

An analysis of the representation of women in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*

by

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An analysis of the representation of women in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*

I declare that the above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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Acknowledgements and dedication

I would like to acknowledge the following people, who made this dissertation possible.

My Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, for His love, grace and mercy and who has never left my side throughout this entire process. I give all praise, glory and honour to Abba Father.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the representations of women in business media through the identification of media discourses and underlying meanings in visual images. Prior research studies have indicated that there is minimal representation of women in news, and in particular business news. However, there is limited research that examines how women are depicted in business news. This study builds on the premise that the media is an influential platform that shapes perceptions and opinions, and is thus viewed as a site for the dissemination of ideology. The continuous examination of women's portrayal is imperative for the empowerment, advancement and participation of women in economic related matters. The study's theoretical foundations are gender studies and theories of representation. The research design for this study is cross-sectional, descriptive, and uses an interpretive paradigm that is analysed through qualitative methodology. Data is collected from two national English business publications, *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*. The type of sampling applied in this study is non-probability sampling and the units of analysis are selected articles and images published in five editions of *Forbes Africa* 2020 and selected articles and images over a period of three months in *Business Day* 2020. The selection criteria for sampling the units of analysis are visual images and text that make reference to women, such as words: 'woman', 'women', 'female', 'she', 'her' or an indication that the text or image pertains or makes reference to women or a female figure. The researcher adopts Barthian semiotics and Foucauldian discourse analysis as the analytical frameworks, as these methodologies relate to an ontological system of belief that everyday life is socially created. The research contributes to the analysis of media text and the representation of women by providing a fine-grained analysis of the discursive construction of women.

Key words:

Representation, semiotics, Barthian semiotic analysis, discourse analysis, media, women

OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie studie was om die verteenwoordiging van vroue in die sakemedia te ontleed deur die identifikasie van mediadiskoerse en onderliggende betekenis van visuele beelde. Vorige navorsingstudies het aangedui die verteenwoordiging van vroue in nuus minimaal is, veral in sakenuus. Navorsing wat ondersoek instel na hoe vroue in sakenuus uitgebeeld word, is egter beperk. Hierdie studie is gegrond op die beskouing dat die media 'n invloedryke platform is wat persepsies en menings beïnvloed en derhalwe as 'n sentrum vir die disseminasie van ideologie beskou kan word. Om deurlopend ondersoek in te stel na hoe vroue uitgebeeld word, is noodsaaklik vir die bemagtiging, vooruitgang en deelneming van vroue aan ekonomiese aangeleenthede. Die studie se teoretiese grondbeginsels is gebaseer op genderstudies en -teorieë van verteenwoordiging. Die navorsingsontwerp van hierdie studie was deursnee- en beskrywende ontwerp en is op 'n vertolkende paradigma gegrond wat deur middel van 'n kwalitatiewe metodologie ontleed is. Data is uit twee nasionale Engelse sakepublikasies, Forbes Africa en Business Day ingesamel. Nie-waarskynlikheidsteekproefneming is in die studie toegepas. Die ontledingseenhede was geselekteerde artikels en uitbeeldings wat in 2020 in vyf uitgawes van Forbes Africa gepubliseer is en geselekteerde uitbeeldings wat in 2020 oor 'n tydperk van drie maande in Business Day gepubliseer is. Die seleksiekriteria vir steekproefneming van die ontledingseenhede was verwysings na vroue deur middel van woorde soos “vrou” (woman), “vroue” (women), “vroulik of vroulike persoon” (female), “sy” (she) en “haar” (her) in visuele beelde en tekste, of aanwysings dat tekste of uitbeeldings betrekking het op of verwys na vroue of vroulike figure. Die navorser het Barthiaanse semiotiek en Foucauldiaanse gespreksontleding as analitiese raamwerke gebruik omdat hierdie metodologieë verband hou met 'n ontologiese geloofstelsel ten opsigte waarvan die alledaagse lewe op 'n sosiale wyse geskep word. Die navorsing dra by tot die ontleding van mediatekste en die verteenwoordiging van vroue deur 'n fyn ontleding van die diskursiewe konstruksie van vroue.

Sleutelwoorde:

Verteenwoordiging, semiotiek, Barthiaanse semiotiese ontleding, diskoers, Foucauldiaanse diskoersontleding, media, vroue

ISIFINYEZO ESISUKETHE UMONGO WOCWANINGO

Inhloso yalolu cwaningo kwakuwukuhlaziya ukumelwa kwabesimame kumabhizinisi kwimidiya (kwabezindaba) ngokubheka ama-discourse emidiya kanye nezincazelo ngemifanekiso yezithombe. Ucwanningo lwangaphambilini lukhombise ukuthi kukhona abesimame abambalwa kwizindaba ikakhulukazi kwizindaba ngamabhizinisi. Kodwa, ucwanningo luncane kakhulu oluhlola ukuthi ngabe abesimame bakhonjiswa kanjani kwizindaba zamabhizinisi. Lolu cwaningo belenziwe ngaphansi kokuqondisisa umthelela abezindaba abanawo ngendlela ababumba ngawo umqondo nemibono njengomkhakha wokusabalalisa i-idiyoloji. Ukuqhubekela phambili nokukhombisa abesimame kubalulekile ekubahlinzekeni ngamandla, inqubekelaphambili kanye nokubamba iqhaza kwabesimame ezindabeni zezomnotho. Isisekelo sethiyori yocwanningo kwakuyizifundo ngezobulili kanye namathiyori okumelwa kwabesimame. Idizayini yocwanningo ngalolu cwaningo kwakuyi-cross-sectional ne-descriptive, kanti ibihlelwe phansi kwe-interpretive paradigm, ehlaziywe ngokulandela imethodoloji ye-qualitative. Ulwazi luqokelelwe kubushicileli bukazwelonke besiNgisi, okuyi-*Forbes Africa* kanye ne-*Business Day*. Kusetshenziswe isampuli ye-non-probability kulolu cwaningo. Amayunithi ohlaziyo kwakungama-atikili akhethiwe kanye nezithombe ezishicilelwe kuma-edishini amahlanu e-*Forbes Africa* ngo 2020 kanye nama-atikili akhethwe nezithombe kushicilelo olwenziwe kwizinyanga ezintathu kwi-*Business Day* ngo 2020. Indlela yokukhetha amayunithi amasampuli ukuhlaziywa kwakungamareferense enziwa mayelana nabesimame ngamagama athi 'owesimame', 'abesimame', u-'she' no-'her' kwizithombe kanye nemibhalo, noma ukukhombisa ukuthi imibhalo noma imifanekiso iqondiswe kwabesimame noma abantu besimame. Umcwanningi usebenzise iBarthian semiotics kanye ne Foucauldian discourse analysis njengohlaka lokuhlaziya ngoba lama-methodoloji ahambisana ne-ontological system of belief lapho okwakhiwa khona impilo yabantu yansuku zonke. Ucwanningo luthela esivivaneni kuhlaziyo lwemibhalo yabezindaba kanye nokumelwa kwabesimame ngokwenza uhlaziyo olucoyisakele nge-discursive construction of women.

Amagama abalulekile:

Ukumelwa, i-semiotics, uhlaziyo lwe-Barthian, i-discourse, i-Foucauldian discourse analysis, abezindaba, abesimame

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The starting point of this study is from an observation I made during my daily media monitoring work where I noticed that media articles relating to women were minimal in the business sections of newspapers. Such articles could play a critical role in the empowerment of women and their omission is a glaring fact. This made me question the critical role that the media plays as an agent for social change and empowerment, and how women are portrayed in business news. The focus of this exploratory study is to probe how business media represent women and the dominant discourses surrounding these representations. The study seeks to address the research gap of analysis of representations of women in business media and the discourse around them. This study will examine underlying meanings in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* through its representations. It draws on researcher and writer Margaret Gallagher's (2001:3) idea that the way media content portrays women mirrors the inference of those who define the public and therefore the media agenda. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall (1997:17) posits that examining the representations and discourse presented is vital as it shapes how we see things. Hall (1997:1) states, "Language is one of the 'media' through which thoughts, ideas, and feelings are represented in a culture. Representation through language is therefore central to the processes by which meaning is produced." Thus, the analysis of the media content will enable the researcher to go beyond what is presented and unearth latent meaning and dominant discourses in business media.

The emancipation of women has been the subject of considerable discussion and although much progress has been made in this regard, there is still a continuous need to discuss the topic. History has shown us the various forms of oppression and discriminations faced by women such as in the home, in labour markets, economically, and physically, amongst others. German Professor of Theology and author Martin Luther situates men above women in his oppressive and sexist view. Luther (1875:299) states, "Men have broad and large chests, and small narrow hips, and more understanding than the women, who have but small and narrow breasts, and

broad hips, to the end they should remain at home, sit still, keep house, and bear and bring up children". His opinion about women champions sexist and patriarchal rhetoric, indicating that women are seen only as biological beings and males as dominant and equipped with intellect. Luther's (1875:299) opinion of women further demonstrates that a person's physique determines their roles in society. French philosopher and author Simone De Beauvoir is well known for her feminist literature that analyses the distinction between biological sex and the construction of gender. In her book, *The Second Sex*, De Beauvoir ([1949] 2010:41) states, "Woman? Very simple, say those who like simple answers: She is a womb, an ovary; she is a female: this word is enough to define her. From a man's mouth, the epithet "female" sounds like an insult; but he, not ashamed of his animality, is proud to hear: He's a male!". Essentially, De Beauvoir's sentiments highlight the disadvantaged role and position of women in society and describe that women are merely viewed as objects, looked at from a biological perspective, and the way they are viewed shapes how women are treated in society. De Beauvoir ([1949] 2010:71) argues that how the human body functions cannot "ground values", but rather be examined in "ontological economic, social, and psychological contexts".

Today, in modern society women are empowered by progressive legislations and are making in-roads in the workplace. However, discrimination against women continues to be portrayed daily. There are intersecting elements, as discussed in Chapter Two, such as race, religion, ethnicity, and sexuality, amongst others that contribute to further oppression and disempowerment of women. Therefore, there is a need to probe representations of women.

1.2 Background and context of the study

Archana Kumari and Himani Joshi (2015:44) suggest that the media can play an influential role in changing society by promoting and supplying information. The media undoubtedly plays a significant and critical role in shaping public discourse and is a key agent for the emancipation of women as explicated by Tanuja Jukariya and Prem Lata (2018:1619), Nefi Wole-Abu (2018:1), and Justice Ganendra Ray (2008). The overall sentiments as expressed in the studies mentioned is summed up by Ananta Narayana and Tauffiqu Ahamad's (2016:16) research findings on the "role of media in

accelerating women empowerment”, wherein they state: “If Media can be a powerful agent of change, it can be an equally powerful agent of oppression. It is without a doubt a dominant medium for advocacy of gender equality and the status of women.”

Julia Wood (1994:31) argues that in any democratic country, the media has a vital function in influencing how women and men are viewed by bringing their messages into our reality, which in turn influences our opinion, perception, and sometimes even our reaction. Jim Macnamara (2003:2) and Ayesha Sadaf (2011:228) further assert that the role that media plays in society goes far beyond the traditional role of providing information and entertainment; it also provides direction to the public on particular issues, influences opinions, creates perceptions, and facilitates the transmission of a particular culture to society through its socialisation function. Kumari and Joshi (2015:44) put forward the view that media content “reflect the pattern of value in any society”. By using language, sound, and images, the media conveys a particular meaning to the reader or viewer. According to Dwight Brooks and Lisa Hébert (2006:297), “much of what audiences know and care about is based on the images, symbols, and narratives in radio, television, film, music, and other media.” Macnamara (2003:2) and Sadaf (2011:228) further argue that the media shapes and influences opinions and perceptions, which is by far more than the traditional role of providing information and entertainment. Taking it a step further, Lei Guo (2015:2) suggests that the importance of issues on the media’s agenda ultimately influences the importance of the same issue on the public’s agenda, subsequently, influencing sociocultural changes and creating or influencing identity construction. Thus, it can be maintained that existing social standards are also influenced by constructions in the media.

The examination of signs is vital to comprehend and decipher the meanings and their impact on a socio-cultural and individual level suggests Feyrouz Bouzida (2014:1002). This study will, therefore, explore the representations of women in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* at the hand of signs, patterns of representation, and discourses. Sadaf (2011:229) suggests that the role of the media expands to socialisation, which transfers a certain culture to society, thus the audience can be easily influenced by the information presented as the media constructs what is the social reality. The vast amount of information that is produced by the media and by virtue of giving order to language, structures our lives and relations. Media audiences are exposed to the quick

flow and exchange of information, trade of data, capital, and social correspondence (Hobbs 2008). Wood (1994:32) further suggests that the media is the most universal and potent influence on how men and women are viewed. Sadaf (2011:228) and Eran Shor, Arnout van de Rijt, Alex Miltsov, Vivek Kulkarni, and Steven Skiena (2015:961) also suggest that the content presented by the media enables the public to form perceptions as the media can give prominence to some issues whilst ignoring or giving less prominence to others. Shor et al (2015: 961) further posit that in line with what the public deems important, “levels of visibility may be considered a metric of women’s social status or influence”. Similar views about the visibility of women are expressed by Rosemary Kimani and Abena Yeboah (2011:434) who indicate that women are an excluded group that fail to receive adequate coverage.

Even when women are represented in the media, these representations are also often problematic. Kate Power (2018:2) suggests that media representations of women are often clichéd and judgemental. Power’s sentiments are aligned to other research such as that by Mwenya Chimba and Jenny Kitzinger (2010:609-612) who explain that scientific research describes men as “Einstein” or “technological wizard” and that articles about effective female scientific researchers constantly declare that they are still satisfied by marriage and parenthood. On a general level, Wood (1994:32) construes that men are portrayed as energetic, courageous, and influential, and women are culturally viewed as sex objects, with a standardised requirement of how they should look. Wood (1994:32) adds that because of the way the media portray women, they are seen to be passive, young, beautiful, and dependent on men, while men are portrayed as powerful, brut, and active. As such, Wood (1994:32) contends that these portrayals send a message of what society deems normal and acceptable for women and men.

Gallagher (2002:11) presents the ideas that men are viewed as focal and that “behind them lie a power structure– social, political, and economic”. Cynthia Carter and Karen Ross (2011:1150) explain that the incorporation of issues affecting women into the news is critical, as they are participants in the economic and political arena. The economic, social, and political environments are largely dominated by men, who hold the power. Despite women being vital in all these environments, they continue to be marginalised and underrepresented. Amongst the key findings of the 2010 Global

Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) (2010:7) are that women are hardly heard in the news. According to the report, the number of women who talk or are heard in the news is 24% in contrast with 76% of men. Over the twenty-year period, 2000-2020, the GMMP report indicates that there was an overall decline in the percentage of stories in which women were the central focus (GMMP 2020:18). According to the statistics of women as a central focus, the economic category saw a decline from 4% to 2%; the politics and government category a decline of 2%, from 7% to 5%, and finally, in the science and health category, women as the central focus decline by 9% (GMMP 2020:18). It is also concerning that representation of women by occupation in the business person/manager category, only moved up by 8% since 2005 and is currently at 20% (GMMP 2020:18). The GMMP statistics are discussed further in Chapter Two.

According to the United Nations' Development Programme Gender Equality Strategy (2014:3), "world leaders recognized that gender equality and participation are important for effective action on all aspects of sustainable development." Similarly, Gayle Tzemach Lemmon and Rachel Vogelstein (2017:1) elucidate that the economic participation of women and prosperity are interlinked, as they are critical to improving economies and stability. Furthermore, women who are financially empowered give more to their families and social orders. It has been demonstrated that women invest finances in their children, which assist to improve their lives, according to Anne Marie Golla, Anju Malhotra, Priya Nanda, and Rekha Mehra (2011:3). Schwab (2017:v) contends that the construction of future economies which are inclusive must ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity, adding that women and young girls must act as beneficiaries and influencers to prevent the loss of talent and innovation to address crucial challenges. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) (2015:8) alludes to women's economic empowerment as a process that expands financial choices that impacts their lives and needs in society. This empowerment is more than partaking in choices, instead, it ultimately empowers individuals to see themselves as capable and qualified to make decisions, posits Aminur Rahman (2013:10). SIDA (2015:8) and Syamala Bhoganadam, Hema Malini, and Dasaraju Srinivasa (2014:102) assert that financial security expands individuals' choices and through this process women are in a more grounded position which enables them to take part, along with men, in the moulding of society, influencing

development, and deliberating from choices that can advance their families and their own prosperity.

The report on *The Status of Women in the South African Economy* (2015:23) identifies key areas from a South African government policy perspective that contribute to the economic advancement of women. These include, amongst other avenues, education, labour market, access to credit, land or property, and unpaid work. Similarly, SIDA (2015:5) focuses on much the same areas that are seen to empower women. These include “entrepreneurship and private sector development, access to land and property rights, productive employment and decent work, unpaid care work, education and skills development, social protections, and agriculture and rural development” (SIDA 2015:5). Women now have more power to make decisions and have influence over political, social, and economic arenas, as per Tam O’Neil and Pilar Domingo’s (2016:9) findings.

