

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN NIGERIA: IMPERATIVES OF HOUSEHOLD ICTS

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ABSTRACT

ICTs such as television, the Internet and mobile phones have assumed a growing presence within the modern households and have made an undeletable imprint on family dynamics and parenting. Though, several gender studies have vouched to understand ICT domestication from the perspective of mothers, however the influence of social and cultural factors on the adoption and appropriation of ICTs has not been as widely studied as expected by scholars in the field. Therefore, in order to better explicate the influence of socio-cultural factors on mothers' domestication of ICTs, this paper delves to explore how mothers incorporate ICTs into their household routines and how they utilise ICTs as they fulfill their matrimonial responsibilities in managing their homes, coordinating schedules, fostering family interaction and supervising their children. Also, the paper highlights on how mothers screen and oversee their children's ICT use. The paper argues that cultural conceptions of motherhood and maternal responsibility, the premium placed on academic achievement by children, as well as the society's highly positive outlook on technology, greatly influence how mothers use and supervise their children's use of ICTs. The paper professes that the mothers are creative in deploying ICTs in coordinating schedules with, disciplining and monitoring their children. The study concludes that perpetual mothering which is ICT-based could be burdensome and stressful.

KEYWORDS: ICT, domestication, household, telecommunication, ICT and Motherhood, Family and ICT

INTRODUCTION

The past 20th century had witnessed a tremendous series of changes in our post-modern society. One of the most important has been the transformation of the social role of women. Historically, women have been involved in jobs without remuneration, typically working in domestic labour. But in the last years their progressive incorporation into the labour market has supposed a point of inflexion. During the last decades, the labour force participation rate for women has been raised dramatically. This massive incorporation of women to the labour market has also stimulated their possibilities of access to the new technologies. However, a

gender digital divide still exist, not only in the developing countries, but also in some developed countries, such as Spain. In most cases, in contrast to the general patterns of women participation increase, the gender distribution of ICT-specialist is an outlier (Gargallo-Castel, Esteban-Salvador, & Pérez-Sanz, 2010).

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) permeate every aspect of our lives; from community radios in the most rural parts of the globe to cellular phones in the hands of women and men in every community on earth, to computers in almost every medium to large organization. The advancement of ICTs has brought new opportunities for both knowledge sharing and knowledge gathering for both women and men. To the extent that the global community can reach heretofore unconnected individuals, families, and populations to better understand their needs and challenges, ICTs can provide unlimited opportunities for economic development and social engagement through new innovative thinking and tools. However, a basic assumption is that all members of our global community benefit from and are part of the growing knowledge society. ICTs have been compared to a double edged sword - advancing the knowledge society on one hand and deepening gender and social divides based on pre-existing social divisions on the other. Leaving large portions of the global community both undeserved and unengaged remains the largest determinant of success for current development efforts. Specifically, without a thoughtful policy, strategy, and execution plan to ensure women's full engagement in the knowledge society, the places in which they work, the families for whom they care, and the communities in which they live and serve will not thrive. The belief that one policy fits all has clearly demonstrated a lack of effectiveness over the years with a loss of billions of dollars and millions of hours of labor leading to little achievement towards the millennium development goals. (Melhem & Tandon, 2009).

However, over the last few years homes have become increasingly "connected", both internally and to the outside world. It is therefore suffice to see a variety of broadband access networks appear to deliver digital content to the home, both Internet based and broadcast. Therefore, an increasing number of homes have multiple PCs and are beginning to connect them to the internet. Yet, as other consumer devices also become digital, even they will also become connected. While the role of the PC and its software changed significantly in business when PCs moved from stand-alone to connected, it is very much expected that new roles and capabilities will appear for the PC at home as it develops continuous connections to other devices. In this paper, the researcher discusses the technologies that are appearing and how they will impact the function and role of the PC in the domestic context. Additionally, this paper will help to boost understanding of issues surrounding the domestication of telecommunication and impact of their functions. This paper is being delineated into several headings and subtopics by asking some pertinent questions to serve a guiding light into the discussions. In what way have families been using multimedia? In what way have PCs been used in managing the home? What are the social trends that will have a bearing on the future use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) generally? Therefore, this paper will provide answers to the following questions which will guide the discussions in this paper. Also, the paper will anchor the discussions on possible theoretical framework by highlighting on applicable theory in the area. Finally, the paper pinpointed

some implications of Social and Cultural Factors on mother's domestication of Household ICTs.

WHAT ARE THE TELECOMMUNICATION 'NEEDS' OF DOMESTIC PHONE USERS?

