but also represented a vital moment in a women's movement. The discourse contested the boundaries between male and female identities and spheres of action by portraying women as actors in the public sphere and as social coordinators, thereby defining them in terms of role categories aligned with culture. This news coverage implicitly embodied ideas and values that challenge traditional beliefs of women as subordinate, emotional, and unable to participate in public debate and decision-making. In other words, the analysis showed that TAMWA to a certain extent has been able to use the mass media to create a space for women's empowerment in the struggle for women's liberation. Hence, the analysis supports the view that a women's movement, spearheaded by NGOs, challenges established cultural codes and representations (c.f. Chapter 4.3).

The analysis also demonstrated that the interaction between TAMWA, Members of Parliament (MPs), and journalists representing different institutional and personal interests played an important role in the struggle over the meaning of gender. This became clear when following the different 'phases' of the news coverage of the TAMWA Symposium. In the first phase, the articles focusing

upon WHAT the debate was about were characterized by unambiguous support for TAMWA's efforts, which gave legitimacy to the issue of gender violence and sexual abuse in the struggle for women's rights. TAMWA was the major source in these articles and appeared as the agent that had made this event possible. However, after the initial phase, which occurred before or on the day of the event, the newspapers began questioning HOW the event was conducted and TAMWA's ability to organize it. TAMWA had to compete with MPs both as agent and source. As the event evolved and the attention turned to HOW to deal with the increasing incidents of rape, sodomy, and defilement, TAMWA 'lost' control over the discourse and the Members of Parliament, who are mostly males, took over as the main authority. The feminist discourse became overshadowed by a commercial discourse, which turned the issue of sexual abuse into a show of punishment methods. In its final phase, centering on WHY the abuse is happening and WHO is to blame, TAMWA seemed to have no influence over the direction of the debate, which turned into a problem related to moral decay that blamed women themselves for the increase of rape and sexual abuse.

The analysis of the TAMWA symposium illustrates the potential for women's/gender NGOs to act as a force in the cultural struggle for gender transformation in Tanzania. The newspapers supported TAMWA's fight against gender violence and sexual abuse as a struggle for women's rights, but resisted ideas that would demand a more radical transformation of oppressive gender relations. A conclusion to draw from this is that liberal feminism seems to fit better with a commercialized press and the nature of news conventions than radical feminism, which would challenge conventional assumptions addressing women's place and status in society. One implication of framing the issue of rape as a human rights issue within a liberal feminist framework is that it lacks social and cultural analysis and explanations pinpointing gender-power relations. As a result, gender was constructed and reconstructed through various and sometimes contradicting ideas, values, and definitions of femininity. Women were portrayed as both fit and unfit as social coordinators, as both active subjects acting upon events and victims of other people's actions, as both freedom fighters and immoral temptations. The news discourse carried multiple ideological positions or gender positioning, which in turn placed the individual reader in heterogeneous and competing situations.

Conclusion

A final conclusion from the analyses of representations of women in the mass media is that the dominant discourse represents a conservative social force that might work as a barrier in the cultural struggle of gender transformation. Yet, the disciplinary power of discourse in prescribing and restricting the meaning of gender can be resisted and subverted. Representations of women in the media discourse appeared to be incoherent, offering multiple ideological meanings and

positions for its 'readers', thereby supporting the idea in feminist post-structuralism that accounts for contradictions in the construction of femininity and instabilities in culture. The analyses show that the dominant culture is riddled with gaps, inconsistencies, and contradictions that can be the seeds for mobilization as well as a means for new identities to develop.

Part IV Media use, empowerment and cultural transformation

An issue in this dissertation has been how media use, choice, and reading strategies entail empowering elements for women (and men) that can be the seeds for change in the cultural struggle of gender transformation. My analysis of the interviews included in this research showed that the mass media had already become an integrated aspect of urban dwellers' lives, and as such is an important source of definitions and images of social reality for the common man and woman (cf. Chapter 5.3). The analysis also revealed that learning a lesson is an important aspect in terms of people's media use, as it involved new ideas and alternative ways of life, but also occurred as audiences recognized and identified oppressive positions and their consequences. Foreign productions tended to serve as a source of enrichment by presenting encounters with other ways of life, which provided both male and female participants with new ideas about how to organize their lives (e.g. bankers, tourist coach workers, and small-scale business women). From this perspective, international media appears to help – and not just undermine existing culture - in the process of cultural growth, diffusion, invention, and creativity. Nonetheless, media exposure in some instances raised resistance towards Western cultural influences that appeared to be threatening, such as nudity and sexual intimacy. While international productions have their strength in expanding traditional frames and discourses and thereby help overcome deep-rooted conceptions, many grassroots women participating in this research stated that they learned about women's/gender issues through local media productions. Local productions have a higher level of relevance for local problems and identification, and thereby facilitate problem articulation and serve as a tool for the description of women's problems. The analysis in Chapter 5 demonstrated that the media is perceived as important in catalyzing recognition of oppressive relationships and praxis, and in motivating women in terms of taking an active role in development.

My work also showed that media use is in part gendered, and distinct variations appeared between the different groups of women. While small-scale business women, secretaries, female youths, and to some extent nursery school teachers were active media users who were seeking knowledge, motivation, and advancement from the media, young non-educated women such as barmaids and house girls were more concerned with celebrity events and sensational news. The former groups said they were selective in their media use and sought programs and news articles concerned with issues related to women and children that

would illuminate women's emancipation, but also that they learned from symbols in the Swahili plays (c.f. Chapter 5.3). Furthermore, the grassroots women who actively sought gender issue information and knowledge through the media also exhibited the highest level of awareness about women's/gender issues in society. Hence, media choice and reading strategies can be seen to play a significant role in women's empowerment, which can ease the progress of gender transformation.

The differences between the groups, perhaps best illustrated by a comparison between small-scale business women and barmaids, supported the notion in this thesis that gender identity is constructed and reconstructed by our participation in a multitude of social processes and discourses. In contrast to the barmaids, who were locked up in low-income and oppressive work relations, women engaged in business, no matter how small, appeared to have gained autonomy and control by their persistence in pursuing income-generating activities, which had brought them into more contact with broader sections in society. They were actively pursuing solutions to their own individual difficulties – they are agents of social change – and conscious of their own role in the family as well as in the development of the country. This supports Freire's (1997) assumption that those who come to a new awareness of selfhood and begin to look critically at the social situation in which they find themselves often take the initiative to transform the society that has denied them this opportunity of participation. Additionally, the small-scale business women interviewed in this research had all sought aid from SERO (Women in Business) to get training and loans for their business projects. This provided an arena for these women to discuss and exchange experiences. Most of them had also attended secondary school (form 4). For these women, the mass media emerged as a means to deal critically and creatively with social reality and provided them a means to participate in the transformation of their world. This supports Lerner's (1958) theory that the media plays a vital role in the cultural transformation associated with modern societies in which media exposure can make the self become more expansive and open-ended.

The analysis further signified a shift in cultural perceptions towards women as well as in women, which could be seen in responses across the interviewee groups (males and females). However, a comparison of small-scale business women with barmaids shows clearly that the latter had less confidence and expressed less concern with gender issues and interest in women's emancipation. While the small-scale business women stressed that women should change the attitude that leads them to depend on men, barmaids said that they need men to help them to overcome their situations. Among all the participants included in this research, they expressed the least confidence in themselves, which in Freire's (1997) terminology can be seen as an obstacle to women's liberation and for

women to be active participants in development. The barmaids' and to some extent the house girls' media use might be a 'reflection' of this situation, as their media use was restricted to news, sports, and music. Simultaneously, they were more concerned with the negative portrayal of women in the news, such as the widespread images of women as prostitutes. For these women, media choice and interpretation emerged to sustain the dominant gender ideology rather than opening up new horizons. The role of the media therefore is not uniform in text-viewer relations, which entail both empowering and disempowering elements depending on prior audiences' identification and material and symbolic resources.

The interviews with female youths also showed clear signs of a changing attitude towards the relationship between women and men; none of the participants stressed the importance of cooperation and communication between the sexes more. They all belonged to the same youth center, where four of them were able to continue with their studies after they had had to discontinue primary school due to pregnancy, while the remaining three worked as volunteers/peer educators (two of them attending secondary school). Temeke Youth Center constituted an important meeting place for these youths where they could have discussions with both teachers and their peers (girls and boys) about how they perceived the world, family issues, their problems, and so forth. They also emphasized the educational aspect of the media, which was reflected in media use and choice of programs. In addition to news, sports, and music they chose educational programs concerned with health (Radio One Doctor), youth programs (UMATI), and woman programs. They said that they found motivation in programs and articles that showed other women or girls progressing and independent of their relationships with men. As such, these young women differed from their peers (barmaids and house girls) who didn't have any institutional connection or anyone to help them in overcoming oppressive relations.

Also, secretaries constituted a group of women who were aware of women's/gender issues, who were active users of the mass media and who learned from the media. They appeared to represent a potential for a women's movement and to be open to the messages that such a movement stands for. Several of the women in this group expressed the feeling that they wished to discuss women's issues with fellow women, to have the opportunity to assist other women in overcoming their problems and in helping youths. For these women, it seemed that a few more years of schooling (secondary school), some additional training and better job opportunities made a big difference in how these women related to the world and gender relations.

The differences between the groups in regard to gender awareness cannot be reduced to the variations in media use alone. There are many intervening factors,

such as the participation in other discourses and practices and institutional connections in which dialogical encounters are carried out. Education is another key factor. It is an impossible project to establish any direction of cause and effect; yet, media use plays a significant role in raising awareness of gender issues and enables women to imagine other ways to organize life and altered gender relations. Even though the media is only one discourse and praxis - which itself is a product of multiplicity that allows for different interpretations, negotiations, and identities - it is also the only arena that provides a shared public discourse that people use in approaching a social phenomenon. During the personal interviews, when we were talking about women's situation in society, it was common among the participants to draw upon the media as a source in understanding these issues. Female respondents said that they liked to watch plays or read news stories that addressed the problems they experienced or found important for women's situation in society. Swahili plays were most popular among women, particularly small-scale business women, who seemed to learn from the symbols in the plays (c.f. Chapter 5.3).

The reception interviews demonstrated that women and men negotiate with the symbolic constructions in the Swahili plays. Even though the content could be deeply conservative, female audiences made their own interpretations in the interaction with the symbolic constructions offered in these plays in which they acknowledged their own social subordination and thereby opened a path for resistance against the prevailing gender ideology that continued to suppress women. In other words, the media discourse allowed for negotiation of cultural codes carrying empowering elements within the dominant discourse. The way the small-scale business women used and interpreted the media reflects that their perception of development is not only a material struggle, but also a cultural struggle of gender transformation. The media therefore can be seen to mediate between individuals and culture, and thus contributes to shape gender identities. Hence, the mass media can be understood as facilitating problem articulation and serving as a tool for diagnosing women's problems. Still, I would characterize the media's role as more of a supportive function rather than a transformative one in gender transformation and development.