Despite this, women are still underrepresented in business sections of media coverage, assert Marilyn Greenwald (1988:12) and Doris Eikhof, Juliette Summers, and Sara Carter (2013:547). Shor et al (2015:961) add that societal convictions with regards to more noteworthy abilities of men compared to that of women may continue gender disparity. The underrepresentation of women in business media has negative consequences to women empowerment and entrepreneurial ambitions state Doris Ruth Eikhof, Juliette Summers, and Sara Carter (2013:545). Since the advent of democracy in South Africa, the country has made great strides through the introduction of progressive legislation and other programmes to improve the status of women. However, women have not advanced rapidly in areas of social-economic empowerment and still face the triple challenge of unemployment, poverty, and inequality as indicated by Statistics South Africa (2013:36). South Africa has a huge gender inequality gap in terms of wealth, resources, and power, and women are often the breadwinners facing the brunt of social ills. Following the apartheid era, early conversations on social change were based on race and class, however, lately gender has been realised as key to dealing with a range of social problems. Therefore, the media is vital to the advancements of women.

1.3 Relevance of the topic to the discipline of communications

The character of this study is that it deals with gender and media communication, and thus it is interdisciplinary. The study explores how the media, particularly the business newspapers and magazines, portray women and the underlying meanings that are created. It builds on the premise that the media is an influential platform that shapes perceptions and opinions. It is also highly relevant to the fields of gender studies and feminism, as it looks at how the media as a communication avenue portray women, which ultimately influences society through its underlying meanings.

1.4 The research problem, aims, and objectives of the study, research questions

1.4.1 The research problem

The research question that this study seeks to investigate is: How are women portrayed in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*? The lack of representation of women in business sections of the news suggests that the information presented to the public does not represent society and the audiences the media serves, especially when it comes to gender and racial diversity. Business news is a niche genre in which women are seen to be marginally represented, with the 2020 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) (2020:17) findings concluding that there is a slight increase of women featuring in business news since the 1995 GMMP report. According to the 2020 GMMP (2020:17) report, in 1995, “women represented in economic stories stood at 10%, and in 2020 they were represented at 24%”. This means that there is only a 14% increase in the economic category over a twenty-five-year period. This slow progress of women featured in the economic news category reveals the need to unpack the levels of meaning of the construction of women. Women are socially located, and thus examining the latent meaning of their representations is important as audiences gain their beliefs about women from discourses and constructions that are made available to them.

The minimal or underrepresentation of women in business news is corroborated by Eran Shor, Arnout van de Rijt, Alex Miltsov, Vivek Kulkarni, and Steven Skiena

(2015:964), who further contend that the underrepresentation of women in business media is due to the continuing social existences of severe gender inequalities at leadership and management positions. Shor et al (2015:964) propose that media coverage often mirrors realities and the inequalities that are experienced every day in society. Whilst, it has been established through the GMMP reports that there is a minimal representation of women in news, and in particular the business genre, there is also a lacuna of research that looks at the media's depiction of women in business publications. This study deems it critical to continuously examine the representation of women in the news as the media is a site of constructing meaning, and is also known for perpetuating stereotypes.

In particular, this study seeks to contribute to the body of literature that examines representations of women by investigating meaning and by examining the visual and discursive construction of women in the media. The purpose of this study is to explore and describe how women are represented in the business publications, *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* through cross-sectional qualitative content analysis. The analytical frameworks applied in the study are Barthian semiotic analysis and Foucauldian discourse analysis. Visual images and text will be analysed in *Business Day* for the period January–March 2020, and in *Forbes Africa* for the period January-June 2020. The sampling period for *Forbes Africa* was extended as it is not published as frequently, compared to *Business Day*, which is a daily publication.

1.4.2 The aim and objectives of the study

The primary objective of this study is to explore, describe and analyse the representations of women in business media. This will be conducted through analysing text and images in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*. The media is a critical site for constructing meaning through representation. The media's role is further advanced to support social change and transformation. This study endeavours to explore and describe the representations and discourses surrounding women through a Barthian semiotic analysis and Foucauldian discourse analysis. The exploration of signs and dominant discourses enables the researcher to look deeper into what is being communicated such as meanings, myths, ideologies, and discourses. Through the discourse presented, the audience can gauge whom and what is powerful and thus it

is useful to probe to understand how it is used to create a subject position or identity construction to groups of people, and in this case, women, as highlighted by James Gee (2001:40). Media is viewed as a site for the dissemination of ideology and therefore, the examination of the media content in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* will enable the researcher to determine the myths and ideologies presented. The need to emancipate women is constantly advancing and it is critical for the media to be reflective of the changes in society. The primary objective will be achieved through the following:

➤ **Objective one:**

To provide a visual semiotic analysis of the representation of women

Examining visual images will allow the researcher to unearth meaning created about women in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*.

➤ **Objective two:**

To look at socially constructed myths in themes derived from the data presented by *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* about women.

Examining socially constructed myths will enable the researcher to obtain insight into ideology, as myth produces ideology.

➤ **Objective three:**

To analyse and explore the dominant discourses surrounding the representation of women

Exploring the dominant discourse in the media plays a crucial role to understand power.

1.4.3 Assumptions and research sub-questions

- **Assumption 1:** There is limited coverage of issues relating to women in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* as compared to that of men

Sub-question 1: What is the overall coverage of issues relating to women in contrast to men in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*?

- **Assumption 2:** The 'masculine' is the norm in business.
Sub-question 2: Is the 'masculine' the norm in the business publications under investigation? And if so, how does this influence the portrayal of women?
- **Assumption 3:** Women are stereotyped in the business media.
Sub-question 3: How are women portrayed and what stereotypes are attributed to women in the business media?
- **Assumption 4:** Women are not reflected as experts or leaders in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*.
Sub-question 4: Do the dominant discourses and images in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* reflect women in positions of authority or as experts?

1.5 Research paradigm

The study uses an interpretive paradigm and is analysed through qualitative methodology. The paradigm is based on observation and interpretation. An interpretivist researcher is concerned with gaining an understanding of meanings and employs a qualitative method (Dean 2018:4). In the context of this study, the interpretive paradigm is adopted to explore, describe and analyse representations of women in business media, particularly in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*. This is to understand the underlying meanings, myths, ideologies, and dominant discourses surrounding these representations. According to Thanh and Thanh (2015:25), an interpretivist "usually seeks to understand a particular context, and the core belief of the interpretive paradigm is that reality is socially constructed". Du Plooy (2009:220) suggests that semiotics is one of the key interpretive theoretical methods used in qualitative analysis. Heracleous (2004:176) suggests that through the interpretive discourse the paradigm adopted assumes that reality is socially constructed. Thus, in the context of this study semiotics and discourse analysis are viewed within the interpretivist paradigm. The interpretive paradigm, in this study, is the basis of the

structure in which the research design is devised. The following section explains the research design for this study.

1.6 Research design

1.6.1 Research Method

The research design is a map that indicates how the study will be undertaken so that it addresses the research question, according to Kevin Durrheim (1999:30). Durrheim (2006:34) further believes that the research design is a well-thought-out structure that enables the link between the research question and the application of the research. Qualitative methods are employed in this study as it involves interpreting the meaning of representations and discourse pertaining to women. Creswell (2007:45) states that “qualitative research today involves closer attention to the interpretive nature of inquiry and situating the study within the political, social, and cultural context of the researchers, and the reflexivity or ‘presence’ of the researchers in the accounts they present.” The study utilises qualitative research methodology instead of quantitative research methodology. Qualitative research is an interpretive exercise that enables the examination of various aspects of content that makes a distinction between individuals and groups amongst others (Creswell 2007:43; Du Plooy 2009:88). Qualitative research is conducted because a problem needs to be looked at to get a comprehensive understanding of the problem, explains Creswell (2007:48). Quantitative research, on the other hand, is based more on analysing statistical data and it is linked to positivism and supports the research with objective and numerical data, according to Du Plooy (2002:21). Quantitative research methods focus more on measuring incidence whilst qualitative research methods focus more on gaining insight into an issue.

1.6.2 Target and accessible population

According to Du Plooy (2009:109), the target population is defined as the “actual population to which we want to generalise result”. The target population for this study is all South African business newspapers and magazines. In this study, the target population is also the accessible population as the researcher has access to business-

related publications through either purchasing them or accessing them online. However, because the accessible population is vast it would not be suitable for this study as it would extend the scope too far, therefore *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* have been selected as the focus for this study. The reasoning behind the choice of these publications is discussed in Chapter Three.

1.6.3 Sampling, units of analysis and data collection

The researcher will use non-probability purposive sampling to assemble a sample of articles and images that provide data on the portrayal of women in business publications. Du Plooy (2009:123) explains that “when drawing a purposive sample, a distinction can be made between a known-group sample and a quota sample. Previous knowledge of the target population and/or the objective(s) of the study can result in a researcher using his or her judgement to select the sample.” Babie (2001:179) asserts that purposive sampling is also suitable to use based on information of the population and the reason for the study. The research question of this study is specific to analysing media representations of women in business news and therefore purposive sampling is suitable. The researcher will use purposive sampling to assemble a sample of text and images to provide data about the representations of women. The units of analysis in this study are images and articles, onto which I will apply the analytical frameworks.

A purposive sample was drawn from *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*, so that as Du Plooy (2009:123) states “the researcher controls the choice of units of analysis”. The sample was drawn according to selection criteria (Du Plooy 2009:56) so that the “characteristics of the units of analysis are relevant to the research”. The selection criteria are visual images of women and text that refer to women, such as words, “woman”, “women”, “female”, “she”, “her”. The visual communication could also indicate that the text or image pertains to or makes reference to women or femininity. The visual images are not confined to those that capture women alone, but they can also include women as part of a group or accompanied by a man. The units of analysis must therefore contain either an image, text, or both, pertaining to women. Data consisting of articles and images selected from *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*,

during the sampling phase, is used as the actual data for the study. This data was selected as per the criteria mentioned.

1.6.4 Data analysis

The analysis and interpretation of the data are carried out using visual semiotic analysis and discourse analysis, guided by the theoretical foundations of Roland Barthes (1967:89), in *Elements of Semiology*, and Michel Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972). The analytical frameworks are explorative, descriptive, and are interpretive by nature. Barthian semiotic analysis is applied to the visual images of women, which are grouped according to common themes that are identified. The visual semiotic analysis in this study is conducted according to Barthes' (Barthes 1972:113) levels of meanings, which are denotation, connotation/myth, and ideology. The levels of meaning are analysed and comprehensively discussed. The second analytical framework employed in this study is Foucauldian discourse analysis which emphasises analysis of the power intrinsic in social relations. According to Hobbs (2008), Foucault's approach and interest in discourse helped link culture to media texts which represent the world. Foucault is of the view that through discourse individuals are influenced by how to talk, think and act. Therefore, social structures are formed. The theoretical and analytical frameworks will be explored in greater depth in Chapter Two and Chapter Three.

1.7 Overview of Chapters

The study's overall research approach and focus are discussed in this chapter. The background and context of the study are provided and the research problem is located. The need for the study is motivated. The research questions and assumptions are presented, and the aims and objectives of the study are detailed. The theoretical approach and methodology are highlighted to give context to the study.

Chapter Two contextualises the theoretical foundations and discusses literature pertaining to the representation of women in the media. The theoretical milieu is focused on theories of representation and gender studies. It is premised on the role of the media, and how the media represents gender as well as its influence on society.

It also describes and discusses available literature pertaining to the topic of representation of women, and is presented in three sections namely, media representation; media representation of women; and media representation of women in business news.

Qualitative content analysis is explored in Chapter Three. This chapter operationalises the study and indicates the aims and objectives, population, sampling, and analysis. It also highlights the selection criteria of the units of analysis. The methodological frameworks of the study are unpacked, namely Barthian semiotics and Foucauldian discourse analysis. The application of the analytical frameworks on the units of analysis is also discussed. The analytical frameworks allow for exploring and examining the hidden meanings, ideologies and myths, and dominant discourses. Reliability and validity are discussed.

The findings of the study are discussed in two separate chapters. The findings of the qualitative Barthian semiotic analysis are presented in Chapter Four and discussed in terms of four dominant themes which are *Power dressing*, *Head coverings*, *Shades of red*, and *Power pearl*. Chapter Five will discuss the two dominant discourses emerging from the considered data. The discussion surrounds the discourse of empowerment and the discourse of women in the workplace.

In Chapter Six, a summary of the dissertation is provided. I will revisit the aims and objectives of the study and examine the contributions and limitations of the study. I will also draw my final conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Chapter Two comprises two sections namely the literature review and the theoretical framework. The literature review considers the existing scholarly published research pertaining to the media depictions of women and the theoretical framework concentrates on the theories of representation and gender studies that underpin this study. The purpose of the literature review for this study is to provide foundational knowledge of the representation of women and identify research conducted in this area to gain understanding into the area of research.

2.2 Literature review

The literature review is divided into three main sections: media representation; media representation of women; and media representation of women in business news. The literature review begins with an overview of media representation and its role in influencing opinions and perceptions and ends with identifying the gap in research that this study seeks to fill.

2.2.1 *Media representation*

In this section, I will first discuss the influence of the media on audience perceptions and opinions and then on media representation. It is recognised that the media is a critical force in shaping views related to social experiences, as expressed by Hansson, Gottfridsson, and Raanaes (2019:59), Iyengar, and Kinder (1987:2) and Nelson, Clawson, and Oxley (1997:567). While the authors share a similar sentiment on the media shaping views and opinions, their sentiments are based on different nuances. Hansson et al (2019:59) expand on the notion that social phenomena such as leadership are shaped by the media. Hansson et al (2019:59) further maintain that the media influences perceptions and ideas such as gender. Highlighting primordial power, Iyengar and Kinder (1987:2) indicate that television news shapes American public opinion on politics. Primordial power in this context refers to the trust that

Americans have in television news compared to magazines, radio, and newspapers (Iyengar & Kinder 1987:2). “Americans believe that television news gives them the most intelligent, complete and impartial coverage of public affairs”, contends Iyengar and Kinder (1987:2). Similarly, Nelson et al (1997:569) suggest that media frames opinions and perceptions are influenced by bringing into focus and placing greater relevance to an issue or event.

There is evidence that demonstrates the importance of the role media plays in creating, maintaining meaning, and influencing the opinions, perceptions, and the proliferation of stereotypes to communicate a specific message, as expressed by Lamsa and Tiensuu (2002:363); Happer and Philo (2013:323), as well as Brooks and Hébert (2006:297). Hopkins, Kim, and Kim’s (2017:1) study focuses on whether “newspaper coverage influences or reflects public perceptions of the economy”. Whilst, Hopkins, et al (2017:1) acknowledge that inquiries usually maintain that content produced by the media is one of the focal sources of citizens’ economic perceptions, their research tests the likelihood of this notion and the alternative hypothesis that media content reverberates public opinions on the economy and politics. Hopkins et al (2017:1) accept that prior research points to mass media being a focal point of American economic perception, however, it is argued that media influence is commonly assumed rather than demonstrated. The research also highlights that there are limited studies, which deliberate the underexplored likelihood, that public opinion influences media coverage instead of media coverage influencing public opinion (Hopkins et al 2017:1). This study, however, investigates how women are represented in business media as it is based on the notion that media influences societal perceptions and opinions.

In another study, Brandon Haller and Helmut Norpoth (1997:1) find that the economic views of some citizens who are not exposed to economic news and the views of those that are exposed to economic news are similar. This suggests that other factors shape economic perceptions and not necessarily the news. Hopkins et al (2017:5) indicate that communal views about the economy in the United States of America are not derived from the tone of national newspaper coverage and that “national newspapers” do not have a powerful impact on consequent opinions of economic functioning. Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, and Sasson (1992:374) argue that media content,

including images, take on its meaning as part of a larger system – as explored further in my theoretical framework below – and the content disseminated by the media creates underlying meaning about political and social reality. Gamson et al (1992:374) highlight that the images that readers or the audience receive are not impartial but demonstrate the power and opinions of the political and economic elite who controls the medium. For example, in South Africa, the media played a crucial role in the transition from an authoritarian state to a democratic state. Herman Wasserman (2020:451) argues that the South African media contributed towards the country's democracy but at the same time played its role as the fourth estate to keep those in power accountable. Despite this transition of the media in South Africa, Wasserman (2020:451) contends that “the media have been accused of serving mostly an elite”. The basic understanding of media representation is about the media portrayal of certain types of people or communities. Brooks and Hébert (2006:298) maintain that the media's role is vital in the "construction and dissemination of gender ideologies and, thus, in gender socialization," such as black female representation. This study does not focus on black female representation per se, however, the majority of the units of analysis contain women of colour and this is given consideration in the theoretical framework in terms of intersectionality and also in the discussion of the findings from the analyses. The Media Monitoring Project (1999), in its report entitled “Snapshot Survey of Women's Representation in the South African Media at the end of the Millennium”, highlights the importance the media plays in regards to the freedom and equality of women in South Africa, and how it shapes the “political, social and economic elements in society”.

Minna Salami (2019) states that “African media is extremely patriarchal and heteronormative”¹. Salami conceptualises three stereotypical representations of women in Africa; which are: “The Struggler”, “The Survivor” and “The Stereotype Empowered African Woman”. Salami (2019) further contends that the media portray women in Africa in light of “motherhood and wifhood”. Challenging these depictions of African women is imperative to “radically change” the illusions created about African women (Salami 2019). A paper prepared by Gender Links (2017:4) for the African

¹ Heteronormative is a concept that mean heterosexuality is the normal mode of sexualities and it assumes the gender binary

Union highlights that issues affecting women and their voices are not prominent in the media, and where women do feature they are shown “in terms of their physical appearance and not their abilities” and are portrayed “as victims of violence and homemakers”. Media representation and stereotypes produced by the media are crucial to interrogate, as they are social constructions that can produce meaning and ideologies. Stereotypes of women are discussed in more detail in this chapter below. Thus, this study seeks to examine the construction of women in the media, as Brooks and Hébert (2006:299) point out that media portrayals determine how others view and respond to groups, such as women, in this study. The next section is based on the representation of women in the media.