Over the course of the last six years research has been conducted in the UK on the consumption of domestic ICTs. The work was initiated by scholars at Brunel University and Sussex University, where a team developed general theoretical frameworks and carried out an empirical case studies of teleworkers, lone parents and the young elderly, each of whom were seen as strategic for developing different facets of the study framework (Haddon & Silverstone, 1993). Apart from the individual reports on each social grouping, examples from all three have been used to exploring themes such as issues around the phone (Haddon, 1994), how access to ICTs relate to debates about new 'haves' and 'have-nots' (Silverstone, 1994) and the longer term careers of ICTs after they have been acquired (Haddon, 1994).

In this study, Haddon (1995) mentioned that the potential for domestic ICTs usage has usually been discussed in very utilitarian terms. For example, what are the possible applications, uses, benefits and, more problematically, how they might fulfill consumer 'needs'. Such an approach emphasises the functionality of technology. Of course, this is not to deny that technologies are used to achieve ends, but they are simultaneously symbolic goods. This dimension becomes clearer at some points more than others: when people talk of the Yuppie mobile phone, the aesthetics of satellite dishes or the latest 'must have' consumer electronic which is in fashion. There is also a good deal more to the process of consuming of ICTs than mere use. Their presence is the subject of negotiation, they have to be located and at times relocated in the home, access to them is regulated and sometimes contested, software is exchanged and both ICTs as objects and the media content which they can deliver provide topics of conversation both inside and outside the home. Hence, there is more to the experience of TV, to home computing or to games-playing than the moment spent in front of the screen. She draws attention to the way many ICT developers focus on the 'family', which usually means the nuclear family. For example, let us consider the adverts or advertising copy which depict scenarios where father, mother and the children can all find different uses for some new black box. This stereotype remains an important guide both for producers and researchers: this is the mass market as opposed to niche markets. But certainly in the UK, nuclear families now constitute a minority of all households at any one time. Therefore, we need to be more sensitive to the diversity of household forms, their dynamics and the consequent implications for ICTs.

According to ICF International (2012) reports on residential household usage of landline and cell phone in Vermont City, USA, it reported that 88 percent of Vermont households have at least one cell phone, and the average number of household members who have cell phones is 1.94. Vermont's cell phone penetration among adults is similar to the national penetration rate of 89.6 percent.¹ Vermont residential consumers spend an average of \$83 per month on cell phone service. Cell phones are being used for a variety of purposes aside from voice communications; 83 percent of cell phone consumers use their phones for texting and nearly two-thirds of cell phone consumers use their phones for data and internet connections. And approximately 6 percent of Vermonters reported replacing their landline with a cell phone.

Over half of cell phone consumers reported that their cell phone is their primary phone, and 36 percent of cell phone consumers who maintain a landline have considered dropping their landline. When asked what factors they would consider when deciding to end landline service and use a cell phone exclusively, *service quality* (including coverage and reliability) and *price* were the two factors mentioned most often. *Convenience* was mentioned by about four percent of the residential consumers. While the other responses were difficult to categorize, respondents indicated that a *lack of need* for a landline telephone would be the main reason they would eliminate their landline service (ICF International, 2012).

Using PCs as an example Haddon (1995) illustrated the temptation involved in asking what type of household data could be kept on a computer, how might household accounts be processed, when and in what forms could the computer provide entertainment. She lamented that even if a 'home' product is bought from household finances and then located and used within the home that usage may relate to people's experience beyond the domestic boundaries. In the case of PCs, at least advertisers were aware that computers might be used to assist with the homework arising from children's participation in schooling. But we need to look at the other, varied relations and involvements which household members have with the outside world and which affects what ICTs they acquire and what they subsequently do with them in the home (Haddon, 1995).

WHAT WILL FAMILIES DO WITH PC, TABLETS AND SMART-PHONES AND RELATED MULTIMEDIA?

According to Bjarin (2013) citing from the International Data Corporation (IDC) report, which shows that in the market researcher of the last quarter, PC shipments were down worldwide by 13.9%. And IDC forecasts that for all of 2013, PC shipments could be down about 7%. Even with PCs being down 7% this year, we will still see over 340 million PCs and laptops sold around the world. While we will continue to see some erosion in PC demand each year going forward, PCs will continue to play an important role in business, education and even in the home. However, their usage model will be changing, which is inevitable given the fact that the PC is no longer the center of our digital universe. However, to get an understanding about the future role of PCs, tablets and smartphones, it is important to look at how people think they will be used in homes, schools and business. For consumers, there is a real shift in the way they use digital technology. Most people's lifestyles are very mobile. They go to work, go to school, go shopping, and go on social outings. Very few people are homebound, and digital technology needs to keep pace with people's mobile lifestyles. So the technology world has given them powerful smartphones, tablets with bigger screens and laptops that are thin and light, even some with enough power to meet all of their digital needs (cited in Bjarin, 2013).