9.2 Post-structuralism and the implications for a cultural critique

Feminist post-structuralism emphasizes the instability of gender, which relates to a caution of generalized absolutes, and thus responding to the complexity and heterogeneity of social life. The postulation of unifying feminist politics that entails a fixed definition of femininity (and masculinity), which few if any can relate to, is in danger of producing resistance and frustration rather than being able to work as a mobilizing force for women's liberation. Therefore, I argue that

we have to learn to tolerate and interpret ambiguity and multiplicity and to formulate a larger vision from a critical feminist standpoint that can take in different and sometimes contradictory elements in an increasingly heterogeneous social and cultural reality. However, if we take post-structuralism to its extreme by stressing the multiple, complex, changing, and contradictory nature of gender, everything becomes relative and uncertain, resulting in the fragmentation of feminist organizations and discourse, which in turn may mean less of a social base for political action. Hence, feminist post-structuralism has raised its own concerns regarding political and theoretical implications in articulating a cultural critique. At stake are both the symbolic representations of women and a material struggle about equal rights and opportunities for women. Feminist post-structuralism erodes the rationale of articulating universal and absolute demands for political correctness, truths and solutions, but does not necessarily involve relativist political retreat. Rather, feminist post-structuralism is an acknowledgment that in order to confront “sexism in all its endless variety and monotonous similarity” (Fraser and Nicholson 1990; 34) a more flexible and pragmatic form of criticism might be more effective than one based upon pre-defined truths (Ang & Hermes 1996; 342).

The experience from this thesis is that feminist post-structuralism is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the focus upon contradictions in the construction of gender has led to difficulties in drawing definite conclusions, absolute demands and concrete solutions. On the other hand, uncertainty is a central point in post-structuralism precisely because it allows us to avoid absolute truths that few can relate to. In order to overcome this problem it has been important to not exaggerate the multiplicity of discourse. As a concept it stands in an opposition to unitary structures, which implies that media produces monolithic reproductions of gender ideologies. Between these two poles there is great variance, depending on how far one pushes post-structuralism or the multiple, changing, and contradictory nature of gender. Moreover, multiplicity of discourse doesn't necessarily mean that all possible meanings of gender that are found in media discourse deserve equal status. There are dominant and alternative meanings, which can be described as a hierarchy of meanings in which some meanings are assigned more importance than others.

The analyses in this study demonstrated that not only is the media discourse a result of multiplicity, but in various and multiple ways gender constructions favor a specific ideological perspective geared towards men's interests that reinforces and legitimizes men's power. Gender is constructed and reconstructed through various and sometimes contradicting ideas, values, and definitions of femininity. The discourse analyses exposed representations of women as mothers, victims, and immoral temptresses, all tied to women's role in the private sphere. It also revealed representations of women as businesswomen contributing to the

national economy and as freedom fighters taking an active role in the struggle of gender transformation and development. There are different stories of women, which reflect different truths and standpoints about women. Still, there is a strong tendency to assign women to a passive position as victims, sexual objects, or receivers of development efforts, which undercuts the power of women and ultimately might work as a barrier to gender transformation. Another way of undermining the power of women is by representing women as evil offenders, who violate social norms leading to moral decay in society. This is reflected in the one-sided focus on women as prostitutes, the biased focus on women's clothing choices as a source of moral decay, as well as the 'gold-digger' girls in the Swahili plays. Also, undercutting a feminist position is the representation of women as rivals and the positioning of women in minor events, which often follow or are the results of major events typically carried out by a male protagonist. These findings demonstrate that a discursive perspective, emphasizing the heterogeneous character of power relations in the media discourse, does not necessarily mean a deconstruction and de-centering of dominant structures. Overall, this thesis supports the view that post-structuralism not only has potential to capture the multiplicity of discourse, but also allows a critical perspective on discursive practices that highlight gender ideology and power relations.

Post-structuralism has helped grasp the complexity involved in the media discourse, which is pulled between society's different discourses and is framed by existing power formations. In the media's attempts to make sense of a changing and at times threatening world, 'women' appear to come in handy as a construction to express the ambivalences embedded in the process of modernization. The mass media sees social change through gendered spectacles, which often puts women at risk of negative representations focusing on women and sexuality. Negative sides of modernization are embedded in the media discourse as seen in the massive output of women as victims of gender violence and sexual abuse, the recurring images of women as prostitutes, as well as 'the gold-digger' girls or as evil temptations in the Swahili plays. Even in the news coverage of the TAMWA symposium, the struggle to define meaning takes place within existing frameworks of power relations in society. As the event evolved, the MPs and a male perspective were given priority and 'hijacked' the news agenda, which reflects the fact that males have better access and more power to engage in the process of defining reality. Also among the female interviewees in this study, there was to a certain extent a resonance in blaming women in miniskirts as a cause for the increase in rape, which may be seen as an expression of women's internalization of men's images and the adoption of their guidelines (cf. Freire 1997; 29).

Post-structuralism is not the only approach to understand these issues, but it helps to view the construction of gender in the media in its complexity. Even minor divergences might be the seeds of social change. This is evident when looking at how actual audiences interpreted the symbolic constructions offered by the media. The analysis revealed that the ambiguity in the discourse had different effects on different audiences, depending on their prior identification as well as access, time, and reading strategies. For example, the main conclusion for the Swahili plays was that they symbolized a conservative social force, but at the same time left openings for reexamination of the dominant cultural values that mediate in the relationship between the sexes. The reception interviews showed that these contradictions should not be disregarded as minor details; instead, they can be seen as a source that challenges dominant meaning systems. The small-scale business women, who appeared to be the most sensitive to women's liberation among the grassroots groups, read the symbolic constructions in these plays as empowering. It showed that these plays are open ideological systems, which allowed for different interpretations and identities. The small-scale business women were also the most eager viewers of these shows, and the context of the reception interviews showed that these participants were engaged in a vivid discussion as we went along in the reception process. The participants were clearly exhilarated as they left the interviews.

Even though the media discourse favors a male-dominated ideology that strengthens and legitimizes men's position in society, this is probably not so much intentional and imposed on behalf of male media workers. Rather, it is a result of an all-pervasive cultural influence that is accomplished at the unconscious as well as the conscious level. Power is here seen as a property of the system of the relations that are involved, rather than the overt and intentional biases of individuals (Hall 1982; 95). For instance, most news reports aim at simply describing a happening or event without deliberately adding some ideological dimension to it. This is not to say that news is neutral, but that what we can call an ideological dimension appears unconsciously. It is part of the taken-for-granted element in cultures that we produce and reproduce on a daily basis. Hence, both male and female media professionals must be made aware of the influences of living in a male-dominated culture, which is taken for granted and naturalizes the established order of power and values as normal. It only appears to be natural, however – it is in fact the historical result of the prestige enjoyed by the male gender. We construct definitions of reality through symbolic constructions and forms. However, this is not something an individual or group of individuals (men) does by themselves, but through participating in a profoundly social process, in the sense that social relations are reflected in definitions of reality while at the same time definitions of reality influence social relations (van Zoonen 1994; 39). Still, these processes are not equally accessible to everyone. The power to define is intricately linked to other power relations in

society, such as political and economic power, which are defined along variables such as gender, class, and race/ethnicity.

10.3 Generalization of interpretations: Limitations & possibilities

Over the last two decades there has been a growing concern in feminist media studies about the shift from ideology in a political sense to a debate that mainly focuses on the 'politics of pleasure' and on the meaning of popular genres for the emancipation or liberation of women (van Zoonen 1994; 6). The discrepancy is related to a theoretical and methodological dilemma; how much freedom should be given to the reader versus the text. Audience-oriented analyses have been criticized for uncritically celebrating popular culture, relativism, and populism. As we acknowledge the pleasure women derive from watching soap operas, melodrama, and reading women's magazines and romance novels, it has become increasingly difficult to find moral justifications for criticizing their contribution to the hegemonic construction of gender identities (van Zoonen 1991; 35). In textual analyses, one runs the risk of being reductionist in the theoretical generalizations about gender and media consumption. In general, it has not been problematized how concrete audiences actually confront the interpellations embedded in the texts concerned. Therefore, it is uncertain how the multiplicity of discourse containing both dominant and oppositional elements affects the individual reader. For example, in the transmission of news as well as the Swahili plays in this thesis, I found that the dominant position produces a symbolic form of feminine identity that might undermine women's ability to take an active part in society and development. Still, the 'successful' production of meaning by the feminine subject is restricted and altered by the contradictions of women's own experiences (cf. Seiter et. al. 1989; 241). Hence, textual analyses need to be complemented by inquiries into how female and male audiences read texts. In this way a maneuvering space is also given to women in their dealing with media texts (Ang & Hermes 1996; 328).

In the following, I address the issue of whether the results from the analyses in this thesis can be generalized beyond the texts included, the genres and media in question, and the local context in which they are produced. In answer to the first question, I would argue that my findings are not restricted to the particular texts in this thesis, but can be generalized to news in general (newspapers) and Swahili plays (in the mode of social-realistic drama) within the Tanzanian context. A particular genre follows an expected narrative sequence structure of action, draws on a predictable stock of images, and has a repertoire of basic themes (c.f. Chapter 3.2). News can roughly be seen to tell the same stories or themes again and again, while only the details, names, faces, and places change. Swahili plays draw upon a limited set of narrative strategies and oppositional characters with more or less fixed features and spheres of actions, which generate a limited set of

themes, interactions, and definitions of femininity. Hence, I argue that the results from the analysis of both news and plays are recognizable beyond the specific texts included in this thesis. However, it is likely that the biggest changes are felt in urban areas, where conflicts between traditional and modern values and ways of life, including gender ideas and notions can be found (c.f. Chapter 1.3). It is therefore likely that urban-based media tend to expose contradictions in culture and in the construction of gender to a greater extent than the rural-based media does.

While I find it reasonable to argue that the findings in this thesis can be generalized to news (newspapers) and Swahili plays in general, it is more problematic to generalize to the media on a whole. Each genre/media has its own specific distinguishing features. For instance, studies of documentaries or discussion programs on television might come to a different conclusion than the study of news. Although I have studied specific genres in specific media at a distinct time and place, there are also elements in this study that can be generalized. The analyses revealed similar constructions of gender in two very different genres and media with a similar outcome for the definition of femininity, which indicates that the results are likely to be valid even for other genres and media. Genre is a collective product that offers a mechanism for controlling the tensions between the familiar and different (c.f. Chapter 3.1). Hence, it should be a reasonable interpretation that all media products to some extent or in some way reflect the dominant culture and the contradictions within it.