2.2.2 Representation of women

This proceeds with a brief overview of post-colonial theory and looks at common examples of othering about women in the media. The researcher acknowledges that women are “othered” in the media in various areas, however, this study looks at the common constructions of women as others. The section will also look at some of the common portrayals of women in the media and some of the stereotypes constructed. The media is one of the fundamental forces in society that influences mass cognisance. However, the media can also further reinforce and create social and cultural norms, which include stereotypes and the creation of ‘others’. Craig McGarty, Vincent Yzerbyt and Russel Spears (2002:2) postulate that stereotypes are representations of characteristics of a group of people that aid the perceiver to make sense of a situation. Post-colonial theory focuses on the experiences of the colonised society after the withdrawal of imperial power.

2.2.2.1 Othering

Othering finds its theoretical underpinnings in the writings of professor of literature, Edward Said (1978:14), who wrote about the Orient. In his book, *Orientalism* (1978), he highlights how historically orientalism was constructed to serve the needs of the West. In other words, it can be described as power dynamics and dominance held by Western society over the Orient (usually defined as Asia or the Far East), through stereotyping and stigmatising. Said’s *Orientalism* (1978:5) shows the disproportion of

power between the West and the East, with the West dominating the East. Said (1978:1-3) uses the terms 'orient' and 'other' to depict the relationship between the West and the East. Another key theorist to post-colonial theory is Gayatri Spivak, who in her work, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (Spivak 1988:287), highlights that women are doubly exploited, especially as the philosophical formation of gender preserves the male as ascendant. The subaltern people can be referred to as people who are excluded from the hierarchy of power, (Spivak 1988:285). In other words, subaltern people are different from what is considered the elite (Spivak 1988:285), and in this study refers to women. Spivak (1988:308, 294) maintains that the subaltern cannot speak as they are affected by gender, class, caste, and religion amongst others. In the context of this study, women are the 'other' to men and the researcher will look particularly at representations of women.

Media scholar Elfriede Fürsich (2010:113) maintains that mass media functions as a standardising structure for the construction of reality and advances that the struggle concerning the media is the placement of 'others' amongst us. 'Others' in this context refers to representations concerning ethnic, racial, gender, or sexual minorities as opposed to European and American males and heterosexuals (Fürsich 2010:116). Fürsich (2010:116) posits that media plays a key role in nation-building and often creates an identity that represents a nation and communities, whilst leaving out minorities – also referred to as 'others'. The concept of 'otherness' is linked to gatekeeping processes and is aligned with the views in Happer and Philo's (2013:322) study that the media systematically edits and promotes information flow, which can lead to certain information or groups of people being the focus more than others. The correlations between Fürsich's (2010) and Happer and Philo's (2013) studies on representation indicate that in some cases advantaged consortia, such as socio-political organisations, are influential in constructing media content.

The discussion of othering this section proceeds by looking at some of the common ways that women are 'othered' in the media. As explained previously in Chapter One, the media is a key agent for creating opinions and perceptions. It is also a vehicle for othering as discussed above. Maha Bashri and Sameera Ahmed (2020:IX) refer to two main themes that emanate from women's media depictions, in which women are outsiders and the status quo of white men continues to be upheld. Bashri and Ahmed

(2020:IX) further argue that portrayals of women of colour or minorities still show them as “aliens”, who require “taming”.

Mary Jatau (2009:1) advances the notion of ‘othering’ in that she problematises “homogenized and Eurocentric media images” of African women. She argues that Western media portrayals of women remain distorted since colonial times (Jatau 2009:1). She contends that the representation of women as savages, during colonial times, has changed, and images of African women portray them as “despair, deprivation, and helplessness”. Jayau (2009:2) further states that in addition to African women being portrayed as objects for Western consumption, the media has also ascribed markers that show “the us versus them divide”. Furthermore, Jayau (2009:6) argues that “Western womanhood” is considered superior and therefore glorified in contrast to “African womanhood”.

Another common ‘othering’ of African women relates to hair, which due to its curly structure becomes a marker for blackness, states Madlela (2020:17). However, the use of hair as a marker for racial identity is becoming difficult as women make use of wigs and weaves. Hair is symbolic for many cultures, and black hair in particular has been a political and cultural statement for many years. Tabora Johnson and Teiahsha Bankhead (2013:89) suggest that whiteness is normalised through the construction of black identity, and thus blacks and people of colour are represented as ‘other’. White was viewed as beautiful, along with straight hair and fair skin. Because black hair forms part of the identity of Blackness, women were historically viewed as inhuman (Johnson & Bankhead 2013:89). Madlela (2020:20) explains that in South Africa, black Africans are a marginalised group, which rendered them invisible. The representation of natural black hair as inferior to white hair could have contributed to many black women adopting ideologies about what is the perfect hair, and thus black natural hair is straightened, relaxed, weaves are sewn on and wigs are worn (Madlela 2020:20). This means that women are accepted socially which puts them in a better position to get a job or advance their career, as Madlela (2020:20) alludes to.

Representation of Muslim women is another common type of ‘othering’ of women. Drawing on “visual representations of Muslim women in the North American print news media”, Watt’s (201: 32) study analyses how prevailing representations about Muslim

women are constructed in print news media sites, emphasising links “between local and global contexts”. An interesting point made by Watt (2012:32) highlights the need for readers to critically read and look at representations and not just accept what is disseminated by the media. Her study examined the image of fully clothed “Muslim women on the cover of Maclean’s magazine”. The findings show that the cover picture does not have any association to the media story and readers are not privy to information about the women and why they are dressed in that attire. Watt explains (2012:37) what is thought-provoking during the analysis process, is that students, who were the participants in the study, found it most interesting that the “women are Turkish Shia observing Ashura, which is an Islamic holy day of mourning”. Watt’s (2012:36) study showcases the power of representations about otherness, as assumptions are made about the image without reading the context. The findings of this study correlate with the argument that the media literacy curriculum and media analysis should pay closer attention to how meanings are produced from representations. The study also highlights the media’s role in reinforcing othering. In a similar study of othering of Muslim women, Bushra Hameedur Rahman (2014:1) explores how the images of the women were portrayed to project an ideal West against the ‘values of Muslims as others’. Rahman (2014:1) suggests that attitudes towards Muslim women and their representations in the Western mass media space are harsh, with them being portrayed as ‘submissive, oppressed, and backward.’

As mentioned earlier in this section, othering refers to being different from the dominant group. Whilst, the topic of othering of African and Muslim women and migrant women are discussed and more prominent in literature, it is not confined to these two groups of women. This study acknowledges that different forms of othering relate to women. For example, Jennifer Thorpe-Moscon and Alixandra Pollack (2014:2) use the example of Mark Zuckerberg, who is normally “described as a CEO” whilst, “Ursula Burns is described as a female CEO — in fact, a female African-American CEO”. Thus, the non-dominant group, female African- American CEOs, is specified in this example. As in the studies discussed above, women being ‘othered’ is the main focus, followed by ‘women of colour’. The studies above discuss African women, a racial aspect, as well as Muslim women, a religious aspect. This is important to reflect upon in this study as most of the units of analysis in the data set are based on women of colour. It is also important to look into previous studies about othering of

women and representations of women, as women of colour are not only affected by their sex, they are also impacted by their race and other social inequalities.

2.2.2.2 Portrayals of women in the media

Byerly and Ross (2008:16) maintain that the way women are portrayed in the media has been the focus of feminist scholars. Problematizing media depictions of women, Gaye Tuchman, Arlene Kaplan Daniels, and James Benet (1978) examine women's omission and stereotypes attributed to them. Tuchman et al (1978:49) look at the image of women, and argue that the image of women can be likened to a "battleground for development and perfection".

Women are still subjected to the same issues of misrepresentation and marginality, as those identified a decade ago (Byerly & Ross 2008:37). Below I will discuss some of the common representations of women. Byerly and Ross (2008:16) contend that the media emphasised women's traditional role and portrayed them as sex objects across various media platforms such as the news, advertisements, television soaps, or film amongst others. Byerly and Ross (2008:37) argue that there is a concerning trend of the "commodification of women's bodies" in which their bodies are displayed in parts and appear across magazines and newspapers. The findings of Onyinyechi Nancy's (2014:41) study, which examines the representation of women's images in Nigeria, show that women are portrayed negatively through photographic images in print media. Women are further negatively portrayed through depictions of them in a domestic or sexual capacity (Nancy 2014:46). Focussing on black African women, Khulekani Madlela (2019:34) argues that media text plays an "ideological role" and therefore impact black women's identities. Examining the representation of black women in *True Love* magazine, a South African publication, her findings show that depictions of women centres on "good sex and a beautiful body" (Madlela 2019:33). She further elaborates that "black women mainly feature as glamorous sex objects and present unrealistic portrayals and expectations of sex and romantic love".

Another common portrayal of women in the media is that of a victim. Byerly and Ross (2006:42) put forward the media's enthrallment with the "fragile women form and her vulnerability to violation". Women are depicted as victims, who are submissive and

reliant on men (Byerly & Ross 2006:42). Looking at how victims of intimate femicide are portrayed in South African media, Amanda Spies (2014:41) asserts that the media frames these murders as isolated crimes rather than a problem that is located within “the social context of male dominance”. Within this portrayal of women as victims, the stereotype of the ideal victim is rooted, suggests Spies (2014:42). This means that the ‘ideal victims’ are characterised as ‘vulnerable and innocent’. Similar to the Spies study, Dane Issacs’ (2016) study also examined media representation of intimate partner violence in South Africa. Issacs’ (2016:493) findings revealed that the depiction of women serves to reduce violence against women to “male perpetration and female victimhood”, rather than representing it as an extraordinary occurrence in South Africa. The findings uncover three main themes which are: “social representations of intimate partner violence as an extreme act of physical violence, constructing representations of ‘mundane’ violence, and reinforcing of the victim status”.

Holtzhausen, Jordaan, and North (2011:168) posit that through advertising women models are used to convey marketing messages to a particular target audience, which is not necessarily reality. Looking at commercials across four television channels, Holtzhausen et al’s (2011:175) findings show that women are mostly depicted as product users in South African television advertising, with the second most depiction being the social role. The finding also revealed that less than “12% of the commercials in the sample” portrayed women in a “career or working role”. Women as leaders and women in business are discussed more in this chapter. The study acknowledges that it has only discussed three common depictions of women above and that there are a plethora of portrayals of women in the media, such as women in sport.

2.2.2.3 Stereotypes of women

Stereotypes are related to the naming of social groups, which are linked to preferences, emotions, likes, and dislikes. Walter Lippman (1991:81) states “we pick out what our culture has already defined for us, and we tend to perceive that which we have picked out in the form stereotyped for us by our culture”. Thus, stereotypes are already constructed for us and through the media, they become accessible and accepted as part of the discourse. Naomi Ellemers (2018:284-286) believes that the representations in the media fortify stereotypes of men and women and this captures

how we expect them to 'behave' and how 'we think they should behave.' Therefore, stereotypes reveal prejudice that is perpetually negative such as dumb blonde women, entitled millennials, the indebted middle class, and the boring housewife, amongst others. However, it is acknowledged that not all stereotypes are necessarily negative. Stereotyping gender is not a new phenomenon. Ellemers (2018:275) highlights that stereotypes about how men and women behave are widely shared and reflect not only differences but also impact on how men and women define themselves and are treated by others.

Although there are many types of stereotypes that are attributed to women, I will discuss three common stereotypes in the context of this study: women as homemakers, women as sexual objects, and leadership stereotypes about women.

2.2.2.3.1 *Women as homemakers*

Conducting a historical study and looking at femininity and masculinity, Gauntlett (2002:43) highlights that before the 1970s women were rarely shown or portrayed in working roles, and if they were depicted they were portrayed as docile and shown in roles such as a secretary, hairdresser, school teacher or nurse. Gauntlett (2002:50) reflects on content analysis of advertisements on television in the late 1970s that reveals that three-quarters of the advertisements with women featuring in them were for kitchen and bathroom products. The findings also showed that women were more seen in the home playing the role of a housewife or a mother, and men were most likely to be seen outside the home and in authority roles. The representation of women as the homemaker was similarly explored in an earlier study by Donald Sexton and Phyllis Haberman (1974:41) who posit that stereotypes through advertisements include the "happy and diligent housewife who strives for a whiter wash and shinier floors; the beautiful but dependent social companion, and the girl who wishes to be blond or thin...". Sexton and Haberman's (1974:45) study probed advertisements for several products across five genres of magazines. Their findings corroborate views that images of women in advertisements do not reflect their capabilities and are narrow as only 16% of the advertisements feature women in non-traditional roles.

In a similar vein, another study that examines stereotypes of women in advertisements across magazines was conducted by Alice Courtney and Sarah Lockeretz (1971:94-95). Their findings indicate four kinds of stereotypes: “a woman's place is in the home, women do not make important decisions or do important things, women are dependent and need men's protection, and men regard women primarily as sexual objects and that they are not interested in women as people” as indicated by Alice Courtney and Sarah Lockeretz (1971:94-95). Courtney and Lockeretz (1971:92) were attentive to occupational and “non-working roles of men and women” as characterised in advertisements. The findings of the study show that in print advertising only 12% of women were shown in working roles, despite 33% of women comprising full-time workers in the United States of America (Courtney & Lockeretz 1971:93). However, the findings also show that 45% of the men were in working roles in advertisements.

Consequently, advertising has been criticised over the years for failing to incorporate the varied competencies and characters of women but instead assisting to continue promoting the happy (fulfilled) housewife perception, argues Sexton and Haberman (1974:42). This reinforces the typical belief and notion that women are the ‘weaker’ sex, whilst men are the ‘provider’ and ‘stronger’ sex. This is affirmed by Wood (1994:32) who maintains that the media reinforces cultural ideals of femininity and masculinity; with women being represented as passive, dependent, and beautiful, and men being unafraid, independent, and powerful.

This traditional stereotype from the 1970s continues to persist even until 2015. This has unfortunately become the acceptable representation of women, even with the GMMP 2015 findings (2015:65) indicating that “Women are three times more likely to be described by family status – as wives, daughters, mothers, etc. – implying identities drawn from their relationship with others. This is a contrast to the higher media tendency to depict men as persons whose worth stem from their other roles in society such as their political positions or occupations.” The 2015 GMMP (2015:44) findings also show that the rate of men distinguished by “family status” continues nearly unaltered since 2000 where just 5% are depicted as a father, child, and spouse or by “other family jobs”. However, in the 2020 GMMP (2020:18) there was a slight decrease, in which only 14% of women were represented by family status compared to the 2015 study, in which 19% percent were represented in family status. The

representation of men in the family status category has been maintained at 5% since 2015. More statistics of the GMMP studies will be discussed later in the chapter. The representation of women as homemakers is a stereotypical gender role, and it is deemed relevant to look at in this study to ascertain whether this stereotype is factored into depictions of women in business news.

2.2.2.3.2 Women as sexual objects

This study also considers it crucial to discuss the objectification of women in the media as it is a negative stereotype and highlights the fact that women are portrayed as decorative figures. Advertising plays a powerful role in society, creating standards and values of what should be referred to as feminine and masculine. Through advertising, the idea of the ideal woman is created and at the same time, capitalism is reinforced. Thus, advertising agents are inclined to use sexual content, which has no significance to the product being advertised, argues Dahl, Sengupta, and Vohs (2009:215); Cortese (2008:57) and Wood (1994:36).

Wood (1994:36) argues that the media imparts messages that women are sexual objects and that women are characterised by ideal body types which are constantly envisioned bare or incompletely clothed. Wood (1994:36) postulates that the sexual representation of women, as desired by men, is ironic as women are encouraged to assume or develop traits such as beauty or sexiness so that they live up to the cultural ideals, which in turn contributes to their victimisation. Wood (1994:37) maintains that the effects of images of women who are portrayed as the ideal beauty standard enables one to believe that a normal body and physique is problematic. This notion is similarly pointed out by Maya Gordon (2008:245) whose study looks at the media's contributions to African American girls' focus on beauty. Gordon (2008:246) suggests that mass media is limited in the diverse representation of women and that one of the degrading roles ascribed to women is that of sex object. Gordon (2008:246) expresses a similar notion to Wood (1994:36) on the objectification of women, wherein she highlights that the idea behind portraying women in less clothing is to be "sexually desirable and/or the object of male attention". The objectification of women, Gordon explains (2008:246) ignores their emotions, characteristics, and desires but instead reduces them to 'body parts'.

Jennifer Millard and Peter Grant (2006:659) undertook two studies to examine the representations of women in magazines and “fashion spreads”. These include looking at representations of women from magazines and the impressions of students on models from advertisements and fashion spreads. For the purpose of this literature, Study 1 will be explored, as this research looks at the representation of women. The aim of the study was to probe the “feminine stereotype of submissiveness and explicit sexuality within modern-day fashion magazines” (Millard & Grant 2006:660). Millard and Grant’s findings (2006:663) indicate two results: women are represented as 1) submissive and 2) explicitly sexualised, thus “women in advertisements are still portrayed stereotypically”. The findings show that 37 of 120 advertisements sampled in the study comprise either revealing clothing on women or nudity. Millard and Grant (2006:669) state the data of the study indicate that “magazine photographs continue to portray women in stereotypically submissive or explicitly sexual poses, as they have been portrayed over 3 (three) decades”. It is noted that the study acknowledges that despite the findings of Study 1 which indicate “that stereotypes are frequently used in magazine photographs, it cannot be generalised because fashion is concerned with physical appearance, which may encourage the use of prototypical poses”. The notion of the male gaze, emanates from art criticism, through John Berger’s book *Ways of Seeing*, in which he looks at the male gaze in operation and how women participate in the gaze. The notion of the male gaze is relevant because it objectifies women and reinforces patriarchy. However, I will discuss the male gaze in more detail later in this chapter.