At the small-screen end, smartphones have become go-to devices for consumers and business users alike. Mary Meeker of Kleiner Perkins stated in a recent talk that "smartphones reach for the phone 150 times a day, which includes 23 times for messaging, 22 times for voice calls, 18 times for checking time, along with multiple times when using it for social media, camera, alarms, music, playing games, looking at the calendar, launching websites and using search".

Consumers and business users now have tablets to access their digital worlds, too. In fact, the proliferation of tablets — and especially relatively cheap tablets — have had a real impact on PC sales, which is partly why demand is down. We've found out that people can do about 80% of what they used to do on a PC on their tablets now, which means that a PC's importance to them has been somewhat diminished. Many in our surveys tell us that if the PC is only used 20% of the time for things like managing their media library, doing long emails and document creation, and paying their bills, that they are either going to keep their current PCs longer or if they buy new ones, they will buy a cheap PC to replace an older one.

This is both good news and bad news for PC makers. The good news is that consumers still see the need for a PC in many cases. Interestingly, we see a lot of homes now that have turned their laptops or all-in-one PCs into the home information-center, where it stays put for all to use. Their more "personal" digital screens have become tablets and smartphones, and they only default to the PC if needed for what we call heavy lifting tasks. The bad news is that for most consumers, buying mid range PCs and laptops will give way to the new normal, which will be laptops and PCs priced at under \$500. This may help drive PC numbers up a bit, but it shrinks margins and really impacts PC makers' bottom lines.

And in education, PCs and laptops are not going away anytime soon, either. School administrators are still buying PCs and laptops in pretty good numbers, with very few shifting to tablet-only programs for their students. In fact, in a lot of schools, we see tablets augmenting the students' digital experiences — not replacing the PCs or laptops that still play key roles in the educational process.

In the short term, demand for PCs will slowly decline. They will never again be at the growth levels the industry has seen for the past 25 years. However, we see them continuing to play an important role with consumers, schools and businesses even if tablets and smartphones become more central to people's digital lifestyles. In fact, a lot of us researchers believe that for at least the next five to seven years, the industry will still sell 320+ million PCs worldwide annually, regardless of the role smartphones and tablets play in our lives in the near future.

Will the day ever come when PCs as we've known them become relics of the past? Bajarin (2013) hinted that it is more likely that they (PCs) will morph into different sizes, shapes and form factors than the ones that populated our digital landscape for the last 25-30 years. In many ways, they already have. A smartphone or a tablet is just a PC in a different form factor today. But the desktop PCs and laptops we have known for much of our lives will still be a key part of our world for quite a while, acting as the digital workhorses in many homes, schools and businesses.

WHAT POSSIBLE ROLES HAVE PCs IN MANAGING THE HOME?

According to Byte-notes.com (n.d.), computer can be used at home in the following ways:

Home Budget: Computer can be used to manage Home Budget. You can easily calculate your expenses and income. You can list all expenses in one column and income in another column. Then you can apply any calculation on these columns to plan your home budget. There are also specialize software that can manage your income and expenses and generate some cool reports.

Computer Games: An important use of computers at home is playing games. Different types of games are available. These games are a source of entertainment and recreation. Many games are available that are specially developed to improve your mental capability and thinking power.

Working from Home: People can manage the office work at home. The owner of a company can check the work of the employees from home. He can control his office while sitting at home.

Entertainment: People can find entertainment on the internet. They can watch movies, listen to songs, and watch videos download different stuff. They can also watch live matches on the internet.

Information: People can find any type of information on the internet. Educational and informative websites are available to download books, tutorials etc. to improve their knowledge and learn new things.

Chatting and Social Media: People can chat with friends and family on the internet using different software like Skype etc. One can interact with friends over social media websites like Facebook, Twitter & Google Plus. They can also share photos and videos with friends (Byte-notes.com, n.d.).