The last issue concerning the ability to generalize from my analyses of the texts is whether the results from this thesis are restricted to a local context (Tanzania). There will undoubtedly be substantial regional differences between different cultures and continents. However, the research allows for some general observations. First of all, many of the issues found in this thesis concerning female representations and women's liberation are recognizable in other African countries, as well as other parts of the world. In the review of early feminist studies in Chapter 2.1, if we leave alone the theoretical assumptions upon which these studies were based, the themes and roles associated with women are similar to the ones found in this thesis. For example, Gallagher (1980, 1985) found that studies of women stereotypes in Western, industrialist, eastern Communist and southern developing countries all showed similar features: Women were portrayed as passive and submissive, and dependent on their relations to men - husbands, fathers, sons, or bosses. Along the same lines, Tuchman (1978) concluded that television not only tells us that women don't matter very much, except as housewives and mothers, but also symbolically denigrates women by portraying them as incompetent, inferior, and always submissive to men. The similarity to the set of themes and positions found in the analyses in this

dissertation is evident. With regard to both news and plays, women tend to be defined in relation to men, sex, and reproduction, which have its significance in the private sphere (see Table 9.1).

The emphasis on portraying women in relation to men, sex and reproduction across continents and cultures suggests that this is a universal feature in cultural thought, which in this study had its resonance in terms of agents and existents in the media texts. It is therefore reasonable to believe that the textual structures in the transmission of news as well as Swahili plays that favored a male dominant ideology are not unique to Tanzania. For example, my analysis of the Swahili plays disclosed points of intersection with Western studies that were reviewed in Chapter 2 (Brunsdon 1981, McRobbie 1982). The analysis revealed similar results as were found in Brunsdon's analysis of the British soap-opera *Crossroad*, where the ideology of personal life and relationships was a central theme. In a similar manner, Swahili plays take place within a circumscribed set of values that provides the norms for everyone's lives, which assigns the viewer a particular ideological and moral position.

Finally, it is important to ask how representative the interpretation of data is. All qualitative analyses entail the author's interpretations. In this respect, an interpretative inquiry will be unique. In accordance with the objectives of this research, the best choice has been an interpretative inquiry entailing qualitative methods (c.f. Chapter 3.1). I have given weight to the validity of the research and understanding of social and cultural processes rather than allowing myself to be 'eaten up' by the absolute representative. Still, I have stressed a systematic approach by making the research procedures explicit, and by providing plenty of examples so that the reader can follow and assess the arguments and conclusions. Underlying the three sets of texts included in this study are tables in which each text has been evaluated according to the main elements in the analytical model (c.f. Chapter 3.3).¹

Nevertheless, the discussion above demonstrates possibilities rather than limitations for the generalization of the results. Generalization has been possible due to the comprehensive nature of this study, which involved a great number of texts, which in turn has allowed for the identification of conventional structures and underlying principles in the transmission of news. Hence, this thesis demonstrates that narrative analysis provides a viable alternative in qualitative analyses and that it is not restricted to narrative formats but is also applicable to news. The number of Swahili plays is more limited compared to the selection of news texts; still, it has enabled me to go deeper into the structure of the plays and to conduct reception interviews that account for audience interpretations. In order to counterbalance the limited amount of texts, I have focused on recurrent themes

¹ See Appendix A for an example of the use of the analytical schema.

in Swahili drama as well as using Lange's study (2002) as a reference. Comparing my own findings with Lange reveals that similar plays or storylines sometimes end with different outcomes and thereby have different impacts on the notion of gender. It strengthens my own findings that the discourse in the Swahili plays is incoherent; it sometimes represents a conservative force reassuring audiences of traditional values, and it sometimes challenges audiences to reexamine dominant values and beliefs, oppressive structures, and attitudes towards women. This is not so much by portraying alternative gender roles, values and ways of living (in contrast to news) but by opening up a path for resistance against the dominant culture.

An important contribution of this thesis has been to illuminate how gender is manifested in the media discourse and how the media positions the female subject, which are both responsible for engendering positions for its audiences. The analyses demonstrated different ways of sustaining the cultural status quo, but also showed how the dominant discourse of gender was contested, which could be the seeds for new thoughts, perceptions, and actions. Further research would benefit from local empirical studies of audiences' reception of both local and international productions. In general, there is a lack of audience studies in Africa. A further exploration of the links between audiences' reception and identity formation and how this might channel or restrict development can help to improve our knowledge of the intersection between micro and macro processes of development. Studies of international productions can increase our understanding of global processes and their impact on gender transformation. Studies with a comparative perspective could contribute to a deeper understanding of underlying structures in the construction of gender and knowledge of mass communication as a social and cultural phenomenon. Finally, further research would also benefit from focusing on the new media as a result of the developments within information- and communication technology, which opens up for a range of new issues.

9.4 Concluding comment and suggestions

The political watershed facing Tanzania has changed its policy for development and opened the country to liberal forces, which has had a contradictory impact on women. Criticism of the modernization paradigm, in particular the welfare approaches to development that were criticized for failing to incorporate women as well as other disempowered groups into mainstream development, have given way to new and alternative theories of development. As a result, development approaches have become more pro-women in which women are considered as active participants in the development process. Against this backdrop, the Women in Development (WID) approach has become dominant in development and women's issues, which primarily locate women's oppression with respect to

their economic position. It has also allowed non-governmental organizations to take an active part in development and in strengthening civil society. As a result there has been a mushrooming of NGOs, including women's/gender organizations. In sum, these trends have directed attention to women's role in development and have left a space for woman activists, legitimizing their struggle for women's rights and gender transformation in society.

However, every woman born into a reality structured by unequal gender relations has to face an inner struggle of self-identity in order to liberate herself. In this respect, it is not enough to primarily focus on basic needs and poverty elimination as reflected in welfare approaches of the modernization paradigm as well as by NGOs occupied with service delivery. It is also not sufficient to focus on issues of access and equality with respect to resources and opportunities, such as education, land, employment and wages, credit and other productive resources as expressed in liberal feminism and the WID approach. The emphasis on the economic sphere leaves out cultural, psychological and political elements, which have been particularly resistant in spite of significant changes in women's and men's respective position in the economy. In order to empower women it is also necessary to enable women and men to critically analyze the world at all levels and in the different sectors of society so as to identify basic causes of gender discrimination and inequality. This aspect of development linking consciousness to action has not been given much attention in development strategies (TGNP 1993; 30). Therefore, I argue for a viewpoint that cuts through macro and micro perspectives on development by focusing on the cultural underpinnings of communication.

Along with the political and economic reforms taking place in Tanzania, the mass media has become an important source of definitions and images of social reality, thereby also becoming the place where the changing culture and values of society and groups are constructed and most visibly expressed. Hence, a critical question to be addressed is how particular gender constructions are manifested in the media discourse, which discourses they draw upon, and how these constructions restrict and channel development of society. The analyses in this thesis demonstrated that the liberalization and privatization of the media, blended with an omnipresent male-dominated culture, put a feminist discourse second to a commercial discourse. The impact of a commercial discourse in news journalism about women is reflected in representations that are likely to disregard and even degrade women as sexual objects or evil offenders who contribute to moral decay in society. The stories that make headlines are based on what is unexpected, strange, or shocking. Moreover, positioning women as passive receivers of development efforts means a 'reader position' of women as coordinated and objectified, which is at odds with participatory development approaches. As a result, women are reduced to static figures sitting on the sidelines even in issues

that are of particular concern to women. Overall, the construction of gender in the media discourse tends to reconstruct dominant values and is likely to sustain women's low status by 'excluding' women from taking an active part in the management of society and development.

At the same time, the market orientation of the media also gives it autonomy to engage in new and more varied themes that support a liberal feminism. Private cultural groups have used the space created by the withdrawal of the state to deal with issues that are of concern to urban people who are pulled between modern and traditional discourses. The newspapers have run stories that contest equal opportunities and access to resources, for instance in education and economic matters, and have put gender violence and sexual abuse on the public agenda, which might contribute to eradicating a taboo while informing women of their rights and raising awareness about the causes behind women's health problems, oppression, and underdevelopment. The strongest challenge to dominant representations of women and cultural codes is the news coverage of women's/gender NGOs, which might channel development in the interest of women and children. By providing society with alternative representations of women, who act upon events in the public sphere that are intended to improve the conditions of women and children, the media contest the boundaries between men's and women's sphere of actions and identities. As such the media can be seen as an agent for change that contests traditional gender roles and patterns, which can be the seeds for changing existing attitudes and dominant social beliefs towards women and their place in society. By being at the forefront in the struggle for gender transformation, the media not only reflects social movements as they are taking place, but the media also plays a role in influencing gender relations and definitions of social reality.

Specific suggestions that would enable a symbolic environment for gender transformation

What the media can do:

1. Work closely with women's/gender NGOs and extend coverage to such organizations.
2. Hire female media professionals in senior- and leader positions.
3. Use women, both professional women and ordinary women, as sources in news stories.
4. Provide more flexible definitions of femininity and masculinity in which women and men can take upon multiple roles and identities.
5. Challenge the gender dichotomy by giving coverage to women who are in roles that are aligned with culture and the public sphere; such as politicians, business women and educators, rather than focusing attention on women in traditional roles such as mothers and wives associated with the private sphere.
6. Avoid biased focus on women as a source of problems and moral decay, e.g. prostitution and women's clothing choices, by reporting men's role and responsibility in the same situations.
7. Portray women in professional relationships with men rather than relations based on a sexual or intimate character as well as independent of men and in which women pull together towards a common goal.
8. Position women as subjects of development efforts by using women as the main sources of stories that highlight their efforts and achievements rather than as objects of development.
9. Use different kinds of frameworks for interpretations that address women's place and status in society as well as scrutinize social and cultural explanations and pinpointing gender-power relations.
10. Expose conditions that demonstrate that suppression of women is a result of political, economic, and social domination and show that women's liberation is a viable alternative.

What women's/gender NGOs can do:

1. Sensitize the media by conducting workshops with professionals in different media and working with different genres (news versus entertainment) at different levels (e.g. journalists, editors, authors, and producers).
2. Establish close links with the media/journalists by developing formal and informal relationships so as to ease sensitization and mobilization of journalists on issues important to the women's movement.
3. Get acquainted with the news media's routines and news criteria in order to develop an effective relationship with the media and an understanding of how to 'sell' news.
4. Develop and integrate a focused media strategy.
5. Recruit journalists into the organization or if necessary hire a public relations specialist to take care of media relations. Produce news stories or programs, issue frequent press releases or at least make sure that women's/gender NGOs appear as an authority/source acting on events.
6. Be pragmatic; make men and especially male journalists allies and not enemies in the struggle for gender transformation.
7. Focus on how gender is manifested in news structures, conventions, and genres rather than blaming particular groups of people (men).
8. Develop 'Media Watch Campaigns' as a forum to recognize good news stories as well as bad news coverage and be prepared to provide concrete suggestions for positive changes.