Gordon (2008:245) argues that sexual objectification of women in the media can potentially limit and influence adolescent girls’ attitude towards beauty and the ideal woman, and in the physical adolescent phase they are under added pressure to conform to society’s idea of what the ideal women should look like. This notion is similarly supported by Sarah McComb and Jennifer Mills (2019:34) who maintain that body dissatisfaction is felt by many people, especially in a disproportionate number of young women. McComb and Mills (2019:34) argue that the media is one of the main transmitters of what is the expected and appropriate beauty ideal, through the images they show of extremely skinny female models. The frequent exposure of the images of skinny women leads to the belief that thin is the ideal and acceptable beauty standard.

The tendency of objectifying and sexualising women continues to remain rife in mainstream news media content and the stereotypes of women being the dependent and weaker sex are shown in contrast to images depicting an independent, authoritative, and strong male (GMMP 2015:45). Concerning the objectification of women in the news, the 2020 GMMP (2020:39) study reveals that the physical attributes of women are described more than their voices being heard in the news. Furthermore, as reported by the 2020 GMMP (2002:39), there is a greater tendency to describe women than men and “to include their images particularly in various stages of undress”.

This study deems it necessary to include the discussion on the sexual objectification of women as it is ultimately the basis for all other objectification of women, even if they are regarded as decorative objects. In the context of this study, it provides the basis for looking at how men treat women, especially in the workplace. Through sexual objectification, women are robbed of power, especially in the workplace. For example, women are portrayed as second to men, they are judged on their physical appearance, and robbed of their self-worth. Furthermore, as Ann Cahill (2012:4) explains, objectification “actually created reality and beings”. Thus, it is imperative to understand how this stereotype operates and if women are constructed as objects in business.

2.2.2.3.3. Leadership stereotypes about women

Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky (1992:3) maintain that discrimination is one of the many contributing factors to “why women have limited access to leadership roles” or their qualifications and work output is not fairly evaluated. Eagly et al (1992:3) argue that leadership behaviour when performed by a man is accepted; however, if the same style of leadership is performed by women it is less acceptable. Using the example of Ann Hopkins, an employee of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) who was denied partnership despite her outstanding work performance, Eagly et al (1992:3) highlight the discrimination she faced because of her leadership behaviour. The interpretation of this case points to her assertiveness regarding other employees, which was unfavourably assessed because she is a woman (Eagly et al 1992:3). Eagly et al (1992:6) maintain that women are expected to possess characteristics such as being “friendly, unselfish, concerned with others, and emotionally expressive”, whilst men

are anticipated to have characteristics of “being independent, masterful, assertive, and instrumentally competent”. A separate study undertaken by Heilman, Bloc, Martell, and Simon (1989) examine the views of “men, women, and successful managers” to specifically determine whether there was a consensus of the “perceptions of men and successful managers” in contrast to the “perceptions of women and successful managers”. Heilman et al (1989:941) state that attributes ascribed to successful women managers in their study are “bitter, quarrelsome, and selfish, and imply an unbridled ambition for power and achievement.” They further note that the description appears to kowtow to the “bitch” role-type, which is used in the descriptions of high-powered career women (Heilman et al 1989:941). Jenna Goudreau’s (2011) article on sentiments of the worst stereotypes expressed of powerful women revealed that such women are summed up by stereotypes that seek to undermine them. The accounts shared by some of the world’s powerful women (such as former International Monetary Fund (IMF) Chief, Christine Lagard, first female Executive Editor of The New York Times, Jill Abramso, and Costa Rica’s first female leader, former President Laura Chinchilla amongst others), indicate that women still struggle with stereotypes. Goudreau (2011) reports that some of the reported stereotypes include the “ice queen; single and lonely; tough and brusque; weak; women must look masculine; conniving; emotional; angry; a token; a cheerleader”.

The former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher, was also subjected to scrutiny by the media as she was the first woman to perform this role. Yves Golder (2020:5) states that the epithet of the Iron Lady was credited to her in “1976 by the Soviet newspaper Red Star”, and associated Thatcher’s feminine and masculine characteristics with it. Blair Williams (2020:2) suggests that mainstream media was attentive to Thatcher having both “masculine and feminine” characteristics, and was often stereotypically, albeit paradoxically, portrayed as both a “housewife” and “Iron lady”. Williams (2020:2) argues that the iron lady stereotype draws attention to Thatcher’s gender difference in fulfilling the role as the Prime Minister, as such posts were reserved for men. At the beginning of Thatcher’s career as a politician and prime minister, she was often depicted by newspaper and television media as the “doting housewife” and “mother” and was pictured by the stove or attending to her family (Williams 2020:1). A critical point to notice is that male politicians are hardly ever viewed in an apron or domesticated role. Williams (2020:4) postulates that Thatcher

was sometimes also subjected to satire, with her features often being distorted, with the parodies representing her as a “nanny, warrior queen, ice maiden and, more broadly, the monstrous feminine.” Such caricatures, Williams (2020:4) elucidates, became part of the larger media discourse that disparaged the voices of women. Campbell (2015:49) refers to a satirical television puppet show, *Spitting Image*, which dressed Thatcher in a man’s suit and discovered the manlier they dressed her, the more famous their puppet became. However, Campbell (2015:49) alludes to the point that “representing Thatcher as a man missed the point”, as she “destabilised the performance of elite or power femininity”. Campbell (2015:49) explains this as Thatcher being a woman and at the same time more than any man. Referring to Thatcher and destabilising power femininity, Campbell (2015:49) states “femininity is what she wears, masculinity is what she admires”. Golder (2020:8) highlights that in response to demeaning parodies of herself, Thatcher turned them into positive representation to counter them, and when they reflected her in a positive light, she further used the opportunity to exploit the same idea. For example, Golder (2020:10) alludes to an incident during her 1979 campaign, wherein she took the view of “Gordon Reece who told her to go shopping in the King’s Road in front of the journalists’ cameras”. Subsequently, on April 25th 1979, people saw her “holding two shopping bags explaining that the spending power had fallen for all the preceding five years of labour government”. Cleverly, she used her portrayal of a housewife to propel her political campaign. She did this to attract her followers’ attention and ensure “a valorising reputation” (Golder 2020:8).

2.3 Statistics on the representation of women in the news

Above, common stereotypes to which women are subjected are discussed. Statistics, which will enable the researcher to have a holistic view of which genres of news women are represented in and where they are excluded, will now be examined. The media produces and churns out norms and stereotypes, influencing and shaping sociocultural practices. As mentioned in Chapter One, this study also relies on the findings of the Global Media Monitoring Project, as it reflects the statistics of how women are represented in the various categories of news. These figures will provide an understanding of the extent of representation of women in the news and highlight the gaps in the representation of women in certain news categories.

Amongst the key findings of the 2010 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) report (2010:7) is that women are hardly heard in the news. The most concerning findings reveal that of “people heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television and radio news” only 24% comprise women. Notably, and shockingly, not much has changed on this front, as the 2020 GMMP (2020:17) report indicates that in the year 2020 only 25 % of women are represented in the news. The 2020 GMMP report (2020:17) further indicates that from 1995 until 2020, there has only been an 8% increase of women heard in the news.

The 2010 GMMP (2010:7) also found that from the year 2000 to 2010 there was slight traction of the general existence of women in economic news, with an increase in representation of women in 2000 from 18% to 20% in 2010 respectively. The 2015 GMMP (2015:25) indicates that there is 21% of women in the economic news in contrast to 79% of men, and within five years, with the GMMP 2020 (2020:17) indicating that women are represented at 24%. This translates to a mere 14% increase in women’s representation in economic news over a twenty-five-year period.

The 2015 GMMP (2015:25) report further reveals that women make up 67% of those represented as homemakers and 47% of those appearing as social workers and health workers, with no increase or decrease noted in the 2020 GMMP report (GMMP 2020:17). Women are still unacceptably underrepresented in major occupational categories such as politics and government, which in 1995 was 7% and in 2020 women’s representation increased to 20%; in economic news over a 25 year period from 1995-2020, women’s representation overall grew by 14%; in the crime and violence category the representation of women increased by only 3%, from 21% in 1995 to 24 % in 2020; and in science and technology from 27% in 1995 to 30% in 2020, as revealed in the 2020 GMMP study (GMMP 2020:17).

Whilst the authors of the GMMP state that they cannot answer why there is such a slow improvement in women's representation, the findings show that there is a critical gap that requires further research to determine and understand the slow growth rate of women’s representation. This is despite many international instruments put in place to advance women's rights and the recognition of changing attitudes, dispelling

stereotypes, and transformation (GMMP 2015:2). Evidently, the media must show some form of accountability or responsibility to women.

Clause J2 in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995:101), which reads: “Promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media,” creates a close link to the context of this study as it focuses on the discursive ways the media characteristically represent women. Wood (1994:31) maintains that three main ideas illustrate how the media portrays men and women, which include women are “underrepresented, women are portrayed in stereotypical ways and relations between male and female reinforce traditional roles”. Wood (1994:32) asserts that in general, men are portrayed as dynamic, bold, forceful, heroes, someone to depend on, powerful and ambitious as opposed to women who are generally depicted as beautiful, thin, dependent, homemakers and victims. Nino et al (2019:645) state that the production of such generalisations is effectively an infringement of women’s rights and it furnishes media consumers with a set of ideas on how men and women should fit into society.

Only 4% of media story categories (Figure 1) challenged stereotypes created, as per the GMMP 2020 report’s (2020:54) findings. This shows that gender sensitivity was only minimally considered with regards to balancing sources, language, and objectivity. Figure 1 below illustrates a 15-year period of stories that clearly challenge gender stereotypes, by major topic.

Topic	2005	2010	2015	2020			Δ 15 yrs
	Print, radio, television	Print, radio, television	Print, radio, television	Print, radio, television	News websites	News tweets	Print, radio, television
Politics and Government	3%	5%	3%	2%	4%	2%	-1%
Economy	1%	4%	3%	2%	2%	2%	+1%
Science and Health	1%	5%	5%	1%	3%	1%	0
Social and Legal	6%	8%	4%	5%	5%	5%	-1%
Crime and Violence	2%	5%	4%	3%	3%	2%	+1%
Gender & Related				19%	15%	15%	n/a
Celebrity, Arts and Media, Sports	2%	6%	3%	4%	7%	5%	+2%
Other	5%	2%	1%	5%	7%	3%	0
OVERALL	3%	6%	4%	3%	4%	3%	0

Figure 1: Stories that challenge gender stereotypes by major topic: 2005-2020 (GMMP 2020:54)

The largest challenge shown to stereotypes in news categories is in celebrity, arts and media, and sports, with it increasing by 2% over a 15-year period. Over the 15-year period, the science and health category has no overall increase or decrease with stories challenging gender stereotypes. This is concerning, as the 2020 GMMP report (GMMP 2020:4) indicated that since the advent of COVID_19 there has been an exponential increase in science/health news. However, there has been a decrease in “women’s voice and visibility in the stories and in their presence, which declined by five points after a steady rise between 2000 and 2015 (GMMP 2020:4)”.

Figure 2, below, shows that the statistics paint an image of the little representation of women in economic news and the genres where they are most prominent such as health, which associates them with traditional care-type roles. (N/A in the figure means that the statistics were not applicable, and therefore are not considered the 15-year period).

	2000		2005		2010		2015		2020		%Change (Δ)	
	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M	%F	%M
by Occupation. NRT												
Homemaker, parent (no other occupation is given)	81	19	75	25	72	28	67	33	68	32		Δ15 yrs (%F)
Health worker, social worker, childcare worker	n/a		n/a		n/a		47	53	47	53		(-7)
Office or service worker, non-management worker	35	65	40	60	45	55	35	65	42	58		+2
Unemployed no other occupation given	33	67	19	81	35	65	34	66	42	58		+23
Activist or worker in civil society org., NGO, trade union	24	76	23	77	34	66	33	67	35	65		+12
Doctor, dentist, health specialist	n/a		n/a		n/a		30	70	29	71		
Academic expert, lecturer, teacher	n/a		n/a		n/a		23	77	29	71		
Lawyer, judge, magistrate, legal advocate, etc.	n/a		18	82	17	83	22	78	25	75		+7
Media professional, journalist, film-maker, etc.	n/a		36	64	29	71	21	79	29	71		(-7)
Tradesperson, artisan, labourer, truck driver, etc.	15	85	23	77	22	78	21	79	21	79		(-2)
Government employee, public servant, etc.	12	88	17	83	17	83	20	80	22	78		+5
Government, politician, minister, spokesperson...	10	90	12	88	17	83	18	82	18	82		+6
Business person, exec, manager, stock broker...			12	88	14	86	16	84	20	80		+8
Agriculture, mining, fishing, forestry	15	85	13	87	13	87	14	86	24	76		+11
Science/ technology professional, engineer, etc.	12	88	10	90	10	90	10	90	20	80		+10
Police, military, para-military, militia, fire officer	4	96	5	95	7	93	8	92	12	88		+7
Sportsperson, athlete, player, coach, referee	9	91	16	84	11	89	7	93	14	86		(-2)

Figure 2: People in the news by major occupation, over a 15-year period: 2005-2020 (GMMP2020:17)

From the statistics above and the literature discussed in previous sections of this chapter, it is evident that women are still subjected to forms of othering, stereotypes and are statistically represented more in categories of home-makers, social workers,

and healthcare workers compared to political and economic news. Against this background of the minimal representation of women in the economic and business category, this study will explore literature based on women in the economic and business media in the following section.

2.4 Women in economic and business media

Gendered stereotypes are not only produced in the news but also in film, television, social media, and popular culture in general. Bell and Sinclair (2016:322) analyse visual media “representations of women leaders in popular culture” and through commentaries show how their “bodies, clothes and sexuality” are portrayed in specific ways. Popular culture is important in the portrayal of women’s leadership by diminishing institutionalised casts that enervate women’s participation in leadership roles across various disciplines, argue Bell and Sinclair (2016:323). The paper offers a comprehensive indication of the portrayal of women leaders in popular culture, the historic stereotypes of women leaders, and how they are considered as bodies rather than leaders. Bell and Sinclair (2016:326) suggest that women in leadership positions are looked at closely based on their physical appearance and this is nothing new as “women have been the object of the male gaze for centuries,” which is directly linked to Laura Mulvey’s ‘male gaze’ (1975). Bell and Sinclair (2016:326) strengthen the study’s argument through Berger’s (1972) concept of how women are seen through the notion of “surveyor and surveyed”. The identity of a woman is made up of the “surveyor” and the “surveyed”, as “she must continually survey all that she is and does because how she appears to men determines how she is treated by them and this is crucial to her success.”

Bell and Sinclair (2016:328-329) note the significance of critiquing and making known stereotypes that women face but also suggest that popular media offers the possibility to “provide spectators with role models which they can emulate”. An examination by Bell and Sinclair (2016:239) of the international Danish hit television series *Borgen*, reveal how traditional views, standards, and influence are associated with representations of women in leadership and how it can be disrupted by equipping viewers with numerous methods of partaking in women’s “experiences of leadership”. The central theme explores an empowering feminist narrative set in a political milieu

and the character growth of the protagonist as she confronts and comes to terms with the pressures of being her country's first female prime minister. Through this series, Bell and Sinclair (2016:239) posit that popular culture can play a critical role in offering and opening up an alternative representation of women in leadership through the creations of a new symbolic structure and not one based on imitating men or being seen as the weaker leader. Similarly looking at women leaders in business print publications as discussed above, Lämsä and Tiensuu (2002:365) suggest that organisations should value the feminine way, in its own right, and not be compared to the masculine way. This would require organisations to become attuned to the creation of another symbolic trait that does not imitate men (Lämsä & Tiensuu 2002:365).

There has been significant growth of business news over time with it becoming a daily niche subject across the globe. The GMMP 2015 report (2015:23) reflects that the economic news subject was reflected in the top ten of "news topics on the global monitoring on the day of 25 March 2015", mirroring previous global monitoring days. The GMMP study (GMMP 2015:28), looks at the period 2005-2015, in which economic news was the third-largest contributor to the study. Business news is a niche domain in which women are seen to be marginally represented, with the 2020 GMMP (2020:17) findings concluding that there is a bare minimum increase of women featuring in business news. Thus far, the literature reviewed has revealed a common thread that shows women are marginalised in the media in general and in business media specifically.

According to Jia, Lansdall-Welfare, Sudhakar, Carter, and Cristianini (2011:6) men are represented in more news categories than women across the media, except for fashion. Undertaking a "data-driven study of gender representation of online English language news media", Ji et al (2011:6) maintain that issues customarily viewed as essentially significant to women are regularly minimised in the news, while the views of men are prominent. The study further points out that men are prominent in the business and politics news categories, whereas "women are acknowledged in the fashion and entertainment categories". Thus, women are underrepresented as both subject and source (Jia et al 2011:8). The minimal portrayal of women in business news is corroborated by Shor, van de Rijt, Miltsov, Kulkarni, & Skiena (2015:964), who further maintain that the underrepresentation of women in business media is due to

the continuing social existences of severe gender inequalities at leadership and management positions. Shor et al (2015:964) propose that media coverage often mirrors realities and inequalities that are experienced every day in society. This study is of the view that there is a lacuna of research that examines women's representations in business news. Shor et al (2015:964) maintain that the reason why groups of people, including women, are underrepresented in the media is that they do not hold positions of power in politics and business, etc., which are subjects that the media tend to focus on.