As related by Genevieve Bell, an anthropologist at Intel, has quite accurately said people inhabit homes, technology powers houses. It is that sensitivity that creators of domestic technologies need to keep in mind. While most domestic technologies embody notions of efficiency, so-called labour saving devices have not actually had that effect. The change she advocates is to design not for efficiency, but for experience, affect and desire. Her manifesto is – think domestic, not digital. As an anthropologist, she believes that technology creators must draw and learn from the rich cultural heritage of the home and the hearth. Philips's Home of the Near Future is based on the belief that 'the Home of the Future will look more like the home of the past than the home of today'. Philips designed a wooden Breakfast Tray that provides a secure surface for a leisurely breakfast in bed. The soft base forms a stable, comfortable 'interface' with the body. Thanks to the magnetic metal contacts integrated into the tray, cups and plates do not slide about. Though cool to the touch themselves, the contacts also provide power to the crockery, keeping coffee and croissants warm, or orange juice and cereals cool. CounterActive, a prototype kitchen at MIT, exemplifies how the kitchen experience can be enhanced. Concealed beneath the one-inch-thick counter is a capacitive touch sensor: the recipe is projected down onto the counter, and the cook touches the countertop to move through the recipe or to glean greater details. Recipes contain side links and facts; a cherry tart recipe will tell you the number of cherries on an average tree, and a recipe for *Chicken Provençal* includes the sights and sounds of a typical French market. CounterActive blends in with the environment and architectural space of the kitchen. Its focus is not to make meal production more efficient, but to enhance the experience of cooking. It gives the cook the feeling of being able to consult others, share her own perspectives (Ogilvy & Shanghai, 2015).

Much of what we can do with technology has been enabled by networks. Online social networks are simply human activities that ride on technical communications infrastructures of wires and chips.

WHAT SOCIAL TRENDS WILL HAVE A BEARING ON THE FUTURE DOMESTIC USE OF ICTS?

And wireless communications is ramping up our ability to connect. Though it seems, at the beginning, that WiFi is largely for the business traveler who must always be in touch with his or her office, the applications are diverse and surprising. Its need is felt the most when people are otherwise disconnected. For example, on the top of Mt Everest. Or in Baghadad, described as the most wireless dependent city on the planet, with phone lines down. While WiFi is seen as a luxury in some places, in others it is a weapon, elsewhere the only way to communicate. MIT has installed WiFi base stations on inter-village buses in South India. In Tokyo, mothers can know where their fourth-graders are: as the kids can carry a wireless GPS based tracking device called Cocoscom (Ogilvy & Shanghai, (2015).

According to the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (2004), the global market for telecommunications is expanding rapidly. It is not a question of "demand pull" or "supply push". Both are happening. The interaction of these two forces has made telecommunications one of the leading growth sectors in the world economy. It has also made telecommunications one of the most important components of social, cultural and political activity.

On the demand side, growth is pulled by an increasing reliance on telecommunications and information technology in every area of human life – in all sectors of economic and social activity; in government, in the provision of public services, and in the management of public infrastructures; in the pursuit of knowledge and the expression of culture; in the control of the environment; and in response to emergencies, whether natural or man-made. As for the supply side, growth is pushed by rapid technological developments which continuously improve the efficiency of existing products, systems and services, and provide the foundation for a continuing stream of innovations in each of these areas. Particularly noteworthy is the convergence of telecommunication, information, broadcasting and publishing technologies, which has greatly enriched the communication choices available to consumers.

The effect of the fundamental forces driving demand and supply has been amplified by the worldwide trend to liberalize markets for telecommunication and information technology goods and services. As a result of this trend, the majority of telecommunication networks are now privately owned and operated. Significant developments have also taken place to introduce competition at the national, regional and international levels. Of particular importance is the World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement to liberalize trade in basic telecommunication services which was concluded in February 1997 by 69 countries which together account for more than 90% of global telecommunication revenues. The agreement entered into force on 5 February 1998. The new framework developed by WTO to govern trade and regulation of telecommunication services will facilitate further globalization of the telecommunication equipment and services industries, as well as the closely-related information technology industry (ITU, 2004).

The impact of ICT on our daily lives has been steadily increasing. Computers and the internet cannot be dismissed from the contemporary scene; even the importance of mobile phones cannot be over emphasized. Thus it is impossible to imagine life today without digital media. In an empirical research on the use of ICT among entrepreneurs in industry in South – West Nigeria revealed that women entrepreneurs under-utilized ICT infrastructure, and

system in the production and marketing of garments. It further revealed that the use of radio and television for marketing and advertisements is under-utilized, due to the fact that it is expressive to explore. It also showed that most of the women producers in the garment industry lack computer literacy. Nigerian women entrepreneurs' use of ICT infrastructure and systems is limited and even the ones in use are not widely explored for business development (Olasanmi, Ayoola & Kareem-Ojo, 2012).