What the government and donors can do:

1. Support efforts concerned with the representations of women in the media that aim to raise awareness among journalists and other media professionals.
2. Support initiatives that aspire to increase the understanding of how gender is constructed, reconstructed and contested in media discourse and the ideological implications involved for gender transformation as well as the development of society.
3. Provide educational and financial support for initiatives that have as their goal the improvement of media professionalism and ethics in general and in particular attempts that are directed towards unskilled media workers.

APPENDIX A

Analytical schema – illustration

All newspaper articles included in this research as listed in Appendix B, C, and D has been subjected to an analytical schema in order to systematically reveal patterns in the material. The schema is based on the analytical model illustrated in Figure 3.2 (p. 63). Due to the large amount of articles, the following tables are only giving examples of how I have classified the articles.

Gender-based violence and sexual harassment (not complete)

Rape etc.	Agent	Existent (affected)	Effect	Foregrounded	Contra-action	Comments
1. Sodomising, hiding students	Elderly male, Tabora	Three female primary students	Negative, disempowering	The male offender	Mother reports offender to police	Elder brother; criminal offence
2-3 Rape/sleeping victim	3 young men suspected, Mwanza	A white female college student, Denmark	Ditto	Female victim	Victim reported incident to police	... male informant questions proceedings...
4-5 Rape	5 men accused, Iringa	A white school teacher (f)	Ditto	Ditto	A pastor	Journalists express disappointment
6. Drugged, defiled and sodomised	Unclear	Females	Ditto. Unconscious, 12 days	Ditto	Relatives, neighbors	Local bars claimed to be involved, DSM
32. In court for sodomising	A male witch doctor	6 year old girl	Action taken against rapist	Male offender/event	Magistrate: Stern punishment to get rid of misleading traditions. Sentenced 20 years	
33. In court for rape	Male (18)	15 year old girl	Ditto	Ditto	Magistrate: Stern punishment. Sentenced 20 years	
34. In court for intention of rape	Young man	16 year old girl	Ditto	Ditto,	Magistrate: Lesson. 6 months imprisonment	
35. In court for raping child	Male (22)	11 year old girl	Ditto. Damage of private parts	Female victim and the violent acts	Magistrate: Stern punishment. Sentenced 20 years	
40. National calamity	Rel. leaders, government (target)	Mostly females, but also some males	Neg.; health, psychologically	Victims	Government to announce a national calamity day. Debate.	
41-43 Rape and sodomy	Rel. leaders, goven., parents, men	Women and children	Neg.	Causes: Witchcraft, immorality, unemployment, lack of education, short dresses, upbringing. Stronger punishment.		

Beating & killing	Agent	Existent (affected)	Effect	Foregrounded	Contra-action	Comments
Killed by husband, Kenya	Husband	Wife	Neg. Cut by axe in head	Victim Offender	Detained by police, while investigation	Happened after a quarrel
Kills wife, Mbeya	Husband	Wife	Neg. Beaten and head cut off	Offender Event	Detained by police, while investigation	Caused by man's greed.
Son kills mother	Son	Mother	Neg. Dies after beating	Victim Offender and event proceedings	Detained by police, while investigation	Quarrel over sandals, brother jealous
Female offenders						
Kills husband by pressing private parts	Wife	Husband	Neg. Beaten with a log on head and...	Victim	Under police investigation	Happened after a quarrel/fight
Beaten by metal bar on head by wife	Wife	Husband	Neg.	Wife beats after being mistreated by habitually drunk husband, leaving no money for food, getting violent etc.		Point of view creates sympathy w. wife
Cries in court after sentence	Happens after woman insulted and beaten uncle's wife	Female	Neg.	Offender (f)	In court	
Beggars fight scramble for man	Female attacks by insults and beating	Female	Neg.	Quarrel over disabled man		Peculiar event
Anti marries her cousin to her own husband	Female (wife) tricks cousin to male love with her husband	Female cousin	Neg. Gets pregnant, mistreated and sent home after giving birth	The offender and her actions	Case taken to city council	The aunt is barren
Sister in law's face burnt	A woman spill hot water on face and hands	Sister in law	Neg.	Victim. Event happened after a quarrel over clothes on floor	Not yet	Similar events have been reported in DSM
Mother burns her child	Mother	Son burnt with hot knife after refusing to sell mandazi	Neg.	Victim	Police involved	
Baby abandonment	Young woman (barmaid)	Baby and mother	Neg.	The offender	In court, two years probation	Difficult life sit.

Female offenders; prostitutes	Agent	Existent (affected)	Effect	Foregrounded	Contra-action	Comments
Harlots invade fisherman camps, Mwanza	Girls (16-25)	Boys/men	Neg. Spreading aids	The fishermen		One-sided.
Changudoa majestically returns from abroad	A former prostitute visit her friends and gives them mobile phones	Female prostitutes she used to work with	Unclear	The veteran Changudoa and her advice to the others		She is now married and lives in USA
Changudoa appeals	Young girl (18) accused for stealing mobile phone	Famous sport figure	Neg.	Sentenced to one year, but appeals...		Says she stole phone, because customer refused to pay.
Woman fighters						
Spouse abandons groom on honey moon	Wife (18) demand divorce due to husband's extraordinary sexual desires	Husband (23)	Positive	Wife's point of view, solving of the conflict	Husband tries to make the wife look bad in court; refusing cleaning, cooking, sex	The writer describes the girl as a successful freedom fighter
Marriage lasted to months	Wife (18) went to court to demand for divorce due to husband bringing a new woman sleeping in their bed	Husband	Positive	Wife's well being		Court gives wife divorce, and opens a new case for sharing properties from marriage ceremony.
Soccer player abandons child	Former girlfriend takes ex-boyfriend to court to make father pay for their child	Former boyfriend	Positive	Soccer player		Order to pay 20.000 Tsh. monthly.

Women and societal issues (not complete)

Politics	Agent or agency	Public/ domestic	Existent/ affected	Culture /nature	Motivation	Effect	Comments
	W. Mandela (f)	P	Women	C	Unclear	Mixed/neg.	Foreign news
	Female CCM campaigner	P	Women	C	Self-interest	Neg.	Editorial
Business/economy							
A business woman's success	A business woman	P	Female employees	C	Social-good	Positive	Female journalists/ sources
DAR NGO to help jobless girls	Women's NGO provide training	Unclear	Girls due to pregnancy	C	Social-good	Positive	Female journalists/ sources
Education							
Education Ministry sponsored female students	Ministry of Education and culture	P	733 female students	C.	Social good	Positive; Better access for girls from poor fam.	Male journalist/male source (planning officer)
UDSM 2000 benefit more women	UDSM (pre entry program/ science)	P	Female students	C	Social good	Positive, increase share of female students	Female journalist 2 male/2 female (MP-activist) sources
Social-cultural							
Health for expectant mother a pipe dream	Poverty Targeted: Government and communities	P (D)	Pregnant women	N	Not applicable	Analysis of conditions and the journalist's (f) views	
Poverty increases women's deaths	Poverty	P (D)	Women	N	Not applicable	Sit. analysis of causes and consequences. How to deal with... Male source (Ministry of Health)	
Pharmacists discuss abortion	Pharmacists (m)	P (D)	Women and children	N	Unclear	Unclear	
Where is culture?	Cultural changes Targeted: Government	P	Youths School girls	N	Not applicable	Neg. Moral decay Pregnancy	Journalist's point of view

Woman/gender issues (not complete)

AGSC'97	Agent	Public/ domestic	Existent/ affected	Culture/nature	Motivation	Effect	Comments
TGNP plans forum to boost gender networking	TGNP; programme officer (f)	P	Local NGOs – Lobbying, advocacy, networking	C	Social good	Positive Identify gaps, draw action plans in resource allocation	Info. TGNP/AGSC'97 aims and activities
Gender conference support VAT	Official planning officer (f)	P	Women (and men)	C	Social good	Positive; Improving government revenues/facilitate basic needs	National economic development (tax and gender)
Mongella urges greater attention	Sec. women int. conference (f)	P	Women (and men)	C	Social good	Positive, improve welfare	Opening speech
Div. womaen's NGOs							
Women to get rid of misleading customs	Woman NGO (RANGO) Female sources	P	Grassroots women, Moshi area	C	Social good	Positive	
WAMATA asked to form prod. groups	Woman NGO, Principle sec. (f)	P	Women	C	Social good	Positive, fight for econ. lib., equal rights and oppression	
Women should not be reduced to goats	Religious leaders (M/f)	P	Women	C	Social good	Positive: Urging men to cooperate with women	TAMWA-seminar
TAMWA to form a human right commission	Director of TAMWA (f)	P	Women and poor men, youths, children	C	Social good	Positive; protection of human rights	Continuance of the TAMWA Symposium
The sodomised in their childhood	Female doctor	P	Children	C	Social good	Positive, informs on the dangers of rape	TAMWA-seminar

The TAMWA Symposium (not complete)

Theme/ heading	Agent	Motivation	Targeted (existent)	Affected (existent)	Effect (intended)	Foregrounded	Background or sub-theme	Point of view	Genre
WHAT: Best Wishes with debate	TAMWA	Social good	MPs	Women and children	Positive	TAMWA's efforts/women's liberation	Women's conditions, difficulties	Women's interest point of view	Editorial
Supporting debate	TAMWA	Social good	MPs Government	Women and children	Positive	Issues, strategies	Stern punishment	Women's interest point of view	Commentary
HOW ORG: False witnesses	TAMWA	Self-interest	TAMWA	Women	Neg.	Accusations about false...	TAMWA's response	"Witnesses"	News
Discrimination among journalists	TAMWA	Self-interest		Journalists	Neg.	Accusations...	TAMWA's response	Journalists	News
HOW COMBAT: Amend law	MPs (3m/1f)	Social good	Government	Young girls offenders	Positive, stern sentences	Defilement of girls and law amendment	Case-in-camera	Young girls (consequences)	News
Human rights committee	MPs (4m/2f)	Social good	TAMWA	Women and children	Positive	Serious proposals	TAMWA's succeeds	MPs	News
Castration, injection or shot to death	MPs (2m/2f)	Unclear		Women and children	Unclear	Funny proposals	Special courts Human rights Short dresses	MPs	News, author present
MPs worries	MPs (9m/2f)	Unclear	TAMWA, women/men	Unclear	Unclear	MPs to be sodomised	Short dresses, Television Mental illness		
WHY: Mini dresses/morality	TAMWA (defending women's choices)	Self-interest	TAMWA criticized for defending short dresses	Everybody	Neg.	TAMWA going against T. culture and moral	Support of TAMWA's objectives in general	The author	Editorial
Women mocked	Group of people	Unclear	TAMWA	Woman in mini dress	Neg.	The woman running around after being mocked at	TAMWA defending women's freedom		News

APPENDIX B

Newspaper coverage, Sept. 8-21 1997

“Representations of women”

Newspapers:

	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
The Guardian/x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		
¹ Sunday Observer							x							x
Daily News/ Sunday News	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	
² The Express				x							x			
Business Times						x						x		
Family Mirror					x							-		
Uhuru/ Mzalendo	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Mtanzania/ Rai	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	
Majira	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Nipashe	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Heko	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Shaba	x	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	-	x	x	x	x	-
Alasiri	-	x	-	x	x			x	x	x	x	x		
Dar Leo	x	x	-	x	x			x	x	x	x	x		
Taifa Letu							x							x

The newspapers included in the research counts for 8 dailies including Sunday editions, 2 evening papers coming out on weekdays and 4 weeklies. 5 of the papers are English (2 dailies and 3 weeklies) and the rest are Kiswahili papers, in total counting for 14 newspapers.