Mavin et al (2016:315) believe that the media in fact gives some sense of women leaders and managers in their portrayals. Judy McGregor (2000:290) states that managerial or leadership positions are viewed as fundamentally appropriate for individuals with manly characteristics. McGregor (2000:290) suggests that the media's uncommunicativeness about women in leadership roles maintains and strengthens the views of male management. According to Hannson et al (2019:61), there is a lacuna of studies that specifically look at the social representation of female managers, and research conducted is from countries such as Finland, Germany, the United Kingdom, and Sweden. A glaring omission is that there was no research mentioned that emanates from an African country. Women being portrayed as 'non-leader or the other leader' and men being depicted as leaders are associated with constructed and historic stereotypes and characteristics attributed to women and men, suggests Hannson et al (2019:59-60). There is also evidence that there are various impediments that reinforce gender inequality, which Hannson et al (2019:60) conclude "fall into analytical categories such as structural, institutional and biological explanations". These impediments include amongst others: "invisible barriers, organisation and organising practices, dominant culture behaviour, scrutiny and judgement applied to women's bodies, clothes, demeanour, and sexuality" (Hannson et al 2019:59).

The impediments, especially the gendered scrutiny to women's dressing and biological features, are asserted by Emma Bell and Amanda Sinclair (2016:323) in an article entitled, "Bodies, Sexualities and Women Leaders in Popular Culture: From Spectacle to Metapicture," Mavin et al (2016:315) maintain that the representation of "women as managers or leaders are gendered or sexualized". The study further highlights that the media advocates and supports women leaders, whilst at the same time passing

judgments on how women leaders play their gendered roles, with detailed attention being placed on a women's hair, makeup, how thin she is, or her family life (Mavin et al 2016:315).

Hannsson et al (2019:60) suggest that research that analyses content and gender constructions produced by the media often scrutinises "broad sections of text" and thus provides "broad descriptions and analysis". This broad-based analysis is viewed as problematic for Hannsson et al (2019:62) as it does not adequately reveal a fine-grain analysis of media text through which gender disparities become revealed in discourse. This is the gap that this research seeks to fill by providing a fine-grain analysis of the content and gender constructions of women.

Hannson et al (2019:74) argue that business media is a powerful entity that contributes to the maintenance of traditional views and stereotypes on gender. The findings of the analysis of business articles by Hannson et al (2019:72-73) indicate that media texts still advance traditional, gender-stereotyped patterns using metaphors, words, and sentence construction. The results of the study show that institutionalised male character descriptions are ascribed to men such as "objective, independent, result-oriented, hard, focused and analytical," whilst women as managers were characterised by "being dependent of others, softness, being more personal, playing games and fuff around, their success being (metaphorically) dependent on the weather, or adopting typically male characteristics in her leadership" (Hannson et al 2019:72-73). In other words, Hannson et al's (2019:73) findings suggest that leadership is still to a great extent connected with manly traits and it is recognised that it is improper for women to be in management or as a leader.

Drawing on the hypothesis that careers are gendered Anna-Maija Lämsä and Tanja Tiensuu (2002:363) maintain that organisations do not have to be a site of "inequality and hierarchy". It is also noted that institutionalised stereotypes, such as taking men as the norm for leaders and women being marked as the other or different are constructed and legitimised in organisations and influenced by social forces, which include the media. As indicated in Chapter One, Lämsä and Tiensuu (2002:364) concur with the notion that the media construct and sustain meanings, which influence perceptions and actions. Thus, readers are disposed to make their assessment on

media content, posits Lämsä and Tiensuu (2002:364). The representations made by the media have partisan, societal, and ethical implications (Lämsä & Tiensuu 2002:364). The focus of the study is on the discursive ways the media describe and portray women leaders through investigating “51 articles published” in a prominent business newspaper, entitled ‘Kauppalehti’ and in business magazines in Finland, namely ‘Kauppalehti Optio’ and ‘Talouselämä’ (Lämsä & Tiensuu 2002:367). The way business media portray women leaders, especially in management, has bearings on what kind of activity is esteemed or not. These media representations argue Lämsä and Tiensuu (2002:364), influence women’s identity and career prospects. The study adopts discourse analysis as its analytical framework, with the findings showing three discourses surrounding women leaders, which are described as: “a patriarchal discourse, a victim discourse, and a professional discourse” (Lämsä & Tiensuu 2002:368). Below the findings of the three discourses will be briefly expanded.

According to Lämsä and Tiensuu (2002:368) a patriarchal discourse views and describes the notion of women leaders as secondary to her male co-workers, with men’s standards and principles given priority in contrast with those of women leaders. The findings show that women leaders are portrayed as ‘different’ and ‘subordinate’ to male leaders. The women leader also faces the disadvantages of being the ‘different’ one, with all her actions being presented from the perspective of a male leader. Therefore, the discourse supports the creation of the women leader in such a way that she follows organisational and societal norms. The patriarchal discourse notes that when a women leader “acts against her natural, feminine character,” and acts ‘in a masculine’ way she is “able to succeed in a managerial task” (Lämsä & Tiensuu 2002: 369).

A victim discourse according to Lämsä and Tiensuu (2002:369-340) has similarities to the patriarchal discourse in that the women leader is portrayed as inferior regarding hierarchal relations between the sexes. The difference between the victim discourse and the patriarchal discourse is that it demands a transformation of male dominion publicly. The victimisation experienced by the women leader relates to career progression. It highlights the impediments and difficulty women face to attain high-ranking positions and the discourse is depicted by its refusal to accept inequality. It highlights this inequality by allowing the reader to see the difficulties women

experience and calls for change for equal numbers of men and women in top positions. The findings of Lämsä and Tiensuu's (2002:370) study also note that whilst the women leader is portrayed as a 'victim', it can very well be that in the future she becomes an 'equal actor'. In other words, if there is a change in the hierarchal status between women and men, women will be equal to men and become equal actors as leaders.

A rare finding in the professional discourse, according to Lämsä and Tiensuu (2002:371) portrays women leaders as skilled experts with no comparison to their male counterparts. The findings regarding this type of discourse show that the advancement of a woman in her career is not regarded as 'exceptional', nor is her ability to do the job questioned. The discourse does not focus on gender but instead on the skills of the leader, creating an identity that suggests that men and women are equal and can progress freely in their careers. This can result in organisations being known for prioritising the competence and qualifications of individuals and not their gender.

Lämsä and Tiensuu (2002:371) elucidate on the main tenant of the professional discourse, which is to showcase and "assure the reader" of the financial success of an organisation, which legitimises a woman leader based on the successful performance of a company. This can be viewed as a tool to influence social practices. It is noted that the power in this discourse is economic and not gendered, and competence becomes inferior to it. Thus capitalism becomes crucial in this discourse. "The power embedded within the discourse is economic and that competence, thus, is subordinated to it," suggests Lämsä and Tiensuu (2002:371). It is also critical to point out that the analysis of the articles did not find genuine efforts on the construction of an alternative narrative such as women's role models or creating a new discourse of how the women leader is represented in her own way and not that of following a masculine norm (Lämsä & Tiensuu 2002:372).

An older study by Marilyn Greenwald (1988:1) examines representations of women in business publications through content analysis. The study focuses on business news treatment of women both as subjects and reporters of stories (Greenwald 1988:1). The study put forth that women would play a role as subjects and writers as there was an increase of women in the workforce from the 1970s. Greenwald (1988:5) speculates that if women and men are portrayed equally, it can then possibly be attributed to the increase of women in the workplace and women in managerial positions. Alternatively,

Greenwald (1988:5) speculates that if both men and women are portrayed unequally, it is highly possible that it could be linked to patriarchal power in society and at the workplace or that despite women being in managerial posts such as editors, male dominance could be in news sources.

Despite women becoming prominent in the workplace, the findings of the study show that women still receive little attention in business sections of the news (Greenwald 1988:7). It is notable that regarding the business sections under review in this study, *The Columbus Dispatch* is headed by a man, and *The Courier Journal* is headed by a woman. However, states Greenwald (1988:9), the only visible difference in gender representation between both business sections is the number of male and female by-lines. In *The Courier Journal* women wrote 35 stories and men wrote 42, while in *The Dispatch* women wrote 10 stories and men 35. What is interesting is that Greenwald (1988:9) points out that more women report for *The Dispatch* than men. Greenwald (1988:9) therefore suggests that having a woman in a position of authority or power – such as an editor – could influence the increase of by-lines by women. This stems from the fact that despite having more women working in the newsroom, *The Dispatch* made men more visible in their by-lines compared to women.

In a more recent study that looks at women in business media, Power, Rak, and Kim (2020:1) maintain a similar sentiment to other scholars about men receiving more media coverage than women. Power et al (2020:1) state that both the underrepresentation and misrepresentation of women in business news have negative effects on the business and other work-related ambitions of women. In their study, Power et al (2020:18) look at representations of women in general in leading North American business magazines *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, *Forbes*, and *Fortune*, from 2015 to 2017. The study seeks to ascertain the frequency with which men and women are mentioned, the levels and types of the agency assigned to them, how they are represented as social actors, and how the business publication reflects on women's present status in the Western business world. Power et al (2020:2) suggest that there is limited research that looks at the frequency with which women are mentioned in business news, their representations, and the discourses that surround them, adding that some studies only look at women as entrepreneurs or leaders. This research differs from Hansson et al (2019) and Lämsä and Tiensuu (2002) in that it included

references of any women in business publications and not only that of female leaders, managers, or entrepreneurs. The study seeks to extricate the notion of 'men as the standard' in business by focusing on representations of women, instead of the differences between the sexes. The study looks at the main text of each article and only included visuals when advertisements were framed as articles.

Like the views expressed by Shor et al (2015:964) about the underrepresentation of women in business news, Power et al's (2020:9) findings reinforce the notion that women are underrepresented in North American business publications. The study acknowledged that the low levels of representation of women could be attributed to the social status of women or their influence in this sector. The findings also indicate that women are not seen to be passive but instead depicted as 'responsible for actions and states of being' (Power 2020:10). The findings also suggest that if the coverage of women were described in relation to an employment category, women would be seen in middle management positions. The conclusion is that the publications' portrayal of women indicates a 'paper ceiling' which, as mentioned earlier in this Chapter, mirrors the glass ceiling whereby women are subject to gendered inequalities including gendered occupations.

Some of the literature reviewed is from decades past and much has changed in the workforce regarding women, who now play more meaningful roles in boardrooms and as experts in various sectors of business and society. Specifically, in South Africa, no study examines women's representations through Barthian semiotic analysis and Foucauldian discourse analysis. Thus, whereas most of the literature reviewed generally find that the media representation of women is minimal and is systematically subjected to some form of bias, there is an argument that this could have changed given the new roles women play towards contributing to economies and in the business world. Therefore, the gap in available research that this study seeks to contribute towards is the analysis of media representations of women and the discourses surrounding these representations in business news in local South African publications.

2.5 Theoretical framework of the study

The theoretical framework is the foundation from which all knowledge is constructed and serves as a structure for the literature review. This section focuses on the theories of representation and gender studies and provides the groundwork upon which this research is built. This section considers the following: representation, semiotics, Foucauldian discourse analysis, Berger's ways of seeing, gender studies and concludes with a summary of the overall chapter.

2.5.1 Representation

Representation is related to how subjects, minorities, and societies, amongst others, are portrayed. In the context of this study, the basis of representation theories is fundamental to analyse how women are portrayed in business media. Theories of representation ultimately focus on how media representation unfolds and it forms the basis for many studies which have investigated the portrayal by the media on various issues.

In his book, *The World as Will and Representation*, German philosopher, Arthur Schopenhauer (1909:39-40) argues that the real world is a representation that is built mentally. Schopenhauer's notion of representation is based on philosopher Plato's theory of Forms, in which Richard Kraut (2017) explains that Plato believes that the physical world is not reality, but instead an eternal reality exists and is filled with ideas or forms. This means that the physical world is an image of the true reality, which is the spiritual realm. Schopenhauer (1909:39-40) stated that "the whole world of objects is and remains an idea, and therefore wholly and forever determined by the subject; that is to say, it has transcendental ideality". In other words, the subject's viewpoint about an object is directed from a process of thought or opinion and is therefore not objective. The world then reflects our will. Schopenhauer uses the word *Vorstellung*², to describe a term which is referred to as an idea or representation, to express that an idea that is before us and is represented by us using our understanding and perception

² The term *Vorstellung* is a German phrase and can be translated in many ways such as representation, presentation, idea, cognitive state and capture only in part the original meaning. Representation is the most frequently used English translation.

of the world through a subject-object association (Schopenhauer 1909:39-40). The notion of representation as expressed by Schopenhauer also finds a place in social representation as will be considered below.

The original proposal on the theory of social representation was first introduced by French social psychologist, Serge Moscovici. The theory initially found a home in social psychology and later found itself relevant to different fields of study (Moscovici(1988:212). Birgitta Höijer (2011:1) states that social representation contributes to media research by studying how the media and citizens socially represent issues. Höijer (2011:3) further highlights that “social representations” are about the collective meaning which results in common cognisance and produces social bonds. García, Martínez, and Marcos (2018:1) describe the concept of collective representation as the main link between subjects confronting a similar social reality. Moscovici (1988:214) ultimately suggests that representation that influences our social relations is in turn an element of social organisation. Rateau, Moliner, Guimelli, and Abric (2011:478) suggest that we are surrounded by huge amounts of information, and to make sense of it one must simplify and recreate it. Therefore, our perceptions and opinions are also shaped by groups of people, institutions, and associations. Rateau et al (2011:478) posit that our view of reality is moulded through interaction and communication with other groups of people. The researcher acknowledges the point made by Rateau et al (2011:478) that not all groups share the same beliefs and opinions; however, they create representations that are aligned to these beliefs.

2.5.2 *Hall's representation*

In a lecture in London, cultural theorist, Stuart Hall (1997b:6) suggested that the word representation conveys the idea that something was previously there, and through the media, it has been represented or reproduced. The word representation also has another understanding in contemporary times, and Hall (1997b:6) refers to this as standing in for someone – for example, a politician represents members of a political party. Thus, the idea of images or depictions and the idea of representing a group, such as by politicians, can be viewed together in the notion of representation (Hall 1997b:7). In other words, representation gives meaning to things and is depicted via the media, irrespective of the format.

For Hall (1997a:1) representation is central to the construction of culture and language and is the common avenue through which we have come to discern things. Through this process, meaning is created and imparted. Hall (1997a:2) refers to the term “cultural turn”, which is also used often in cultural studies, and this term tends to place great significance ‘of meaning to the definition of culture’. Meaning gives us a feeling of who we are and of our own identity and it relates to how culture uses and maintains identity within and between groups (Hall 1997a:3). Thus, Hall (1997a:4) asserts that identities are consequently established inside and not outside of portrayals. Hall (1997a:15) further indicates that there are “three approaches to representation: the reflective, the intentional and the constructionist approaches to representation”. The mutual connections between these three “are governed by cultural and linguistic code,” asserts Hall (1997a:35). This study takes the constructivist approach as it is concerned with what representations are made about women and their meanings.

All forms of communication, like images or text, are a form of representation, and the media has become a strategic catalyst and purveyor of portrayal in present-day society. Stuart Hall (1997a:14) maintains that “representation is the production of meaning through language”. The representation of ideas and beliefs, through communicative practices such as images, signs, symbols, and text, produce meanings and therefore, reality is constructed through these representations. Language offers a broad avenue of how culture and representation operate with each other (Hall 1997a:6), and this is recognised as the semiotic approach, which is considered in more detail below. As this study follows a constructionist approach to representation, a distinction will be made in the analysis between what we are presented with and the underlying meanings of representations.

It is important to unpack and probe the meaning of representation in the media as representations produce ideology and also create meanings and ultimately ideology, as will be considered in later sections of this chapter. The various forms of media, such as the news, films, and images, amongst others have the power to shape and influence thoughts and opinions on various issues. The media also provides access to new ideas and concepts and can even provide positive role models. The media shows and tells us how the world works and our place in it, which is linked to culture. As explained in Chapter One, what the audience is informed about comes from stories

that are produced and disseminated, following various processes. Dwight Brooks and Lisa Hébert (2006:297) explain that these stories – as produced by the media – are based on images, symbols, and narratives, and as such the representations influence how individuals construct social identities. Thus, signs are linked to broader social relations and the media represents social realities. It is important to analyse media text as it reveals underlying messages which influence our ideas, attitudes and beliefs. It is crucial to look at the language as it looks at social and cultural issues in the communication environment and how these issues affect society.

2.5.1.2 Semiotics

Representation is a fundamental piece in the way meaning is produced and exchanged, and it is also rooted in linguistics and semiology (Hall 1997a:3). Linguist Ferdinand De Saussure is known for his belief that the production of meaning is dependent on language. De Saussure (1959:15) argues that “language is a system of signs” that express ideas, emphasising the important factor being the amalgamation of “meanings and sound images” For De Saussure (1959:68) the ‘linguistic sign is arbitrary’, and this means that there is no innate tie between the signifier and signified and can be recognised in comparison with coexisting signs of similar nature. De Saussure further argues that words shift their meanings and that the relation between the signifier and signified is not permanent (De Saussure 1959:126). De Saussure (1959:XII) points out that “language is a self-contained system whose interdependent parts function and acquire value through their relationship to the whole”. In other words, the linguistic value of a word is determined by contrast with other related words. Thus, no linguistic sign can be considered in isolation of the system as the sign has no independent value.