Olatokun (2007) explained that the usage of ICTs by Nigerian women academics showed that the majority of women academics were ICT literate. They made use of computers, internet, telephones, mobile phone and photocopiers while ICT facilities such as scanners, facsimiles, video conferencing and teleconferencing were not used. It was also revealed that ICT were used to perform data collection, statistical analysis, word processing, information search, storage and retrieval of materials, electronic communication, search and preparation of course materials. Majority of women academic affirmed that they had unequal access to the use of ICTs in their institutions in comparison with their male counterparts.

Most women in developing countries who use ICT use it at work. Except in upper income classes, home access to a computer and the internet is not a phenomenon. Users of ICT at work, use it as a tool of production, in other words ICTs are used in routine office work, data entry, manufacturing, computer industry jobs, programming, and related work. While some use ICT as a tool of communication in creating and exchanging information. E-mail is the major ICT application that women's organizations and individual women in developing countries use (AED's Global communications and learning system n.d) (Olufunke, & Adeola, (2014)

The International Telecommunication Union (2004) highlighted that few years ago, not many would have predicted that the Internet would emerge so rapidly as a serious competitive force in telecommunications. But today's Internet is only a precursor to the new competitive forces that are likely to emerge in the next decade in the new "communications and information sector" which will result from technological convergence. The essential lesson to be learned from the Internet phenomenon is that competition is no longer a public policy tool which can be introduced in a completely controlled fashion and regulated within the confines of the traditional telecommunication sector. Competition in telecommunications is rapidly becoming a true market force whose evolution cannot be planned by policy-makers, a force which increasingly is seen as best regulated on the basis of principles that are not specific to telecommunications, but derived from a broader economic, social and cultural perspective.

Although far from universally accepted, the sweeping changes in telecommunications described above have broad support among many countries, including a number of developing countries who see it as the best way forward in developing their telecommunication networks and services to the benefit of their overall economic and social development. The liberalization of telecommunications does not mean an end to regulation - but it has changed both the role of government and the nature of telecommunication regulation: In the past, most administrations of ITU Member States tended to be "all-purpose" creatures - policy-makers and operators which both provided and regulated telecommunications on the basis of a "public utility" model.

The liberalization of telecommunications has been accompanied by a separation of these functions. The trend now is for administrations of ITU Member States to be policy-makers, nested within a general department of government (e.g. industry and trade); for telecommunications to be operated by corporations — whether public, private or mixed; and for "the public interest" in telecommunications to be protected by an independent regulatory authority.

In countries that have introduced partial or full competition, the model for regulating telecommunications is changing. Principles derived from competition law are taking their place alongside the classical precepts of public utility regulation. In some jurisdictions, sector-specific telecommunication regulation has been abandoned. Again, the WTO agreement will amplify these regulatory trends. More than 60 signatories accounting for more than 90% of global telecommunication revenues have made commitments to apply in whole or in part a set of regulatory principles including interconnection, transparency and anti-competitive safeguards. These regulatory commitments, and indeed all other commitments, are subject to the WTO dispute resolution mechanism. They are therefore more than a voluntary code of conduct. They are binding commitments which are enforceable under the WTO dispute resolution mechanism. In the 1999-2003 planning period, it is likely that the trends noted above with respect to liberalization, competition and globalization will begin to combine in new ways that may ultimately change the way the telecommunication industry sees itself and is seen by its regulator(s) and customers (ITU, 2004).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The domestication of technology is an approach within the area of media appropriation studies. It describes the process of media (technology) adoption in everyday life, and especially within households. It outlines several dimensions of this dynamic adoption process in the context of the household as a moral economy and through the concept of the double articulation of media as technology.

Two major strands of the domestication approach have been developed, only one of which is clearly within the field of media and communication studies, while the other is located in the field of social studies of technology (Lie & Sorensen, 1996). The domestication idea was first developed at the beginning of the 1990s, primarily in the UK. It has its roots, however, in an article by the German ethnologist Hermann Bausinger, published in *Media, Culture and Society* in 1984, where he described a weekend in the life of a "typical" German family and reflected on the communicative role of the media. He stressed the uses of different media, everydayness, and the collective use and discussion of media. Building on Bausinger, the main researchers contributing to the early formulation of this approach were Roger Silverstone, David Morley, and Eric Hirsch (and later Leslie Haddon) (e.g., Silverstone & Hirsch, 1992). It has been argued that the neglect of mutual shaping processes is problematic for understanding technology use, and not only gender in technology use, but the mutual shaping between technology and social inequalities in general. Domestication theory suggests that various elements such as gender, class or geography impact on the integration of technology into the household.