¹ In addition comes The Sunday Observer Sept. 7/97

² In addition comes The Express 4 - 10 Sept. -97

APPENDIX C

Media coverage, AGSC'97

- **Media coverage in newspapers, radio and TV, from 08/09/97-21/09/97**
- **Pre-AGSC'97: Wed. 10 - Fri. 12 September 1997**
- **AGSC'97: Mon. 15 - Thu.18 September 1997**

Newspaper coverage:

12 articles (6 English and 6 Kiswahili)

Radio coverage (RTD):

News & Commentaries, and Majira (evening): 10 items

- 4 items are from the Pre-AGSC (gender training), focusing on gender and media.

- Six items are from the conference, five of them focus on land.

Live program (opening), 15/08/97

Women & Development (Sun. 21/09/97:11.00-11.30 am)

Radio Tanzania, English Service:

Meetings of the Minds (Panel discussion w. four journalists; gender and media)

Face the Mic (Interview with Jill Johannessen; gender and media)

TV

DTV: "Tanzania this week"; Sat. 10.15pm (interview with Jill Johannessen and Prof. Majorie Mbilinyi)

CEN: Documentary

Coverage of Pre-AGSC & AGSC'97:

	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
The Guardian/ ³ Sunday Observer			*							*		*		
Daily News/ Sunday News			*							*				
Business Times														
The Express														
Family Mirror														
Uhuru/ Mzalendo														
Mtanzania/ Rai														
Majira														*
Nipashe														
Heko														
Shaba			*			*					*		*	
Alasiri														
Dar Leo										*				
Taifa Letu														

³ The Sunday Observer Sept. 7/97 had one article about the conference.

Inventory listing, newspapers:

Date	Newspaper	Section/ genre	Journalist	Title/headline
07/09/97	Sunday Observer	Gender page	Mathilda Kasanga	TGNP PLANS FORUM TO BOOST GENDER NETWORKING
09/09/97	SHABA	News notice	Rehema Nakenya	AN EXHIBITION ON GENDER TO BE HELD ON MONDAY
10/09/97	The Guardian	News	Alfred Mbogora	TANZANIA GENDER TO HOST FESTIVAL ON DEVELOPMENT DYNAMICS
10/09/97	Daily News	News notice	Daily News Reporter	GENDER STUDY CONFERENCE STARTS ON MONDAY
13/09/97	Shaba	News	Rehema Nakenya Joseph Kapinga	MEDIA PROVIDE FEWER CHANCES TO WOMEN – SEMINAR
17/09/97	Daily News	News	Daily News Reporter	GENDER CONFERENCE SUPPORT THEINTRODUCTION OF VAT
18/09/97	Shaba	News	Rehema Nakenya	DEVELOPMENT WILL BE BROUGHT IN COOPERATION OF ALL GENDERS
19/09/97	The Guardian	People's Watch	Abdi Sultan	WHAT ARE THE DANGERS OF PERPETUATING GENDER DISPARITIES?
21/09/97	Majira	News	Oscar Mirando	CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS ARE USED TO OPPRESS
Land:				
17/09/97	The Guardian	News	Cathlex Makawia	BILL: MORE WOMEN TO BE DENIED LAND ACCESS
17/09/97	Dar Leo	News	Oscar Mirando	MONGELA OBJECTS A DRAFT <i>FOR</i> LAND LAW
20/09/97	Shaba	News	Rehema Nakenya	LAWS <i>LAND BILL</i> CONTRIBUTE TO OPPRESSION

Inventory listing, Radio Tanzania:

Date	Program	Time	Title/headline
10/9/97	Majira	Evening	NON-HEADLINE (gen. information about the gender training workshops)
11/9/97	Majira	Evening	NON-HEADLINE (discrimination of women in media institutions)
12/9/97	Majira	Evening	NON-HEADLINE (negative portrayal of women in the media)
12/9/97	News	10.00 PM	EDITORS AND JOURNALISTS IN THE COUNTRY HAVE BEEN ASKED TO UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF A WORD GENDER WHEN THEY WRITE AN ARTICLE ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIETY
15/9/97	News	08.00 PM	AMBASSADOR GETRUDE MONGELA HAS ADVISED THAT LAND BILL BE AMENDED BEFORE IT IS BROUGHT TO TH PARLIAMENT LATER THIS YEAR
15/9/97	Majira	Evening	NON-HEADLINE (<i>land bill</i>)
16/9/97	News	11.00 PM	GENDER DEBATE ABOUT EQUALITY SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL MAKE GRAVE MISTAKES IF IT WILL DENY CITIZENS ENOUGH LAND AND INSTEAD ALLOCATE BIG LAND TO FOREIGNERS
16/9/97	Majira	Evening	NON-HEADLINE (<i>land, education and health</i>)
17/9/97	News	Evening	NON-HEADLINE (<i>land bill</i>)
17/9/97	Majira	Evening	NON-HEADLINE (<i>land bill</i>)

Radio Tanzania coverage

	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
News						*			*	*	*			
Majira			*	*	*			*	*	*				
Live program								*						
Women & Dev.														*

* In addition comes the two English programs on Radio Tanzania English Service (exact dates unknown).

APPENDIX D

Media coverage, TAMWA Symposium 1997

- **Media coverage in newspapers, radio (RTD) and TV in the time before, during and after the Symposium (July 26th 1997).**
- **Radio and TV listings are not exhaustive - especially news! For complete coverage see "Report of Media Coverage of 1. Gender Violence; 2. Kongamano", (TAMWA; Selemani Mkufya, 1997).**

Newspaper coverage:

35 articles (7 English/28 Kiswahili), 6 pictures and 3 cartoons

Radio coverage, Radio Tanzania (RTD):

News 7 items

Special program 1; 24/07/98 (1/2 hour)

Special program 2; 25/07/98 (1/2 hour)

Live program 3; 26/07/98

Special program 4; 27/07/98 (1/2 hour)

Women and Development (Wanawake na Maendeleo): Sunday 20/7/97:11.00-11.30am

TV

ITV: Women Journal (Jarida la Wanawake); Tuesday 22/07/97, 6.30-7.00pm

ITV: Women Journal (Jarida la Wanawake); Tuesday 29/07/97, 6.30-7.00pm

DTV: Perspective, Tuesday 7.46-8.00pm (Interview w. TAMWA member Maria Shaba)

TAMWA Publications

TAMWA Supplement/pull out; Daily News July 26th 1997

Inventory listing, newspapers:

Date	Newspaper	Journalist/genre	Title
17/07/97	Alasiri	Abdul	CARTOON
18/07/97	The Guardian	Tryphon Mweji	PICTURE (TAMWA press-conference)
18/07/97	Majira	Richard Mwaika	PICTURE (TAMWA press-conference)
22/07/97	Sunday Observer		FIGHT AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE TO BE INTENSIFIED
22/07/97	Uhuru	Letter: Maftana	AN OPEN LETTER TO TAMWA
24/07/97	HEKO	Editor	BEST WISHES – TAMWA
24/07/97	Uhuru	Leah Mwainyekule, Dodoma	TAMWA TO PAY THE MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT 6 MIL
25/07/97	Nipashe	Lucas Raphaul Tabora	RC ADVICES TAMWA ABOUT WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN HARASSED
25/07/97	Majira	Editorial comment	MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT SHOULD «MAKE A SACRIFICE» WITH TAMWA'S MONEY
26/07/97	Majira	Correspondent	TAMWA DEBATE IN DODOMA MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENT GIVE OBJECTION • They refuse showing films about raping
26/07/97	Mtanzania	Letter:	THE PROCEDURE WHICH TAMWA IS USING IS IMPROPER
27/07/97	HEKO	Joseph Ngoi, Dodoma	2400 WOMEN HAVE BEEN RAPED: TAMWA REVEALS IN DODOMA
27/07/97	Mtanzania	Leader	TAMWA HAS LIT UP MWENGE, OUR DUTY IS TO RUN IT
27/07/97	Sunday News	Moses Kitururu, Dodoma	IN BID TO STEM RAMPANT SEX CRIMES ... TAMWA PRESENT CASE BEFORE MPs
27/07/97	Mzalendo	Leah Mwainyekule, Dodoma	MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AGREE WITH THE IDEA OF SPECIAL COURTS FOR RAPIST
27/07/97	Mtanzania		CARTOON
---	Dar Leo		TAMWA WARNS THE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT
28/07/97	Shaba		STRATEGIES LAID DOWN IN THE DEBATE ARRANGED BY TAMWA SHOULD BE WORKED OUT
28/07/97	Daily News	Moses Kifururu, Dodoma	BOMANI PROPOSES SPECIAL COURTS FOR SEX OFFENDERS
28/07/97	Daily News		SEX MANIACS HAVE A PRICE TO PAY