2.5.1.3 Barthian semiotics

French theorist and semiotician Roland Barthes built on De Saussure’s theory of the sign, which comprises the signifier and the signified and suggests that the sign is the sum of the signifier and a signified (Barthes 1967:10). Barthes further develops De Saussure’s linguistic model in that it is applied to a wider field of signs such as photography and other modes of writing (Hall 1997a:27). Barthes (1972:108)

specifically highlights this shift by saying: “It is therefore by no means confined to oral speech. It can consist of modes of writing or representations; not only written discourse but also photography, cinema, reporting, sport, shows, publicity.” Feyrouz Bouzida (2014:1002) states that for Barthes, semiological systems are objects of everyday use, such as clothes for protection.

In *Elements of Semiology* (1967:89) Barthes points to the distinction between denotation and connotation as crafted by Louis Hjelmslev, a linguist. Barthes’ reference to denotation and connotation is about images and suggests that connotation relates to other semiotic signs “other than language”, states Theo Van Leeuwen (2005:37). The first system is the denotational plane and the second system is the connotational plane (Barthes 1967:89). This shows that Barthes’ semiotic theory can be applied in levels, with denotation being the first level of signification and refers to the literal meaning of the sign (Bouzida 2014:1005). Denotation, according to Hall (1997a:23) is a descriptive level where there would be a common understanding and agreement on the meaning of a sign. Bouzida (2014:15) further adds that denotation is “primary to connotation in the process of signification.” Sui Yan and Fan Ming (2015:62) state that connotation is the second level of signification and refers to an array of related significations which are socio-cultural or personal. As described by Hall (1997a:23), at a connotative level one can “interpret the completed signs in terms of the wider realms of social ideology – the general beliefs, conceptual frameworks and value systems of society”. Van Leeuwen (2005:37) points out that Barthes viewed visual denotation and visual connotation as culturally shared meanings.

In Barthes’ (1972:11) collection of essays, entitled *Mythologies* originally published in 1957, he reflects on daily events and refers to them as “some myths of French daily life”. In his essay “Myth Today”, Barthes (1972:107) states that myth “is a type of speech” that requires special conditions and is a mode of signification. Van Leeuwen (2005:38) explains that for Barthes it is in the second level that meaning that can be ‘superimposed’. In other words, another layer of meaning is added in the connotative level, which Barthes calls myth. Hall (1997a:24) and Leeuwen (2005:38) concur with the layering of levels stating that the representation happens through two different steps which are connected. The first semiological order is the denoted message which comprises the signifier and the signified coming together to form a sign; the second

semiological order is the sign which is then linked to the level of meaning (Hall 1997a:24). Barthes refers to the second semiological system as that constructed from “a semiological chain that existed before”. Referring to myth, Barthes (1972:113) posits “that which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second”. This level of meaning is referred to as myth or meta-language which is, as Barthes states, the second-order semiological system (Barthes 1972:113). Myth is not confined only to “oral speech but to other modes” of representation such as writing, pictures, sports, amongst others (Barthes 1972:108). As explained above, for Barthes’ (1952:107). myth is a form of language and is a “system of communication”

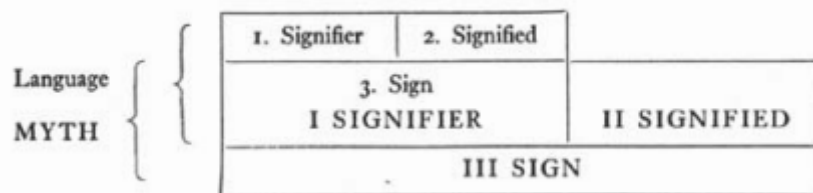


Figure 3: Diagram of Barthes' semiological system (Barthes 1972:113)

For Barthes, culture connotes and gives meaning or understanding to its surroundings. In *Mythologies* (1972), Barthes reflects on the system of signs that creates meaning which is embedded in the culture. Myths are “broad and diffuse concepts which condense everything associated with the represented people, places and things into a single entity,” as Van Leeuwen (2005:38) points out. Barthes (1972:115) uses the term ‘Frenchness’ and ‘Militariness’ and call such concepts myths, and as indicated by Leeuwen (2005:34) it has “ideological meanings, serving to legitimate the status quo and the interests of those whose power is invested in it.” Barthes (1972:112) states that connotation and myth function as cultural codes which are analysed through semiotic analysis. The third level of meaning is ideology, and according to Barthes (1972:137-141), it is produced and reproduced by myth.

Another concept of Barthes that forms part of the semiotic analysis is anchorage. Barthes (1977:38-40) states that text that supplements an image actually “anchors” the meaning of the image and highlights the denotative description of the image. The

photographic image does not operate alone and is surrounded by coexisting messages such as the caption or text amongst others (Barthes 1977:15). Leandra Koenig-Visagie (2011:43) states that “the anchorage function of the linguistic text, therefore, acts as a control over the image’s meaning and the reader’s understanding”. Through the anchor, the reader can identify and understand the intended meaning; but without the anchor, the image is then open to interpretation. Barthes (1977:41) states that, “the text directs the reader through the signifieds of the image, causing him [sic] to avoid some and receive others; employing an often subtle dispatching, it remote-controls him [sic] towards a meaning chosen in advance”. Images are considered ‘polysemic’ or in other words, images can have numerous meanings, however, with an anchor, there is limited interpretation.

This study employs a Barthian semiotic analysis according to the framework discussed above as one of two analytical frameworks. The other analytical framework is Foucauldian discourse analysis as will be considered in the following section below. The methodological approaches that flow from these frameworks will be explored in Chapter Three.

2.5.1.4 Foucauldian discourse analysis

French philosopher, Michel Foucault, remains one of the significant scholars with regards to discourse and representation. Foucault (1970:XXIII) explores the different eras of history that have instituted various knowledge systems, which he calls ‘épistémè’. In other words, it is the production of knowledge for a particular era. I do not attempt to give a comprehensive examination of Foucault’s complete works here, but instead seek to provide an overview of his notion of discourse, representations and how it links to culture.

Hall (1997:44) states that Foucault moves away from the semiotic approach and language and moves towards discourse. Hall (1997:6) posits that semiotics is about how language produces meaning in contrast to the discursive analysis which looks at the ‘consequences and effects’ of representation and how the knowledge of a certain discourse links to power or construct identities. Mitchell Hobbs (2008) argues that Foucault’s interest in power and social change and his notion of discourse aids in

linking culture to representation and in turn culture is linked to media texts. Two of Foucault's leading works, *The Order of Things* (1970) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) are relevant and prove to be valuable as their discussion on discourse can relate to understanding media content.

Sara Mills (2003:33) highlights that Foucault's view on power differs from the traditional meaning that is associated with the word 'power'. Mills (2003:33) points out that Foucault is not concerned with the suppressive nature of the powerful over the powerless, but he rather looks at how power functions "between people and institutions." Thus, Foucault's interest in the notion of power does not focus on oppression but instead looks at repelling power (Mills 2003:34; Hall 1997:48). Joanna Thornborrow (2002:7) maintains that Foucault views the idea of power as multifaceted and ever-evolving 'social and discursive relations'. Foucault's belief about power enables the exploration of relations between discourse and society, suggests Thornborrow (2002:7). This exploration of relations relates to representation through language and that each society has discourse that functions as 'truth', explains Foucault (1980:131). This means that social standards might be discursively created through linguistic practices. In addition to the exploration of relations between discourse and society, Thornborrow (2002:7) further believes that Foucault's notion of power enables the examination of what discursive resources are used in 'doing power' and what resources are used to resist power. Thornborrow (2002:8) highlights that language is powerful and is important to create and maintain power relations.

Foucault defines the term 'discourse' in several ways, but for this study, the definition he explores in the *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) will be used, namely that discourse is the "general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements" (Foucault 1972:80). This definition is directly linked to the analytical framework that is undertaken in this study and explored more in Chapter Three. Mills (2003:53) states that Foucault's meaning of the term 'discourse' can refer to all words or speech which have meaning and some sort of effect. In other instances, Foucault uses the term discourse to denote "individualizable groups of statements" and in other instances, he refers to unwritten rules and structures that construct certain statements.

Foucault was concerned with the production of knowledge, rather than only the meaning. Thus, he refers to knowledge as discourse (Hall 1997:42). Mills (2003:54) states that for Foucault, structure and rules constitute discourse and it is the rules and structure that he is interested in. By comparing Foucault's notion of discourse to ideology – a term that point to statements and ideas by institutions that may have some form of influence over individuals' ideas or opinions – Mills (2003:55) points out that ideology is presumed to be restraining and adverse whereas Foucault's idea of discourse encompasses both oppression and resistance. This creates another way of thinking about power and discourse as compared to the normal view of negative power. Mills (2003:65-66) suggests further that power and discourse, as per Foucault's ideas, enable reflection of the past without adopting a particular view.

Hall (1997:45) maintains that Foucault is of the view that discourse constructs 'the topic' and administers how a subject can be meaningfully discussed. Hobbs (2008) argues that whilst Foucault's work is entrenched in history, he does not look at the different eras of history and the knowledge systems as bettering each era, but he rather focussed on 'what society considers and values to be knowledge'. According to Hall (1997:43), Foucault believes that through culture there is a common understanding and how "our knowledge about the social, the embodied individual and shared meaning comes to be produced in different periods". Hall (1997:43) suggests further that Foucault contributed significantly to the understanding of representation in that he looked at the nexus between discourse, knowledge, and power. This means that knowledge is connected to power as it is constantly related to social practices.

2.5.1.5 Berger's Ways of Seeing

British novelist and art critic, John Berger, in his book *Ways of Seeing* (1972), offers readers an opportunity to view art and representation differently, from an appreciation stance to criticism. Berger (1972:8) states: "The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled. The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe." Berger shows the reader that what we see often comes with various layers, which have deeper meanings. One of how people perceive the world is through images, which can refer to art, pictures, or other forms of representation. Berger depicts the relationship between society and art; and how certain styles of paintings

depict women. Berger (1972:47) states that “men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves.” Hence, women were viewed in paintings as objects. Berger (1972:46) describes the way we view women, and how women view themselves, arguing that women are both “the surveyor and the surveyed”. Unpacking the notion of “surveyor and “surveyed” Berger (1972:46) states: “She has to survey everything she is and everything she does because how she appears to others, and ultimately how she appears to men, is of crucial importance for what normalcy thought of as the success of her life”. The objectification of women, also within the media, plays a very central role in representation. British feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey’s ‘male gaze’, a term she coined in her essay "*Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*" (1975), posits that women are sexually objectified by the men who are ‘the spectator’. Mulvey (1999:843) explains that “the image of woman as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man takes the argument a step further into the structure of representation, adding a further layer demanded by the ideology of patriarchal order.” Thus, the male gaze refers to films being produced in such a manner that it gives male sexual pleasure through looking, a phenomenon she terms scopophilia. Although this was originally aimed at women objectified in films, it could apply to all media. Challenging the paradigm of the ‘male gaze’, Zoe Dirse (2013:15) argues that it does not consider differences such as “sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity”.

2.6 Gender studies

In this section, the relevance of gender studies is examined and some ideas of feminism that are relevant to this study are highlighted. It is noted that feminism is a vast field, and not all points are included in the discussion. The discussion below focussed on ideas and concepts from feminism selectively that the researcher believes are relevant to this study. The studies of women from different races, cultures, statuses, sexualities, masculinities, and religions, have all rendered themselves valuable to the gender studies field.

History shows recurring disempowerment and discrimination faced by women. Dilli, Carmichael and Rijpma (2019:31) contend that for the past 200 years there have been

marked improvements in the emancipation of women. Examples include improvements in girls accessing education as previously only received by boys and improvements in women being evaluated on their merit instead of relying on the capabilities of their partners. However, Dilli et al (2019:32) state that despite some progress the eradication of prejudice against women has not been achieved. The fact that there is still prejudice against women makes it crucial to keep probing the current portrayals of women.

Gender, women, and sexuality studies overlay more than one field of study and seek to contest androcentric and patriarchal knowledge and its production thereof. April Bailey, Marianne LaFrance, and John Dovidio (2018:1) suggest that androcentrism refers to a “societal system organized around men “and is central to the “needs, priorities, and values” of men. Miliann Kang, Donovan Lessard, Laura Heston, and Sonny Nordmaken (2017:2) describe androcentrism as the favoured male and masculine ways of considering the world. Sultana (2011:2) refers to patriarchy as male dominance and a way to keep women subordinate. Simply put, it is a system of dominance that is exercised by men and renders women as oppressed.

The meaning of feminism varies among different scholars and drawing from various statements, concerns, aims, definitions, and explanations of feminism, it is ultimately viewed as an ideological position to transform the inequalities that women face daily and to eradicate all forms of discrimination and oppression. According to Jane Pilcher and Imelda Whelehan (2004:48) thoughts and actions related to feminism predates the term feminism, with writers and activists conceptualising ideas for decades that women realise their abilities to contribute to society on various levels as individuals. The social and political underpinnings of the advancement of feminist ideas shape an assortment of viewpoints under "woman's rights" postulates Denise Buiten (2009:18), further suggesting that feminist theory is constantly evolving to become more multifaceted. Pilcher and Whelehan (2004:49) argue that all feminists can agree that women face injustices because of discrimination due to their biological makeup and are steadfast to challenge the status quo.

The notion of biological determinism is a central concept in feminism and a terrain on which many of its battles have been fought. George TH Ellison and Thea De Wet

(2017:1) maintain the term biological determinism can be defined as seeking biological explanations for human social occurrences, which include social disadvantages. Vast social inequalities such as status, wealth, and power exist between individuals and groups. A form of reductionism in which inequalities between races, sexes, and classes occur exists too, according to American evolutionary biologist Richard Lewontin (1982:153). Thus, biological determinism views social events as the result of a biological product. David M Peña-Guzmán (2016:269) highlights that Simone De Beauvoir (1949:329) states explicitly that a biological process does not make up or constitute a woman, asserting that “one is not born, but rather becomes, woman”. Peña-Guzmán (2016:269) further adds that De Beauvoir’s notion that physiological studies may inform one about the normal functioning of men and women’s bodies, but it cannot enlighten one on which specific sex is ‘greater’ or have more ‘success’, as these terms are social and not only empirical. The biological differences between a female and male are the physical process that females experience such as reproductive roles and includes claims that females are the weaker sex due to their physique, in comparison to males who are viewed as the stronger sex due to their physique (De Beauvoir 1949:65). As such, a social constructivist feminist outlook, as opposed to the psychoanalytical approach, points to the social conception of gender and can represent the social expectations of how women and men should behave and what status should be assigned to them. The psychoanalytical approach is concerned with the human psyche.

Feminist theory suggests that there is a multifaceted relation between power, ideology, and language. Its practice in the socio-cultural setting could be viewed as ‘doing gender’ postulates Sumita Sarkar (2014:49) - a notion that was conceptualised by Judith Butler. To put it plainly, ‘doing gender’ means expressing one’s gender for example through the clothes one wears or conforming to what society deems is appropriate for one’s perceived gender. Judith Butler, in her essay entitled, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution” (1988), contends that gender is naturalised and produced from history – therefore gender roles are invented and reproduced. Butler (1988:519) argues that gender is an identity established in time which is a “stylized repetition of acts” over time, and it is also this idea that she bases her theory of performativity on gender. Butler’s (1988:519) essay is based on theatrical acting but it also lends itself to the ‘discourse of “acts” that maintains associative

semantic meanings.’ Butler (1988:520) argues that if ‘gendered behaviours’ are repeated over time they can become institutionalised and a natural way of behaving. In the same way, the media institutionalises stereotypes of women, such as the standard for beauty amongst others, and creates perceptions that are accepted and suit the larger part of a community.

The social role theory looks at social factors in the determination of gender with regard to the workplace. According to the International Labor Organization (2000:9) report, entitled “The ABC of women workers’ rights and gender equality”, the promotion of gendered labour outside the home originated in the 1960s, with the recognition of “sharing family responsibilities” which acknowledged and recognised that men should and can play a greater role in family responsibilities instead of the role being assumed entirely by women. This means that emphasis was placed on outside the home because gendered labour inside the home has always existed. Natasha Zaretsky (2010:192) refers to the labour force in the 1960s and states that the “labour force was segregated along gender lines“ and women were known for working as house cleaners, waitresses, and secretaries and that job advertisements were classified by sex in the newspaper.

Zaretsky (2010:192) further alludes to the fact that women and men had different pay scales. Thus, the notion that labour outside the home is gendered is an issue that is not new. Manning et al (2018:2) point out that whilst men and women fill different roles in the workplace, they are expected to assume the characteristics associated with the role such as women being seen as caregivers and men as the stronger sex – a tendency which is also revealed in the literature reviewed and discussed earlier in this chapter. Alice Eagly and Wendy Wood (2012:459) maintain that stereotypes form as society perceives male and female behaviour and imply that a specific gender has a corresponding character. It is suggested that in industrialised societies men are inclined to be employed in ranks of authority compared to women who are more likely to fill the caretaking role (Eagly & Wood 2012:459). In addition to the different roles played by women and men in the workplace, the *Global Gender Gap Report 2020* (WEF 2019:17) shows that the difference in pay between women and men is a tenacious form of gender inequality and that progress towards eradicating this gap has

stalled. According to WEF (2019:11) “on average, over 40% of the wage gap³ and over 50% of the income gap⁴ are still to be bridged.” The wage gap and the income gap are indicative that women in a similar position as men are paid less for doing the same work as men (WEF 2019:11). Furthermore, women continue to be inferior in the workforce compared to men which adds to the “economic participation and opportunity gap”.