However, Hynes and Richardson (2009) highlight that domestication theory is essentially about giving technology a place in everyday life. The domestication concept

enables researchers initially to understand media technology use in the complex structures of everyday life settings, with attention to interpersonal relationships, social background, changes and continuities, but also to the increasingly complex interconnection between different media, and the convergence of different media technologies and media texts.

Domestication traces the creation of meaning in media from its inception (when the producers and advertisers create certain meanings for new media) to its later use (or non-use) and the meanings that emerge. Thus, the emphasis is on consumption as well as use. Domestication, both as a metaphor and as an analytical concept, is used to find the crossover where technologies and people adjust to each other and find (or do not find) a way to coexist. Central to the domestication process is the often unconscious attempt to make technologies fit into their surroundings in a way that makes them invisible or taken for granted. This requires mutual adjustment on behalf of both the users and the technology, and is where social shaping comes in to play. In essence, the person shapes the technology to fit into his or her life (Hynes & Richardson, 2009).

In addition, domestication theory offers a sociological approach, suggesting that, for example, gender can be relevant for technology use. It states that the use of technology is shaped by the context of everyday life (Berker, Hartmann, Punie, & Ward (2006) but although the importance of this context is pinpointed, domestication theory does not offer any further explanations. A similar problem has also been identified as lack of an analysis of power and domination in the conception of gender in actor network theory (ANT) (Cockburn, 1992), which neglects the fact that traditional gender relations result in the domination of women by men in everyday life. If ICTs are studied from a feminist technology perspective, their use can be examined in the context of traditional gender-technology relations, which enables us to explore the significance of different aspects (such as structure, symbolic associations and identity) for the internet use experiences of women and men. Studying the simultaneous interplay of all three levels also allows us to better integrate atypical experiences within the analysis.

Taking cues from the work of Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley (1992), it is believed that domestication processes include spaces for individual agency. However, it is necessary to further explore the mutual shaping processes of technology and social inequalities to better understand the role of agency in the domestication of the internet, as well as its limits. It is therefore important to avoid the reduction of social inequalities to aspects of identities. The analysis of gender-technology relations developed in feminist technology studies (Faulkner, 2001) distinguishes between gender structure, gender symbolism and gender identity (Harding, 1986), arguing that gender shapes everyday life simultaneously on these three levels. Although domestication theory sometimes includes gender and age within the study of ICTs in everyday life, the comparison with feminist technology studies highlights the need to theorise gender and other social inequalities in more depth. Therefore, the integration of feminist technology studies enhances the analysis of domestication processes and gives it a more sociological grounding (cited in Kadi, 2013

IMPLICATION OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL FACTORS

Women and Religion

Secretary, Women's Section of the Democratic Socialist Movement (DSM) Titi Salaam (2003) lamenting about the situation of women in Nigeria, said that generally religion is used as an instrument in defense of class society and patriarchy. It discriminates against women. As a result of the theocratic character of the governance of the northern part of Nigeria before the advent of the British colonialists Islam has been institutionalised as a culture - the way of life - of the majority of the people of the region. Islam like most religious beliefs gives hope of fantastic heaven - the paradise - to the adherents. Knowing fully well the emotional attachment of the northern Nigerian Muslims to religion and the psychological equanimity they derive from it, politicians ruling the northern Nigerian states introduced Sharia law in order to enhance their political prospects and divert attention away from their own looting and failure to improve living standards. Of course, Sharia as religious law gives central place to paternalistic interpretation to women's appropriate roles and socio-political arrangement of the society (Salaam, 2003).

Sharia law conflicts with national secular principles, especially in relation to women's rights, on which Nigeria is formally based. It places a lot of restrictions on the rights of women. The major victims of this political Sharia are women. Examples that readily come to mind are the cases of Safiya Hussein Tungartudu and Hafsat in Sokoto state and Aminat Lawal in Katsina state who were sentenced to death by stoning because of their alleged commitment of adultery while their male "accomplices" are taken as innocents. While Safiya and Hafsat has been left off the hook as a result of the local and international campaign, the fate of Aminat Lawal still hangs in the balance (Blueprint, 2015).