28/07/97	Nipashe	Bonifasi Luhanga, Dodoma	THERE SHOULD BE FOUND A COMMITTEE TO DEAL WITH RAPING AND SODOMISING - MPs
28/07/97	SHABA	Seraph Kuandika, Dodoma	RAPING MAKE THE NATION TO LOOSE GOOD FUTURE LEADERS – SEMINAR
28/07/97	Mtanzania	Correspondent, Dodoma	SUMAYE BESEECHES THE MPs NOT TO GO TO THE AUCTION TODAY • He beseeches them to attend TAMWA seminar
28/07/97	Mtanzania	Letter: Ali Hassan Fanon	CONGRATULATIONS TAMWA FOR A SEMINAR ABOUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT
28/07/97	The Guardian	Emmanuel Kwitema	PICTURE (TAMWA Symposium)
28/07/97	The Guardian	Emmanuel Kwitema	PICTURE (TAMWA Symposium)
28/07/97	Nipashe	Emmanuel Kwitema	PICTURE (TAMWA Symposium)
29/07/97	Nipashe	Fikira Kissimba	RUKWA WOMEN SUPPORT TAMWA
29/07/97	ALASIRI	Joyce Bazira	TAMWA DEBATE: VIJEMBE VIBWEKA AND MPs WORRIES TO BE SODOMISED
29/07/97	HEKO	Correspondent	MPs CONDEMN TAMWA FOR DESPISING THE JOURNALISTS
30/07/97	Mtanzania	Mariam Mniga	RAPING: WHICH PUNISHMENT IS SUITABLE CASTRATION, INJECTION OR DEATH BY A GUN? • Members of parliament are still meditating on this issue
30/07/97	The Guardian	Festus Mangwangi, NSTI	DAR RESIDENTS DIFFER WITH JUDGE OVER COURTS FOR RAPIST
30/07/97	HEKO		THE PARLIAMENT ASKED US FOR ALLOWANCE – TAMWA
31/07/97	The Express	Rownsom M. Mallya	MOTHERS OF TOMORROW MISTREATED
31/07/97	The Express	Mwanahawa Mhando	SEX: DODOMA'S BEST ENTERTAINMENT
31/07/97	Sanifu	Bondabo	CARTOON
02/08/97	Shaba	Seraph Kuandika	DEBATE MEMBERS DISCRIMINATED BY TAMWA – DODOMA
05/08/97	Dar Leo	Leah Samike	POLITICS IS FULL OF INSULTS – TAMWA
09/08/97	Nipashe	Peter Msamba	TAMWA AND STRIVE FOR WOMEN RIGHTS
11/08/97	---	Editorial comment	TAMWA SHOULD NOT SWORE FROM TANZANIAN MORAL
12/08/97	Majira	Correspondent	LAW FACILITATORS SHOULD BE TRAINED – TAMWA
14/08/97	Alasiri	Khalifan Said	PICTURE (TAMWA Symposium)
15/08/97	Dar Leo	Reginald Simon	THE WAY TAMWA FIRED IN DODOMA

---	---	Mishele Nyirenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the Parliament weep • Commission on human rights to be formed <p>A WOMEN MOCKED IN DAR FOR PUTTING ON SHORT DRESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She runs to buy «kitenge» to cover her up • Noises of TAMWA ... TAMWA heard
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Inventory listing, Radio Tanzania - News (from RTD's library)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Heading - theme</u>
16/07/97	11 am	The Government has promised to bring before the parliament amendments of the law in order to fight against the increase of violence against women and children and to defend women's rights in the country.
16/07/97		TAMWA has organized a meeting, to inform journalists about the MPs debate which will be held in Dodoma next week - which is part of TAMWA's efforts to fight against various evils done to women and children.
16/07/97	8 pm	Informs about TAMWA's request to the MPs to listen to women and children who have been victimized of rape , so they can see the seriousness and suggest measures against such evils.
16/07/97	10pm	SUMMARY: Summarizes/repeats that some women and children will get a chance to explain to the MPs how they have been demoralized by rape and defilement.
16/07/97	11pm	POINTS: Repeats the government's expression to present amendments in favor of women's rights. Repeats live testimonies under TAMWA Symposium.
20/07/97	8 pm	Reports upon members (TAMWA) of the MPs debate leaving Dar es Salaam to Dodoma, more than a 100.
22/07/97	4 pm	The Minister for Community, Women and Children, Hon. Mary Nagu, says that the Government is looking for funds to conduct research on oppression and violence against children.

Newspapers coverage: TAMWA Symposium (July/August)⁴

	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
The Guardian/ Sunday Observer		*										**		*																	
Daily News/ Sunday News					*								**																		
The Express															**																
Uhuru/ Mzalendo					*		*					*																			
Mtanzania/ Rai										*	**	**		*																	
Majira		*						*	*																		*				
Nipashe								*				**	*											*							
Shaba												**					*														
Heko							*				*		*	*																	
Alasiri	*												*																	*	
Dar Leo																				*											*
Sanifu															*																

Radio & TV

	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		
News												*****					*		*											
Women & Devel.																	*													
Special programs	*														*							*								
Live program																							*							
Women Journal (TV)																			*							*				

⁴ Three articles are lacking name of newspaper or date (or both). These are not included in the overview.

APPENDIX E

Sexual Offences Special Provision Bill' 98

- **Media coverage in newspapers, radio (RTD) and TV (CTN)**
- **Parliamentary Committee for Women Affairs and other Special Groups;
3-day meeting March 31 - April 2 1998**
- **Parliamentary Session 16-21 April 1998**

Newspaper coverage (including Sunday editions):

English papers (3 newspapers):	27 articles
Kiswahili papers (7 dailies, 1 weekly)	53 articles
Total	80 articles

Radio coverage, Radio Tanzania (RTD):

Radio Tanzania News & Commentaries, Majira (evening; 08.00pm): 14 items
 Women & Development (Sun. 05/04/98 11.00-11.30 am)
 Women & Development (Sun. 19/04/98 11.00-11.30 am)
 Parliamentary discussions (17/04/98)
 Parliamentary discussions (20/04/98)

TV

CTN: Wakati Wako, April (Interview with TAMWA)

TAMWA Publications/Radio-program (RTD)

Sauti ya Siti: A Tanzanian Women`s Magazine (totally 10 main articles/20 pages)
 TAMWA-Supplement/pull out, Daily News 10/12/98
 KIOO 15/04/98;20.15-20.30
 KIOO 22/04/98;20.15-20.30

APPENDIX F

Kiswahili plays

Overview over Swahili plays included in this research:

DATE	TIME	CANNEL	THEME	FOCUS GROUPS
23/09/97	6.30-7.00 pm	Kiswahili play, CTN	Upbringing: The way you bring up a child	Secretaries
29/11/97		Kiswahili play, ITV	Harassment: The house girl	Barmaids, house girls
20/12/97 Saturday	11.05-11.30 pm	Kiswahili play, ITV (Mambo Hayo)	Marriage: The gold-digger - lesson learned	Male petty traders
25/12/97	06.30-07.00 pm	Kiswahili play, CTN	Marriage: X'mas play: Infidelity	Bankers
08/01/98	06.30-07.00 pm	Kiswahili play, CTN	Marriage: Modern/traditional marriage	Small scale business women gr. 1& 2; tourist coach workers

Kiswahili plays - summaries

(I) "Marriage - between modern and traditional"

Janet comes into an office looking for a job. She wants to see the boss, but a secretary doesn't allow her. Cheni, one of the employees, comes in and invites Janet to his office. Cheni finds Janet very attractive and they agreed to meet the next day on the beach.

Morani, a friend of Cheni enters Cheni's house. By this time Janet live together with Cheni. Cheni informs his friend that he wants to send his parents a telegram to inform them about his marriage plans. Morani advises Cheni to go to his parents in the village by himself and explain all the details of his marriage to his parents, but Cheni don't take his advice. While Cheni is waiting for the reply from his parents, his uncle comes from the village with a lady that his father has married for him. Cheni tries to explain for his uncle what has happened, but his uncle doesn't listen to him, gives him the new wife and leaves. Cheni gets confused, he has to respect his father's decision, and so he can't abandon his legal wife, Mbamba. At he same time, he wants to live with Janet, the wife he has chosen. He therefore decides to live with to wives. Janet threatens to leave, but Cheni manages to stop her.

Cheni, Janet and Mbamba now live together in the same house. Janet mistreats Mbamba, she rebukes her and insults her that she is a traditional woman. Cheni also mistreats her, and for some days Cheni and Janet leave her alone in the house. A neighbor comes over, finding Mbamba alone who has been feeding on food prepared several days ago. The neighbor lady laughs at her, tells her to go out and spend as well, but Mbamba says she can't go out without permission of her husband. The neighbor disperses her, tells her that she is too traditional, but promises to help her find her husband.

(II) “Xmas play - infidelity”

Tulasi comes back home. His wife is cleaning the house ready for Christmas celebrations. She complains to her husband for not buying her a new Christmas dress.

Sikumbili brings her wife Kadada a new gown for Christmas. Kadada is extremely happy, new clothes for their child Gift would be brought later. Sikumbili informs his wife that he will leave for a party. Kadada get disappointed. She tells him “you have given me everything, but one this is lacking, that is Love. Kadada is not comfortable with Sikumbili’s decision to leave her alone but Sikumbili doesn’t care, he leaves.

Tulasi leaves his wife at home and goes to a sweeter, Happy. Tulasi tells Happy that at Christmas he can’t stay with his wife but he likes to spend with attractive ladies like her. Tulasi brings with him a very nice gown for Christmas to Happy. Happy asks him whether she also bought one for his legal wife. Tulasi says that he will buy her cheap second hand clothes at Manzesi. Happy supports him, she even advises him to go to Tandale area where he can get the most rejected cheapest second hand clothes.

Sikumbili meets his friend Kitunguu. He tells his friend that it is hot at home, “my wife is furious with me because I told her I will leave for a party, I bought her everything for Christmas, women are never contented” he argue. Sikumbili tells Kitunguu that he has planned to go to spend with his concubine Rita. Kitunguu discourages him, he urges him to abandon Rita and stay at home with his wife, “that is what love means in the family,” he tells him. While discussing this, Tulasi joins them and he invites them to his home place during the Christmas. In the Christmas day, Sikumbili and Tulasi left their wives at home and went to spend with other women; this makes these wives very unhappy.

(III) “The gold-digger girl - lesson learned”

In this play, Ritch introduces his fiance Waridi to Aisha, his sister. Aisha is very happy about this and she explains to Waridi about good behavior of Ritch. Ritch takes his fiancé to his close friend Bishanga to introduce her to him. Bishanga is a very rich businessman. While Bishanga, Waridi and Ritch were chatting at Bishanga’s home place, Ritch goes to make a call to one of his friend. Bishanga uses this opportunity to establish a love relationship with Waridi. They arrange to meet the same day evening.