Zillah R Eisenstein (1979:17) maintains that the division of sexes in society and the workplace showcases the hierarchical divisions of roles between masculine and feminine, which is instrumental in ensuring patriarchal control. Nancy Holmstrom (2002:2) puts forward the reality that the economic impact of globalisation affects everyone and that women are subjected to a greater burden. Kang et al (2017:108) also suggest that “the structure of the worldwide economy influences individuals diversely” not just by the monetary circumstances of the countries where they live, but also by sexual orientation and race. More women now form part of the paid workforce; however, gendered norms and values and economic constraints make some paid for work categorised as ‘women’s work’, making economic contributions by women insignificant or absent (Holmstrom 2002:10).

Another field of inquiry that is relevant to the gender studies field is intersectionality. Intersectionality is a term coined by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe how gender, class, race, and other characteristics, such as economic background, intersect, overlap, and build on each other. Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1989) paper entitled “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics”, is based on three legal cases which addressed race and gender issues. Crenshaw (1989:139-140) highlights the propensity to consider ethnic groups and gender as mutually exclusive which is problematic as it operates on a singular issue and ignores the other multiple burdens faced by a specific group such as black women. Crenshaw (1989:141) examines three court cases: *DeGraffenreid vs General Motors*, *Moore vs Hughes Helicopter*, and *Payne vs Travenol* to illustrate the courts’ limited view on

³ “Wage gap refers to the ratio of the wage of a woman to that of a man in a similar position” (WEF 2019)

⁴ “Income gap - the ratio of the total wage and non-wage income of women to that of men”(WEF 2019)

discrimination and limitations placed on single-issue analyses. The law failed to realise that black women can face compound discrimination because they are black *and* because they are women. Crenshaw (1989:140) states that intersectionality is larger than “the sum of racism and sexism and if intersectionality is not considered then research or analysis cannot sufficiently address the way black women are discriminated against or disempowered’.

Probing the “struggle for professional identity” Ella LJ Edmondson Bell and Stella M Nkomo’s (2003:1) study highlights that not all women in managerial positions in corporate America share a similar journey, face similar issues, and implement similar strategies to overcome obstacles. Bell and Nkomo’s (2003:1) research points out that black women in comparison to white women embark on different journeys to grow and preserve their professional careers. Black women entered professions, mainly dominated by white men, and as a result, were subjected to forms of sexism and racial stereotyping (Bell & Nkomo 2003:137). In addition to racism being experienced daily, the study shows that other issues black women face include being stereotyped as incompetent and unqualified for the job despite having the right academic qualifications and experience; the resistance of women in the corporate world; black women earning a lower wage than their white counterparts; and invisibility (Bell & Nkomo 2001:140).

Jaga, Arabandi, Bagraim, and Mdlongwa (2017:1-2) argue that the voices of black South African women in professional occupations are present in work-family and absent from other categories. Their study uses intersectionality to reveal “how the interaction of race, gender, and organisational culture hinders the advancement of black women professionals” (Jaga et al 2017:1). Black women are entering the workforce the fastest in South Africa because of legislation that empowers them and access to education and work opportunities, furthermore, they are more likely to have a tertiary qualification than black men (Jaga et al 2017:2-3). In addition, Jaga et al (2017:2-3) state that black South African women are rejecting the “traditional social norms” and are aspiring to grow in their careers and financial independence. However, despite their efforts, black women are facing hurdles especially in breaking into the white male dominated professional workplaces. Looking at “organisational culture and policies, and their impact on black women professionals”, Jaga et al (2017:6-7) explain

that the South African government introduced the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Amendment Act. This Act was meant to redress economic inequalities. However, black women felt that they were afforded “dummy positions” and served as window dressing so that organisations met the B-BBEE requirements (Jaga et al 2017:7). The findings of this study reveal “deeply embedded gender and race prejudices that black women professionals” still faced in South Africa (Jaga et al 2017).

From the above overview, it can be deduced that gender studies and feminism are ever-evolving fields. This study acknowledges that feminism has raised many challenges about women in society and that not all of these have been solved despite the many years of ongoing activism and developments. If all the concerns raised by feminism were solved, then women would not be still facing the triple burden of unemployment, poverty, and inequality. Furthermore, as more women enter the boardrooms and become professionals in various fields, research must look at their representations in the media to identify gaps. The media not only acts as a mirror of what is happening and thereby becomes a platform that can perpetuate stereotypes, but it is also known to be an agent for social change.

2.7 Summary

Conclusions in the reviewed literature indicate that women are marginalised, stereotyped, and underrepresented in the media. In the context of this study, there is an indication from the literature that there is a degree of representation of women in business news, albeit minimal. Women continue to be at a disadvantage in relation to men, through different kinds of inequalities to which they are exposed. It is against this background that the research will examine how women are portrayed in business publications and the discourses surrounding these representations.

A notable finding of this literature review is that there is a significant amount of literature on how women are portrayed in the media in areas of objectification, and in topics that surround health and social work. However, it is also noted that there is a lacuna of research that critiques media representations of women in the business category of news and the discourses that surround them. The limited studies that look

at representations in business publications either focus solely on women as leaders, managers or as subjects - and writers also explore the agency of women. It is acknowledged that the literature reviewed mentions that analyses of how men and women as managers are constructed were based on countries such as Finland, Switzerland, Germany, and the United Kingdom. However, there are minimal studies that examine such construction of women in Africa, and in particular black women managers. It is important to examine the construction of black African women, as they are a marginalised group and their empowerment is vital.

Some of the literature reviewed is from decades past and much has changed over the years in the workforce regarding women, who now play more meaningful roles in boardrooms and as experts in various sectors of business and society. The older literature reveals the historical challenges of women in the workplace and the current studies show how women have evolved in the workplace, yet are still subjected to forms of discrimination. It must also be noted that there are minimal fine-grained analysis studies that look at black African women in leadership posts. Thus, whereas most of the literature reviewed generally find that the media representation of women is minimal and is systematically subjected to some form of bias, there is an argument that this could have changed given the new roles women play towards contributing to economies and in the business world. Therefore, the gap in available research that this study seeks to contribute towards is the contemporary analysis of media representations of women and the discourses surrounding these in business news, in local South African publications.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the methodology and processes undertaken in this study. It essentially outlines how this study will be conducted and registers the research design, philosophical paradigm, data gathering methods, and analytical frameworks. A qualitative research design through content analysis is employed to achieve the intentions of the study as outlined in Chapter One. This inquiry is based on Barthes' system of semiotics and the notion of Foucault's approach to discourse analysis, where the aim is to examine media content to reveal latent messages, myths, ideologies, and dominant discourses. These methodologies relate to an ontological system of belief that everyday life is socially constructed and caters to examining social structures, like the media, as it is a site of creating meaning. Du Plooy (2009:88) contends that qualitative research design is suitable when the study examines the belongings or dispositions that distinguish individuals or groups amongst others. A qualitative approach is deemed appropriate as the rationale ultimately seeks to investigate the representations of women and the underlying meaning that are communicated in the media.

3.2 Research design

This study employs qualitative research methodology because it caters to examining symbols and interpreting meaning. Quantitative methodology is not suitable to study symbol systems, as Du Plooy (2009:34) points out. By employing a qualitative method this study can examine the content and interpret meaning shared in a cultural setting. Du Plooy (2009:34) points out that qualitative research has expanded over time into probing culture and gender, as well as ethnographic research of media. The media is considered an actor of gender equality and is acknowledged in this study as an institution of power and a site that generates meaning. Therefore, this study advocates for the continuous reflection of how women are portrayed. A descriptive and interpretive analysis into how women are collectively represented in a real world-setting, like business media, is adopted. John Creswell (2013:91-92) suggests that the

descriptive and interpretive research focus is aligned to ethnography. Haradhan Mohajan (2018:1) postulates that qualitative research enables the researcher to “explore meanings and insights”, and in the context of this study, the approach is concerned with unearthing meaning about women produced by business media. For Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (2005:3) qualitative research “locates the observer in the world” and “consists of multiple interpretive practices” to create visibility of the world and transforms it to become a series of representations. Differing from quantitative research, which involves numbers and statistics, a qualitative methodological approach as highlighted by Denzin and Lincoln (2005:3) uses “empirical materials” such as visual text to bring visibility to areas of concern and specific meanings produced in those texts. In the context of this study, the examination of the portrayals of women and the discourses surrounding the representations will show how women are depicted in business publications.

Qualitative research data is not quantified, as it is in quantitative research methodology, but it concerns itself with the nature of a social occurrence that requires exploration. Haradhan Mohajan (2018:24) points out that qualitative research gathers and works with non-numerical information that aims to decipher the meaning that helps us to comprehend social activity through the study of focused geographical areas, populations, or groups of people. In other words, the researcher employs a qualitative research method to explore meanings and insights in a natural setting. Thus, qualitative research cannot be quantified but instead, it is often based on observations. As highlighted by Denzin and Lincoln (2005:10) qualitative researchers focus rather on probing how reality is constructed and the meanings ascribed to a subject, compared to quantitative researchers who focus more on measurements and numbers.

3.3 Research paradigm

The main paradigms within qualitative research are positivist, interpretivist, and critical paradigms. The present study is appropriately premised on the interpretive paradigm as it enables the researcher to understand and interpret the latent meaning of the considered data. In the interpretive paradigm, the researcher believes that there is no singular reality, but that realities are multiple and are socially constructed. The

emphasis is placed on understanding the construction of women in media content and the meaning of the data examined. This study relies on analysing existing text, which is a methodology that is located within the interpretive paradigm.

The interpretive paradigm is in contrast to the positivist paradigm that is generally associated with quantitative research and looks at measurable facts. To understand meaning the interpretive paradigm uses content in the form of text and interviews and other forms of qualitative data. The interpretive paradigm is understood to enable researchers to view the world from the experiences of others to construct and interpret meaning from data, as Nguyen Cao Thanh and Tran Thi Le Thanh (2015:24) suggest. Creswell (2013:25) points out that “subjective meaning” is formed through “social construction” and “historical and cultural norms”.

Interpretivism advances the significance of qualitative data in pursuit of knowledge and in this study the interpretive paradigm allows the researcher to advance knowledge of the construction of women in the media. Du Plooy (2009:220) maintains that semiotic analysis is an interpretive theoretical approach in qualitative research and focuses on the connotative meaning of content. Likewise, discourse analysis falls within the interpretive paradigm and Loizos Heracleous (2004:176) indicates that the interpretation of discourse is dependent on context and it looks at several texts where discourses are established. Thus, semiotics and discourse analysis are considered aptly suitable for this study as they are consistent with the interpretive paradigm.

3.4 The population and sampling method

3.4.1 Population

Population refers to all likely units of analysis and not only refers to people but also organisations, objects, and groups (Du Plooy 2009:108). The target population, as explained by Du Plooy (2009:109), represents the entire population or the actual population. In the context of this study, the target population refers to all print or online business publications or publications that have dedicated business sections in South Africa. In other words, it refers to the bigger representation from which the sample is drawn.

The target population differs from the actual accessible population which refers to the actual population that is accessible to the researcher (Du Plooy 2009:109). In this study, the accessible population is the same as the target population because the researcher has access to business-related publications in South Africa through methods such as purchasing a hard copy or reading print e-editions. However, the accessible population is quite vast, and the researcher will not be able to use every business-related publication for this study and a selection of publications is therefore made to limit the scope of this study. In addition, it must be noted that some of the print e-editions are subscription-based whilst some are only published quarterly.

For this study, *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* were favoured as the selected populations for several reasons. The decision to select *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* was also, in the main, motivated by the fact that the researcher's daily operational employment duties revolve around media monitoring and issue management. Over the past 10 years, the researcher has noticed that women hardly feature in business news and that images of males dominated business coverage. Furthermore, these publications - and in particular *Business Day* - are well-known to the ordinary South African and not only popular within the business circles and industry, and therefore shaping the opinions and understanding of the role of women to its readers. Taking this observation further, the researcher was curious to understand how women were constructed in business-related publications, despite the initial observation that there was minimal media coverage regarding women in business-related news. In the case of *Forbes Africa*, it is a well-known and influential publication on the African continent, of which South Africa plays a very significant part. This makes *Forbes Africa* eminently suitable for probing the representations of women in the media as women currently occupy more economic leadership roles and are astute and active in business as seen in the literature reviewed in Chapter Two.

The selected publications are not merely dedicated business-related sections of publications such as in weekend newspapers, like *Sunday Times*. *Business Day* and *Forbes Africa* are well-known specialist business publications in South Africa, which cover current topical issues, impact managerial trends and economic discussions. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two reveals that business publications are historically

known for having male dominance and depicting masculinity as the norm in business sectors. Women in specialist business media are underrepresented as both a subject and an information source. Therefore, this study considers *Business Day* and *Forbes Africa*, which are niche business publications, as important research sites for unravelling deeply hidden meaning through their constructions of women.

Business Day was launched on 1 May 1985 and *Forbes Africa* was established in 2011. Both publications are dominant in South Africa and also have reach on the African continent. Whilst, they do not compete with each other as *Business Day* is a daily newspaper and *Forbes Africa* is a monthly magazine, they are well-known in the 'the business publication market' and have strong profiles on the African continent. *Business Day* also has a fairly good circulation compared to other business-related publications and serves as a preferred choice for examination. Herman Manson (2020) reported that the publication grew its circulation by 5.52% during January – March 2020; however, during the same period, *Forbes Africa* had a decline in circulation figures along with other business publications. This reporting period was also at the start of COVID-19 in South Africa and had an impact on the overall media industry resulting in limited submissions to the Audit Bureau of Circulations. The circulation figures of publications are important and enable one to view the demand and popularity of publications, as well as the reach of the content produced.

One is not obligated to purchase a subscription to access the publications. *Forbes Africa* is available in hard copy as well as print e-editions and the monthly editions can be purchased individually. The researcher also has access to Press Reader, through Newspaper Direct, and through this media, the system has access to the print e-editions of *Business Day*.

3.4.2 Sampling

Sampling concerns itself with choosing a sample that is archetypal of the population being studied. The type of sampling applied in this study is non-probability sampling which means that "every unit in the target population does not have an equal and therefore probable chance of being selected as part of the sample" (Du Plooy 2009:123). Non-probability sampling techniques are often used in qualitative research

and are known as convenience samples, purposive samples, volunteer samples, and snowball samples (Du Plooy 2009:123). The sampling technique employed in this study is purposive sampling which involves “subjects selected because they have specific characteristics” (Du Plooy 2009:305). The researcher will use purposive sampling to assemble a sample of articles and images to provide data about portrayals of women in business publications. The application of purposive sampling enables the researcher to select the subject, which is ‘women’ in this study and the sites for study, which are *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* because the subject and the site can resolutely create insight into the research problem, as Creswell (2013:156) points out. Thus, the sample that is drawn refers to units of analysis for a specific purpose which is to examine the portrayals of women, and sampling criteria are employed to decide which images and articles are included in the sample. The selection criteria for the units of analysis will be visual images and text need to refer to women, such as the words: “woman”, “women”, “female”, “she”, “her” or indicate that the text or image pertains to or makes reference to women.

The initial study period was three months, January-March 2020. However, the sample period of *Forbes Africa* had to be extended as it is not published frequently. The sample period for *Business Day* was not extended, as it is a daily publication and the sample would have been too large. I have stated that 5 editions of *Forbes Africa* will be examined in this study, and *Business Day* will be examined over a three-month period in the Ethical Application. This was approved with no changes.

It must be noted that *Forbes Africa* was not accessible in May 2020 due to it not being uploaded for purchase or published for purchase, i.e. the publication was not produced during this month. In total, this study will examine five published editions of *Forbes Africa* in 2020. In turn, *Business Day* will be examined for the period 8 January - March 2020. In total, there are 60 editions of the daily publication, which includes, 18 editions for January 2020, 20 editions for February 2020, and 22 editions for March 2020. *Business Day* started publishing on the 8th of January, as they do not publish print editions over the late December and early January period. Furthermore, the study also acknowledges that the duration chosen for the study coincides with the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) across the globe. The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated many economies, industries, and social life, with women not being exempt.

Azcona, Bhatt, J Encarnacion, Plazaola-Castaño, Seck, Staab and Laura Turquet (2020:1) elucidate that COVID-19 has broadened gender inequalities and that “by 2021 around 435 million women and girls will be living on less than \$1.90 a day.” Azcona et al (2020:5) further state that, “women’s lesser access to land, financial capital, and other assets makes it harder for them to weather a crisis, bounce back and rebuild their small businesses”.

3.4.3 Units of analysis

The units of analysis for this study are articles and images related to women that are published in *Business Day* and *Forbes Africa*. This is aligned to Du Plooy’s (2009:56) explanation that the units of analysis refer to individuals or subjects that could apply to a specific population and involve the “smallest elements being investigated”. The units of analysis are also the smallest units on which the analytical framework will be applied. Kevin Durrheim (2006:41) asserts that newspaper articles and images are considered “social artefacts” which are outcomes of “human action”. Thus, print media articles and images are chosen because of their functions of creating meaning and information, influencing public conversation and discussion, and being vocal about issues affecting particular groups or members of the public.

The following image, Figure 4 (Mahlo 2020:27), is an example of a visual unit of analysis in this study, where Graça Marcel is wearing an indigo suit with her arms folded. The visual units of analysis are extracted from articles in the publications. The only text that will be included in the visual data will be the captions or headlines that form part of the image. However, it must be noted that not all visual data have accompanying captions. The images will be analysed using Barthian semiotics which are unpacked in the analytical framework section in Chapter Two.