In spite of the aberration of Sharia in relation to Nigeria's secular constitution, President Obasanjo has refused to call spade a spade by being afraid to rock the boat. Obasanjo recently in an interview with the BBC stated that Sharia is legal. This was done obviously because of the need to sustain the political support of the northern elite particularly for his re-election bid, more so when the candidate of the other major big business party, ANPP, General Buhari has openly declared his support for the Islamic legal code. While there is provision for Sharia in the 1999 constitution of Nigeria this is limited by the secularity of the country, which is equally provided for in the constitution. We will defend the rights of religious believers, both Muslims and non-Muslims, to practise their religions. We fight against discrimination on the basis of religion, gender, ethnic origin or race. In this sense, the right of Muslims to practise those aspects of Sharia, which pertains to worship, mode of dressing, naming of children and other personal or family matters must be respected.

However, religion should be a personal affair and should be separated from the state. This is even more imperative in a multi-religious society like Nigeria. The failure to adhere to this principle by successive capitalist governments in Nigeria, both military and civilian, is one of the main reasons for the rising wave of ethnic and religious conflicts in the country, particularly since the beginning of the introduction of Sharia law by some states in year 2000. About 10,000 lives have been reportedly been lost in ethnic and religious violence since military rule ended in May 1999. The bourgeois politicians who introduced the Sharia penal code with severe punishments such as stoning and amputation for crimes like stealing,

prostitution or so-called adultery, argue that these type of law and punishments are necessary to curb the increasing wave of crime in the society. Even some sections of the working masses both within and outside the Sharia states, perturbed by the violent crimes and social decadence which pervade society, genuinely support the penal code in the belief that it is the solution to these problems.

The penal code is also informed by the belief that the harsher the punishment the lesser the crime rate. But these are erroneous views. Crimes, violence and other social vices are products of worsening mass poverty and unemployment, which are engendered by the Nigeria's crisis-ridden neo-colonial capitalist economy. Only the abolition of the causes of endemic poverty, the provision of decent living, full employment with a living wage, free and qualitative education and medical care, plus adequate housing for all can lead to the reduction, if not eradication, of crime.

On the contrary, amputations, stoning and other harsh sentences being used in the Sharia states will on the long run fail to reduce or eliminate crime. Since the early 1970s armed robbery has been punished by execution in Nigeria. But this has failed to reduce armed robbery. On the contrary, violent robberies have continued to escalate due to worsening economic crisis and huge youth unemployment. In reality, the introduction of Sharia by the capitalist politicians in some of the northern states was a deliberate strategy to seek cheap popularity using religion to divert the masses' attention away from their failure to provide the basic necessities of life, jobs and social security for the populace. In the same manner, the capitalist elites in the southern part of the country are hypocritically pretending to be championing the interests of their people, through agitation for resource control.

Most importantly, the Sharia penal code as presently enacted and practised in these states discriminates against the poor working people in general and poor, marginalized women in particular. Since the introduction of the code, several poverty-stricken peasant farmers and traders have had their limbs amputated and been incapacitated for life for allegedly stealing items like cattle, goats or hens. Many ordinary workers and traders have been flogged and humiliated in public for consumption or sale of alcoholic drinks. All those who have been sentenced under the code have been poor working masses, women and men. In contrast, the capitalist politicians and top civil servants who enacted this degrading and inhuman penal code continue to get away with brazen acts of fraud and looting of several millions of naira from the public treasury. In addition, these rich elements have relationships outside marriage without having to suffer the indignity of being dragged to court or sentenced to death by stoning. Surely, if anybody deserves to be sentenced to death, it is these corrupt and rich elites who embezzle public funds which ought to have been used to provide jobs, education, food and medical care for the populace but doing otherwise.

Relating from the news report of the Guardian published on 27th January, 2003, Salaam (2003) mentioned that the hypocrisy of the ruling elite as regards application was shown for instance in Dutse in Jigawa State, where on 27th of January 2003, a 20 year old prince was arrested by a local committee and caned for an offence of drunkenness. It was the second time he was being flogged for the same crime as he was convicted for the sin of drunkenness on December 11, 2002. The emirate council embarrassed by the publicity the committee gave the incident, consequently declared war on the Sharia police. The council's action has led to the partial suspension of the activities of the Sharia implementation group.

In contrast, in the same Dutse a man was arrested for drinking alcohol and was given 100 strokes of cane at the market place. This is a typical example of the class discrimination in Sharia implementation. Also, in a related development, the Kaduna mayhem that broke out around the Miss World Contest was not unconnected with the Islamic view on women. Yes, it was the Isioma Daniel's article in *This Day* that ignited the violence and the attendant senseless killing and destruction of property, but the country had been sitting on the gun powder since some Islamic fundamentalists raised religious objections against Nigeria playing host to this beauty pageant (cited in Blueprint, 2015).