From this day, Waridi abandons Ritch and she starts going around with Bishanga, her fiancé’s best friend. Three months later, Ritch goes to Aisha’s home place, complaining about Waridi. They don’t communicate. Ritch tells Aisha that he heard rumors that Waridi goes to Bishanga’s home place every day. He beseeches Aisha to try to investigate about it. Ritch decides to go to Bishanga and ask him about it. As he reached Bishanga’s place, he meets Waridi there. He becomes furious and commands Waridi to tell him what is happening. Waridi becomes also furious against Ritch. She tells him that he is too poor to marry her: “I am tired of walking on foot”, she argues. Ritch leaves home very confused.

Not long time passes, Waridi comes to Aisha crying and complaining that Bishanga deceived her that he would marry her. Aisha is not sympathetic to her at all; she tells her that she deserves it because she is after money and cars. After a while, Ritch comes in. He got a new fiancé and they are going to marry in the next month. Waridi asks for forgiveness from Ritch but he doesn’t heed her, “it is too late” he tells her. Ritch leaves the place and Aisha chases Waridi away.

(IV) “The way you bring up a child”

In this play, Kadada is a form one student who has developed love affairs with Sikumbili. Sikumbili is also a student, so he relies on his parents for everything. Kadada brings her mother a lot of presents that she is given by Sikumbili. Kadada’s mother called Bi-Chema never bothers to investigate how her daughter gets those presents. While this was happening, Tulasi, Kadada’s father had gone to Nairobi.

One day, Kitunguu, Kadada’s uncle brings Tulasi a message but he doesn’t find him in. While Bi-Chema and Kitunguu were just chatting, Kadada came in with some presents and gave them to her mother. She told her that she was given by some friends. Bi-Chema was very happy with the presents but Kitunguu warned her saying that she should not accept that kind of presents because she might be getting them from some men who may be misleading her. Bi-Chema was furious and chased Kitunguu away saying that he was envying her.

Kadada became pregnant. She was suspended from school and her mother chased her away. She went to her boyfriend, Sikumbili and told her that she was suspended from school and her mother didn’t want to see her. Sikumbili refused to accommodate her and told her he doesn’t have money for caring for her. He said that he depends on his parents for everything, Kadada returned to her home crying. When she entered in the house, her mother became very angry; she started to force her off. When she was

doing so, Kitunguu came in and found them quarrelling. When he learnt that she was chasing her away because she had become pregnant, he warned her not to chase her away and said that she should accept her pregnancy in the same way as she accepted the presents which Kadada was bringing her.

Tulasi, Kadada's father came back and his wife informed her that their daughter became pregnant and she was suspended from school. She told him that she forced her to and live with a person who made her pregnant. Tulasi was very annoyed. He told her that she should not chase her away because she can commit suicide. He gave her two hours to go and bring Kadada back.

(V) "The house girl"

Waridi is a rural girl who has just come to town to look for a job. She meets a woman on a street and she directs her to Bishanga's house. Bishanga lives with his sister and brother Aisha and Ritch.

Bishanga and his relatives investigate Waridi on how she got information and how she managed to come to town. Waridi sold some crops she harvested in the village to get fare. Bishanga summons his relatives in the sitting room. He tells Waridi to do whatever she is told otherwise she would eat herself. He tells her that her salary will be 4,500/= per month. Aisha and Ritch complain about this salary. They are saying: it is too much. Bishanga agrees to give her 3000/= per month. Then they start giving her rules, how she should behave in the house. Bishanga tells her, she should not use the sitting room, not touch TV, she should eat in the kitchen and the rest, and she should follow Aisha and Ritch's commands.

Aisha tells her not to sit on the coaches, nor use the indoor latrines. (They laugh at her).

Aisha comes in and finds her ironing. She insults her because she has put on transparent 'Kanga' to intimidate her brothers, she says she is lazy. Everybody in the house assigns her so much work that she can't finish all of them. Aisha punishes her. Ritch also give Waridi a lot of clothes to wash. He orders her to have ironed them by 4.00 p.m. in spite of other work she has to do.

Ritchie tries to force her to his room but she resists. He lets her go after insulting her.

TWO WEEKS LATER.

Waridi takes her bag and informs Bishanga that she is tired of staying with them so she wants to leave.

Ritch calls Aisha and Ritch and asks them whatever there something is wrong.

Waridi tells Bishanga: Aisha insults her, beats her and the other day she fell her in the kitchen. Also she says that Aisha pours water into her bed at night if she delays to open the door for her. She also says that Ritch peeps into her when she is taking shower and he forced her into his room.

Ritchie and Aisha deny all these; they are saying she is a liar. Bishanga promises to send her home the next day. THE END.

Appendix G

Interview guide - personal interviews

“Standard”

I. Media access/-use/-habits

1) Do you use mass media on a regular basis? Which? (Why not?)

- radio, tv, newspapers, magazines etc.

2) Do you have any special newspapers you like to read? Which? Why?

- anything specific you like to read in the paper (s)?
(i.e. sports, politics, social reportage, domestic/international news, commentaries/analysis, editorial)
- where do you usually read the newspaper?

3) Do you have any special channels/programs on radio you like listening to? Which? Why?

- information/news/debate
- educational plays (Twende na Wakati?)
- women documentaries (Women Liberation, Women and Development)

b) Where and with whom do you usually listen to the radio?

- home, friends house, work etc.
- family, relatives, friends, neighbors etc.

4) Do you have any special channels/program on television you like to watch?

- information/news/debate
- educational plays (Kulikone?)
- entertainment (Kiswahili plays?)
- women documentaries (Jarida La Wanawake?)

b) Where and with whom do you usually watch television?

- do you have Tv at home?

5) Do you talk about programs, news or articles in the media with other people? Who? Where?

- home, friends house, school/work, organization/club etc.
- family, relatives, friends, neighbors, school mates/colleagues, fellow members etc.

6) Do you perceive media as an important part of your life? Why? Why not?

7) If it was up to you, is there anything you would like to change regarding the mass media? What?

- Location of media institutions? Who should work there?
- What should it cost

b) Is there anything special you miss in the media (programs, themes, people)?

II Problems/issues of concern & information gathering

1) What is the most important problems or concerns you are facing in your everyday life?

- work/education/school
- family matters
- economy/household
- health, nutrition
- environment

b) Who do you talk to about these problems/concerns?

- Family, relatives, husbands, neighbors, work/school mates, organization members etc.?
- Where do you talk about these things? How often?
- If you need an advice - who would be the single most important person to talk to?

b) Are the mass media of any use to get information about these matters? Which medium/program? How?

2) Is there any other, more general problems in society/public issues you find important - which you are concerned about? What?

b) Who do you talk to about these issues?

- Family, relatives, husbands, neighbors, work/school mates, organization members etc.?
- Where do you talk about these things? How often?
- If you need an advice - who would be the single most important person to talk to?

c) Are the mass media of any use to get information or knowledge about these matters?

- Which medium/programs? How? Why not?

3) If it was up to you, is there anything you would like to change in the society? What?

4) What do you think about women/girls situation vs. men/boys situation in society?

- school/workplace
- in the family
- politics
- economics
- development

5) Have you ever thought about how women/girls are represented or portrayed in the media vs. men/boys?

- anything you don't like?

6) If it was up to you, is there anything you would like to change concerning women/girls situation in society vs. men/boys situation in society? What?

b) Are you able to talk about these things? Who? Why not?

- do you have somebody to talk with concerning what it means to be a woman/girl or a man/boy?

7) Have the mass media ever played an important source of information in your life?

- If yes, can you name some episodes...when was it? In what way?

III Democracy and media

1) In 1995 multiparty democracy was introduced in Tanzania. Do you have any opinions about that?

- How do you feel about it?
- What does democracy mean to you?
- Is there any specific values about multiparty democracy that you find important?

2) Do you feel that the introduction of a multiparty democracy have had any impact for women/girls situation in society?

- Does it have any practical consequences for your life?

3) How did (do) you get information/knowledge about the introduction of a multiparty system?

b) Who did (do) you talk to about these matters?

- Family, relatives, husbands, neighbors, work/school mates, organization members etc.?

c) Did (do) you use mass media in gathering information about it?

- If yes, did the media have any impact on your choice/voting?
- If you didn't vote - what stopped you?

3) Did you vote under the election in 1995? (if able to vote). If yes, how did you know what to vote for? If you didn't, what stopped you?

IV) Background/personal data

- age
- family situation
- live in which area of Dar
- come from which area in Tanzania
- tribe
- religion
- school/workplace/occupation (for how long?)
- income
- educational background
- member of any organization, group activity or political party etc.

Appendix H

Interview guide - reception interview

Introduction

First of all I like to thank you all for participating in my project. My name is Jill Johannessen and this is my assistant Phillip. We have now come to the second interview which we will conduct as a discussion based on selected media text. These interviews are part of my Ph.D. project about *Gender, Media and Development: The role of the media in the cultural struggle of gender transformation in Tanzania*. So to today we will show you a sequence from of a Swahili play, and follow up with discussion around the text. We want to focus on how you understand and respond to the play and what they mean to you.

Please, speak frankly. No names will be used in my thesis, and what are being discussed here today I want to be kept in this room to sustain you anonymity. Also, this interview depend on your active participation

→ Present item: Kiswahili play: «Marriage - tradition & modern»

Open questions (general)

What is your first impression of what I just showed you? What was it about?

- Can you tell me about what you were thinking when you watched this play?
- Did you notice anything special of what they said or in the picture? What?

- Can you tell me more about that
- Did you notice anything else

Can you identify certain themes that are involved in the text???

- marriage, love relationship
- traditional/modern, rural/urban way
- the rural women (treatment)

Can you think of any reasons and effects for the parents to choose husbands/wives for their children? What are your opinions on this matter?

Can you think of how this denial and harassment of the 2. wife is effecting her?

Does the play take up an important issue? How? Why?

→ **Replay Item**

We will now show you the same text one more time. Try to look carefully at the characters involved.