WOMEN AND THE LAW

Furthermore, Salaam (2003) advocated that Nigeria criminal law has a number of provisions relating to sexual and domestic offences that are especially relevant to women's rights. However different laws, for instance on rape, apply to different parts of the country. Rape is defined in a gender-specific manner, as "carnal knowledge" or sexual intercourse with a woman or girl without her consent or under duress. Besides the restrictive nature of the definition, which does not extend to the rape of males, it must be pointed out that in practice most rape victims are unable to benefit from these provisions. The way in which a rape trial is conducted and the nature of the evidence required exposes women to indignity, making it a man's trial but a woman's tribulation. The law needs to be extended to cover marital rape. Currently the Penal Code specifically excludes "sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife" from the definition of rape, so long as she has attained puberty. With respect to the criminal law, it is also necessary to remove the gender disparity in punishments applicable for indecent assault. Presently, there is a dichotomy, which creates the impression that one gender is superior to the other. Sections 350 and 363 of the Criminal Code cover the same offence (unlawful and indecent assault) but provide for a lesser punishment when the victim is female (two years imprisonment) than when the victim is male (three years imprisonment).

In northern Nigeria the Penal Code specifically precludes as an offence any act which does not amount to the infliction of grievous injury and which is done by "a husband for the purpose of correcting his wife, such husband and wife being subject to any natural law or custom in which such correction is recognised as lawful". The law through the Penal Code condones the widespread problem of domestic violence, by encouraging beating of wives in as much as it does not amount to grievous harm. In case of traditional laws the wife herself is often regarded as property and she is generally not expected to entertain any expectation. In fact, under some traditional customary law systems, especially in south east Nigeria, she is one of the chattels to be "inherited" after the death of her husband (Salaam, 2003).

WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Lack of education has been a strong visible barrier to female participation in the formal sector. The social pressures on females such as early marriages, and other extraneous factors as well as consideration of female education as secondary to that of boys and certain inhibitive religious practices in some parts of Nigeria are the major causes of the high illiteracy rate amongst women.

As the impact of teenage pregnancy and early marriage makes abundantly clear, girls are at a double disadvantage in educational access, especially in the north, where these practices are most widespread.

More generally, girls' educational opportunities tend to be circumscribed by patriarchal attitudes about gender roles, which result in some parents attaching greater importance to the education of boys than girls. This is always the likelihood when the parents lack resources to enrol all children in schools. One must quickly add that there would not have been cause for that if the government has been committed to the provision of free and functional education as a social service. But this is not so under capitalism more so in the era of neo-liberalism when all the concession towards social services has been removed in line with the dictate of IMF/World Bank. In some families, investing in girls' education is regarded as investing for the benefit of the family she will eventually marry into, unlike in the case of boys. This argument holds in particular for higher education, which involves greater expenditure and is seen to be less necessary for females whose main role will be in home keeping and child raising.

What definitely still exist is the gender stereotyping in the school curriculum and the academic streaming process. For instance, certain subjects, such as the sciences, mathematics and other technical disciplines are tagged masculine, while secretarial studies and home economics are tagged feminine, thereby denying both sexes the opportunities to benefit from exposure to all subject areas or a wider choice of subjects. In general, the female inferiority complex established from childhood through social interactions in the home, including the differential levels of support and motivation, influence the aspirations and eventual learning achievement of boys and girls (Salaam, 2003).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, domestication research has highlighted a dominant viewpoint of the essentialist assumptions held about technologies and those that consume them. The future and what technologies we have and how they are used is not inevitable and critical interpretation means a shift in focus from what appears to be self-evident, natural and unproblematic on the one hand and what can be interpreted as the freezing of social life, irrational and changeable on the other (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000). Moore (2003) describes the corporate versions that seek to produce corporate identities presenting a future that is ultimately knowable through expertise resting on the valued endpoint of competitive advantage. She continues to highlight the inexorable logic of future-orientated technological determinism.

This paper has contributed to an area, though not neglected, but not well researched by scholars, especially male scholars. The paper has applied the concept of domestication to understand socio-implication of telecommunication where it matters and is taken for granted 'in the intimate spaces of the home and household. In practice the era of ubiquitous computing involves much more than the spheres of design, development or end-user implementation. ICTs involve dynamic, mutually shaping relations and application of domestication theory means giving technology a place in everyday life.

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