II Focused questions (gender)

- Did you notice anything special when watching the character(s) carefully?
 - Does anything come to your mind when I ask you to view this as a woman/man?
 - What do you think about the relations between the husbands and the wives in the play?
 - Who is the one to blame for this situation? Who do you sympathize with?
 - Do you think that the portrayal of the female or male characters were fair?
 - Can you think about other and maybe better ways to present or angle the story?
-
- Can you tell me more about that
 - Did you notice anything else

Personal experience

- Was the situation a familiar one?
 - Is it a typical situation for a woman (man) to be in?
 - Have you or anybody you know had any similar experience (s)?
-
- Can you tell me more about that
 - Did you notice anything else

APPENDIX I

List over people interviewed using the interview guide

No.	Group/occupation	Sex	Age	Education	Family status	Tribe	Region	Residence	Religion
01	House girl	F	24	Primary	Single/home	Mmakuwa	Morogoro	Mwananyamala	Christian
02	House girl	F	19	Primary	Single/home	Mhehe	Iringa	Buguruni	Christian
03	House girl	F	15	Primary	Single/relatives	Mhehe	Iringa	Kiwalini	Christian
04	Barmaid	F	22	Primary	Single/alone	Mngoni	Morogoro	Vingunguti	Muslim
05	Barmaid	F	24	Primary	Single/sister	Mbondei	Tanga	Ilala	Muslim
06	Barmaid	F	20	Primary/not passed	Single/relatives	Mzigua	Pwani	Temeke	Muslim
07	Barmaid	F	21	Secondary form 3	Single/siblings	Mhaya	Kagera	Ilala	Catholic
08	Nursery school teacher (YMCA) ⁵	F	38	Primary 2 y. child care	Married/5 kids	Msambaa	Tanga	Buguruni	Christian
09	Nursery school teacher	F	23	Primary	Single/home	Nyamwezi	DSM	Unknown	Muslim
10	Nursery school teacher	F	29	Primary, tailoring	Married/kids	Nyiramba	Singida	Ubungo	Christian
11	Nursery school teacher	F	31	Primary Child physic therapy	Married/no children	Chagga	Moshi	Kurasini	Christian
12	Secretary/computers	F	32	Sec. form 6 Banking certificate	Married/4 kids	Msawa	Mbeya	Temeke	Babtist
13	Secretary/computers	F	32	Sec. form 4 Secretary course	Single/mother	Mhaya	Kanyigu	Keko	Christian
14	Secretary/computers	F	28	Sec. form 2 Computer course	Living with a man	Msukuma	Mwanza	Mabibo	Christian
15	Secretary/computers	F	29	Sec. form 4, typing	Married/1 child	Mhaya	Kagera	Kilwa rd.	Muslim

⁵ Nursery school teachers (no. 8-11) were all working at the same school run by YMCA (Young Women Catholic Association).

No.	Group/occupation	Sex	Age	Education	Family status	Tribe	Region	Residence	Religion
16	Teenage mother (TYC) ⁶	F	15	Continuing primary std. 6	Single/home	Pare	Kilimanjaro	Tabata	Christian
17	Teenage mother	F	17	Continuing primary std. 6	Single/home	Chagga	Kilimanjaro	Mtoni	Christian
18	Teenage mother	F	17	Continuing primary std. 6	Single/brother	Wafipa	Sumbawanga	Ukonga	Catholic
19	Teenage mother	F	17	Continuing primary std. 7	Single/home	Mkindo	Pwani	Tandika	Muslim
20	Youth peer volunteer	F	18	Att. Sec. form 3	Single/mother	Wajitta	Mara	Kurasini	Catholic
21	Youth peer volunteer	F	19	Sec. form 4 Att. Nursing college	Single/home	Msukum	Mwanza	Mtoni	Muslim
22	Youth peer volunteer	F	20	Primary	Single/home	Mgogo	Dodoma	Mtoni	Muslim
23	SCBW (SERO) ⁷ Eggs/buns/samosa	F	36	Primary	Married/7 kids	Mha	Kigoma	Sinza	Christian
24	SCBW Secretarial services	F	39	Sec. form 4	Married/5 kids	Sukuma	Mwanza	Ukonga	Catholic
25	SCBW Buns/cakes/chapati	F	36	Primary	Married/2 kids	Mluguru	Morogoro	Unkown	Muslim
26	SCBW, tailoring	F	38	Sec. form 4	Single/2 kids/rel.	Mhaya	Bukoba	Mlalakuwa	Catholic
27	SCBW, furniture work	F	51	Sec. form 4	Married/4 kids	Nyakyusa	Mbeya	Mbezi Beach	Christian
28	SCBW Tailoring	F	50	Secondary Teacher college	Married/5 kids	Yao	Mtwara	Kiondoni	Christian
29	SCBW Fish/eggs	F	59	Secondary Diploma adult edu.	Widow/ 5 kids	Unknown	Ruvuma	Regent Estate	Christian
30	SCBW Diary project	F	51	Secondary Diploma	Married/4 kids	Chagga	Kilimanjaro	Kawe Beach	Christian

⁶ Teenage mothers and youth peer volunteers all belonged to Temeke Youth Center (TYC) run by UMATI.

⁷ Small-scale business women (SCBW) all belonged to SERO (Woman NGO for "Women in Business").

No.	Group/occupation	Sex	Age	Education	Family status	Tribe	Region	Residence	Religion
31	Petty trader, carpentry	M	34	Primary	Married/4 kids	Mhehe	Lindi	Keko	Catholic
32	Petty trader, signs	M	30	Cooperative college	Single/home	Zaramo	DSM	Kigamboni	Muslim
33	Petty trader/ unemployed	M	33	Secondary, account certificate	Divorced/2 kids/ friends	Mdengereko	Pwani	Mtoni	Muslim
34	Petty trader, carpentry	M	23	Sec. form 6	Single/home	Unknown	DSM	Mburahati	Catholic
35	Tourist coach agent	M	28	Sec. form 4	Married/1 child	Chagga	Moshi	Tabata	Muslim
36	Tourist coach agent	M	27	Sec. form 4	Single/friend	Chagga	Moshi	Sinza	Muslim
37	Tourist coach agent	M	24	Sec. form 4	Single/2 sisters	Mhaya	Mikoba	Sinza	Catholic
38	Banker	M	41	BA Economics Part-time university	Married/4 kids	Luo	Muzoma	Sinza	Christian
39	Banker	M	41	Sec. form 4, Div. certificates	Married/4 kids	Chagga	Kilimanjaro	Kijitonyam	Christian
40	Banker	M	34	Sec. form 4, Div. certificates	Married/2 kids	Wakuria	Mara	Vingunguti	Catholic
41	Banker	M	25	Post-graduate fin. management	Single	Asian-Indian	Dodoma	Kariakoo	Unknown
42	Youth volunteer/stud. ⁸	M	19	Primary, att. Sec.	Single/home	Shirazi	Coastal	Mtoni	Muslim
43	Youth peer volunteer	M	20	Primary	Single/home	Mzigua	Unknown	Keko	Catholic
44	Youth peer volunteer	M	21	Primary	Single/home	Zaramo	Coastal	Temeke	Muslim
45	Youth peer volunteer	M	19	Primary	Single/home	Mnyakyusa	DSM	Temeke	Muslim
46	Activist TAMWA	F	49	Historian	Divorced/3 kids	Unknown	DSM	Upanga	Unknown
47	Activist TAWLA	F	44	Lawyer	Married/3 kids	Mhaya	Mikoba	Unknown	Christian
48	Activist TGPNP	M	36	BA degree	Married/1 child	Mgita Ukerewe	Lake Victoria	Mabibo	7days Adventist
49	Activist UMATI	M	36	Master in health and fam.planning	Married/2kids	Mnyasa	Ruvuma	Kimara	Christian

⁸ Male youth peer volunteers all belonged to Temeke Youth Center. Except for no. 43, who was waiting to start Secondary School, they were all unemployed.

50	Activist WLEA	M	36	University degree, law	Married/4 kids	Mhaya	Lake region	Segerea	Catholic
51	Activist NOCHU	M	46	Secondary Inst. of Dev. Manag.	Divorced/live with 4 kids	Mndamba	Morogoro	Sinza	Unknown

APPENDIX J

Media preferences according to group membership

Choice of newspapers according to group membership

Groups/ Newspapers	Female youths (7)	House girls (3)	Barmaids (4)	Teachers (4)	Secretaries (4)	Business women (8)	S U M	Male youth s (4)	Petty traders (4)	Tourist agents (3)	Bankers (4)	S U M	Activists Female & male (6)	TOTAL
The Guardian					1	1	2			2	3	5	3	10
Daily News					1	2	3				2	2	2	7
Majira	3		2	2	1	2	10	3	1	1		5	4	19
Mtanzania	3		1	2	1	3	10						3	13
Nipashe	5		1	1	2	3	12	2	1	2		5		17
Alasiri		1	3		2		6	1				1		7
Dar Leo	1	1	2		1		5	1				1		6
Uhuru	1		1			2	4				2	2		6
Kashese	1	3					4	1				1		5
Sanifu	2	1					3		1			1		4
Taifa Letu	1					1	2							2
Letha Raha									1			1		1
Business Times						1	1	1		1	2	4		5
Financial Times											1	1		1

Radio preferences according to group membership

Groups/ Newspapers	Female youths (7)	House girls (3)	Barmaids (4)	Teachers (4)	Secre- taries (4)	Business women (8)	S U M	Male youth s (4)	Petty traders (4)	Tourist agents (3)	Bankers (4)	S U M	Activists F & M (6)	TOTAL
News	4	2	2	4	4	7	23	2	2	1	2	7	4	30
Majira ⁹	1			1		2	4				1	1		5
BBC						1	1				2	2	1	4
Radio plays	2			3		1	6		1			1	2	9
Women's programs	2		1	3	1	5	12						2	14
Music		2	3		2	1	8	2	3		2	7	2	17
Health	2		2	1	1	2	8		1			1	1	10
Sports	2		1		1	1	5		4	1	1	6		11
Others	1					2	3		1	1		2	1	6
Total	14	4	9	12	9	22	70	4	12	3	8	27	13	110
Index*	2	1.3	2.3	3	2.3	2.8	2.3	1	3	1	2	1.8	2.2	2.2

* Index = Total amount of radio programs listened too per group/number of group members. The index is only a rough indicator of which groups listen to the radio the most.

⁹ Majira is a news program reporting from the different regions in Tanzania.

Television preferences according to group membership

Groups/ Newspapers	Female youths (7)	House girls (3)	Barmaids (4)	Teachers (4)	Secretaries (4)	Business women (8)	S U M	Male youths (4)	Petty traders (4)	Tourist agents (3)	Bankers (4)	S U M	Activists F & M (6)	TOTAL
News	5	1	3	2	1	6	18	1	1	3	4	9	5	32
BBC/CNN						2	2			2	3	5	2	9
Swahili plays		1	1	2	2	5	11	1		1		2	3	16
Women's Journal	2				2	3	7						2	9
Music	2	1	1				4			1		1		5
Health	1				1		2				1			3
Sports	2	1	2	2	1	1	9	3	2	2	2	9	1	19
Eng./Am. drama, film comedies	1	1	1				3			1	1	2	3	7
African Journal	1				1		2		1	1		2	2	6
Factual local programs	1					1	2		1		1	2	1	5
Total	15	5	8	6	8	18	60	5	5	11	12	32	19	111
Index*	2.1	1.7	2	1.5	2	2.3	2	1.3	1.3	3.7	3	2.1	3.1	2.2

* Index = Total amount of TV-programs watched per group/number of group members. The index is only a rough indicator of which groups watch television most.

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