Figure 4: Photograph of Graça Machel extracted from *Forbes Africa* (Mahlo 2020:27)

3.5 Data collection and analysis

In qualitative studies, various analytical methods can be applied to extract data to understand the underlying themes, messages, and ideologies. As mentioned previously, this research employs content analysis through Barthian semiotics and Foucauldian discourse analysis. Creswell (2013:146) states that the collection of data does not happen as an isolated event but rather form part of other activities which aim to collect information in answer to the research questions of the study. Similarly, Du Plooy (2009:395) contends that “data collection is concerned with who, what, how, when and where data were collected”. The inter-related activities as described by Creswell (2013:146) are shown in Figure 5, known as the “data analysis spiral”. With regards to transitioning from the data collection activity to the data analysis activity Martin Terre Blanche, Kevin Durrheim, and Kevin Kelly (2006:321) postulate that there is no clear point as to where the collection ends and analysis begins. Rather there is a gradual phasing between both activities (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Kelly 2006:321). Using the concept of the ‘data analysis spiral’, Creswell (2013:183) shows how the “researcher engages in the process of moving in analytical circles rather than using a fixed linear approach.” Creswell (2013:182) elucidates the researcher enters the “data analysis spiral” with “data such as text or images” and departs with a “narrative or account, which refers to unpacking or discussing the findings of the considered data”.

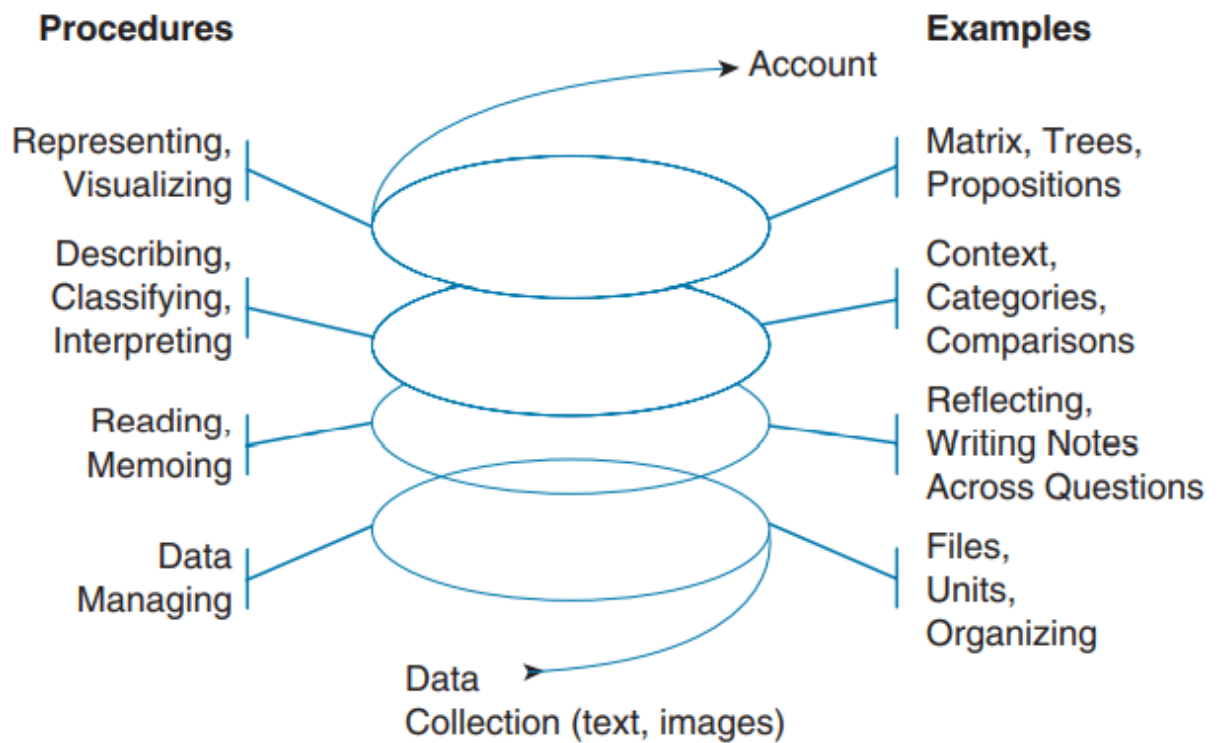


Figure 5: Data Analysis Spiral from Creswell (2013:183)

Using the concept of the data spiral, the following steps of data collection and analysis are undertaken in this study:

Step one: Data managing is the first loop of the spiral and it is the start of the process of interrelated activities undertaken in this study. Here, the units of analysis, which are articles and images identified from *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*, are downloaded and organised in folders on a computer. The two main folders are titled *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*. Sub-folders are created for *Forbes Africa* and they are arranged per month, starting from December 2019 – June 2020. The sub-folders for *Business Day*, are arranged per month from January – March 2020. The extended sample period for *Forbes Africa* is explained in section 3.4.2. The units of analysis are saved as per the following: name of publication, date, and title. The materials are organised in folders so that they are easily accessible.

Step two: Reading and memoing is the second loop in the spiral, and it is here where I get a broad sense of the information in the data through continuous reading before

looking at the finer details. Immediate thoughts and notes are recorded on a separate page such as keywords, concepts, phrases, colours, and information that stand out, e.g. “women wearing red”, amongst others. My broader and initial thoughts allow me to have a sense of the emerging themes in the data.

Step three: The reading and memoing loop move on to the describing, classifying, and interpreting loop, the third loop in the data analysis spiral. This step involves providing detailed descriptive analysis, categorising data, and interpreting the content. It is in this step that I can look at the data and provide a detailed description of what is presented by the media. By examining the data, providing a detailed description, and from the activity in step two, the text and visual data are refined into smaller categories and assigned a label, for example ‘finance’. It is through the process of classification of the finer details that the broad dominant themes begin to emerge. The visual images will be analysed according to the various levels of meaning in Barthian semiotics, which are denotative, connotative/myth, and ideology. Barthian semiotics is further discussed in Section 3.6.1. Following the repetitive reading and continuous reflection of the text, the researcher identifies the dominant built discourses, which are analysed through Foucauldian analysis. Discourse analysis is the second analytical framework in this study and is further discussed in Section 3.6.2.

Step four: The final loop of the spiral refers to representing and visualising the data. It is in this step of the data analysis spiral that an in-depth reflection of the findings will be discussed and presented.

3.6 Application of analytical frameworks in the analysis

This study adopts a qualitative content analysis through the application of Barthian semiotic analysis and Foucauldian discourse analysis as indicated. Both research techniques are explorative and descriptive. As Creswell (2013:198) suggests semiotics and discourse analysis are interpretive and are aptly suited to answer the research question of this study. The analytical frameworks allow for the exploration of “patterned regularities in the data” and provide a detailed description thereof. The aim of using semiotics and discourse analysis in this study is to identify the underlying meanings, myths/ideologies, and dominant discourses prevailing in the data.

3.6.1 Barthian semiotics

The researcher will apply Barthian semiotics to analyse visual images of women in business media. The visual semiotic analysis in this study is applied according to Barthes' semiotic levels of meaning, namely the denotative level, connotative level /myth, and ideology. The analysis will entail identifying the visual images and themes that emerge from the units of analysis, which will be analysed and discussed. I will first identify the sign in the images and establish the denotative and connotative levels of meanings. On the denotative level, I look at the signifier and the signified. The discussion will entail describing the literal or most basic meaning of the sign. In other words, I will give a detailed account of what is photographed and what is the broadly agreed upon or common understanding by society of the sign. The denotative level is purely descriptive. Analysis on the connotative level will include building on the denotative level of meaning, using the denotative sign as the signifier, and expanding on its implied or figurative meaning. On this level of analysis, I will describe the secondary meaning of the signifier. I will not examine the literal interpretation but rather focus on emotional or cultural associations that are made with the signifier. In the main, I will consider the codes in the sign to make sense about how the sign is understood. An example of a code could be the social code such as fashion or posing. Thus, the analysis and context on the connotative level will come from codes that aid in finding meaning efficiently. As stated in Chapter Two, it is on this level of meaning that another layer of meaning is superimposed, which Barthes refers to as myth. I will also discuss which myth manifests from the considered data and how it operates in culture, as well as ideologies that are produced from myth.

3.6.2 Foucauldian discourse analysis

The researcher also applies Foucauldian discourse analysis as the study's second analytical framework. Through the application of Foucauldian discourse analysis, the study will explore the dominant discourses around women. This study will base its discourse analysis on the work of Michel Foucault, who according to Alan Bryman (2012:528) "seeks to link language and its modes of use to the significance of power and social differences in society". An important part of Foucault's work is that

discourses are intimately connected to subject, power, and authority in society as considered in detail in Chapter Two.

Foucault does not provide specific procedures or processes of undertaking Foucauldian discourse analysis, explains Linda Graham (2011:663) and Arribas-Ayllon and Walkerdine (2008:91). The process of analysis is always interpretive and “truth is contingent upon the subjectivity of the reader,” argues Graham (2011:663). Foucault (1982:778) explains that “we need a historical awareness of our present circumstances. The second thing to check is the type of reality with which we are dealing with.” The notion surrounding Foucauldian discourse analysis is to elevate statements that place a discursive outline around a certain group, such as women. As indicated in Chapter Two, the definition of discourse Foucault (1972:80) provides in the *Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) will be used which is the “general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements”. Therefore, the analysis in this study is applied based on the understanding that the regularity and repeatability of statements can be understood as a discursive formation.

The analysis will attempt to show how knowledge, power, and discourse are connected, as they are central to Foucault's work. Discourse formation entails the identification of text, description of the discourse, and the analysis of the content. The analysis will include the identification and extraction of all texts and instances of reference to women according to the selection criteria, followed by locating discursive statements that contribute to the construction of discourses. The researcher identifies the dominant discourses through the grouping of the identified discursive statements and analysis of the dominant discourses.

3.7 Reliability and validity

Qualitative research is closely related to human experiences and in undertaking such a study the researcher must ensure trustworthiness. This study follows specific processes to ensure the research's credibility and dependability. Reliability and validity are central concepts to ensure rigor through using “techniques of verification” explains Janice Morse, Michael Barrett, Maria Mayan, Karin Olson, and Judy Spiers (2002:19).

“Reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor, and quality in qualitative paradigm” asserts Nahid Golahshani (2003:604).

Reliability, also referred to as “trustworthiness” in qualitative studies, aims to evaluate the standard of quality, states Morse et al (2002:15), to create understanding (Golahshani 2003:597). This study adopts an interpretive paradigm and for Terre Blanche et al (2006:93) interpretive researchers replace the term “reliability” with the term “dependability”. The term “dependability” is closely related to “reliability” in quantitative research (Golahshani 2003:601). Therefore, in this study dependability will be achieved through a comprehensive description of the research process of the study. I have provided an in-depth discussion of the theoretical foundations of this study, which are based on theories of representation and gender studies. A comprehensive qualitative method is outlined, in this chapter, and is an offshoot of the interpretive paradigm, which enables the examination of the text to answer the overarching research question of this study: how are women represented in print business media publications? Within the interpretive paradigm, the researcher examines the media construction of women. The study provides a descriptive and precise data collection and analysis process which utilises Creswell’s (2013:183) data analysis spiral. The analytical frameworks employed in this study – that of Barthian semiotic and Foucauldian discourse analysis – fall within the ambit of the interpretive paradigm. A detailed outline is also provided on how the analysis will be undertaken. Dependability, therefore, will also be achieved by providing a detailed, rich description of the findings. The method and operationalisation of the study are documented and the analytic approach has also been disclosed. In the context of this study, reliability is based on “consistency and care in the application of research practice,” as Brigitte Cypress (2017:256) suggests. Consistency and care are achieved through providing a detailed account and visibility of the research practice.

Validity refers to credible, meaningful, and justifiable research, posits Terre Blanche et al (2006:90), and obtains rigor through techniques of verification (Morse et al 2002:19). Validity takes into account the philosophical viewpoints essential to qualitative research and refers to the process of continuous checking, identifying and correcting errors, and confirming data and results (Morse et al 2002:17). The researcher gains thorough insight into the data through repetitive reading. Through

this process patterns of how women are portrayed are noticed and meanings of the representation begin to emerge. The researcher records initial thoughts and ideas about the text and images through notes. The activities, outlined above, are considered as this study undertakes an interactive process, as outlined in the data spiral analysis. Important and relevant sections of the text are identified and labelled so that they relate to the emerging themes. The extracted sections of data are aligned to the selection criteria for the unit of analysis which are visual images and text that refer to women, such as words: “woman”, “women”, “female”, “she”, “her” or an indication that the text or image pertains or makes reference to women. This also ensures that the researcher continually verifies that the extracted section of the text applies to the emerging theme, which contributes to the continuous verification process. Finally, after the coding and collated data are extracted and labelled, dominant discourses surrounding the portrayal of women are identified. This will be followed by a descriptive discussion. Thus, in the context of this study, the validity of the findings is associated with the continual verification of the data and that steps, such as continuous reading and verifying of data, are repeated or improved to ensure the coherent link amongst the research questions, theoretical approach, the literature reviewed, methodology and analysis.

Another key aspect that must be noted is the notion of reflexivity and Terre Blanche et al (2006:506) posit that the researcher recognises his or her influence and acknowledges that personal attributes play some part in “eliciting research data”. To this end, the researcher acknowledges that she is female and women are the subject of the inquiry. I also acknowledge that I am South African Indian and my historical and cultural background has also influenced the desire for such a study. South African Indians descent from indentured labourers and migrants, and were given a subordinate status too. Indian women were also subjected to discrimination from society as well as in the home setting and thus I acknowledge my personal attributes and cultural influence in this study. The researcher has no affiliation to *Business Day* or *Forbes Africa* and through strictly adhering to the research framework, the findings of this study could be considered dependable.

3.8 Summary

Chapter Three unpacks how this study is operationalised in terms of the interpretive paradigm and the research methodology. Specific details about the research methods employed, the data collection process, and the units of analysis have been provided. The study is premised on the interpretive paradigm which allows knowledge about how women are portrayed in business media to advance. The study employs qualitative research methodology, as the analysis of visual images of women entails examining symbols and interpretation of latent meaning. The accessible population, business-related publications, is quite vast and thus the researcher has selected *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* as the publications that will be examined in this study. The units of analysis for this study are articles and images related to women that are published in the selected population. The study uses Creswell's (2013:183) data analysis spiral concept for the data collection. The "data analysis spiral" shows that activities do not occur in isolation but rather the activities gradually move into each other. The study adopts a Barthesian semiotic analysis and Foucauldian discourse analysis. The analysis of the visual images will be applied according to Barthes' levels of meaning, which are denotative, connotative/myths, and ideology. The Foucauldian discourse analysis looks at statements that place a discursive outline about women. The discourse analysis is applied based on the regularity and repeatability of statements, as it is understood as a discursive formation. The chapter also looks at strategies that are utilised to ensure the dependability and credibility of the study.

The following table provides a summary of the methodological operationalisation of this study.

KEY AREA	OPERATION
Research design	Qualitative research inquiry
Philosophical paradigm	Interpretive paradigm
Selected population	<i>Forbes Africa and Business Day</i>

Units of analysis	Articles and images pertaining to women
Data collection and analysis technique	Creswell's data analysis spiral
Analytical framework	Barthian semiotic and Foucauldian discourse analysis

Figure 6: Summary of methodological approach

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF IMAGES AND SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused specifically on the qualitative methodology applied in this study, and this chapter considers the findings and interpretation of the data. As explained in Chapter Three, this study employs semiotics and discourse analysis as its analytical frameworks. The findings and interpretations are discussed in two separate chapters for ease of reading. Chapter Four investigates the depictions of women in visual images and Chapter Five examines the dominant discourses surrounding the representation of women. This chapter considers images of women that form part of the dominant themes identified and provides an analysis and discussion according to Barthian semiotics. Four identified dominant themes emerge from the data set, which are Power Dressing, Head Coverings, Shades of Red, and Power Pearls. The representation of women wearing red is vast and therefore I have distinguished them in sub-themes, under Shades of Red. The sub-themes discussed here are red suits, red dresses, red gendered occupations, and red politics.

It must be stated that the data gives the impression that there is a fair amount of visual images of women in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*. This, however, is not the case. The impression is created because of a special feature on 50 powerful women in Africa published in *Forbes Africa's* March 2020 edition, which provided most of the data for discussion. In the absence of such a feature piece, there would have been minimal images of women across *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* compared to images portraying men. This study does not examine the portrayal of men in business media but it acknowledges that there is a significant amount of visual images of men observed in both publications.

4.2 Power dressing

Gender is a social construction and clothing is one of the elements that contribute significantly to social identity. History has demonstrated that the construction of masculinity and femininity and the role of women and men were also influenced by

dressing. Diana Crane (2012:1) suggests that clothing is a visible marker of social status and is also an indication across various eras of how people became aware and negotiated their status in society. Crane (2012:197) further delves into the idea that the business suit was primarily worn by working-class men. Joanne Entiwistle (2020:285) refers to the term “wardrobe engineering”, which looked at how women dressed in the 1980s in relation to power dressing. Entiwistle (2020:285) states that power dressing entails “tailored skirt suits with shoulder pads” in darker shades to construct high-powered career women.

Through power dressing, women were able to structure and establish themselves in roles previously dominated by men (Entiwistle 2020:286). Romana Andò (2015:210) explicates that power dressing was inspired by the male dress code, and conveyed a new status for women in the 1980s. The main symbol of power dressing was the business suit which aimed to reduce the femininity or sexuality of the female body, (Andò 2015:210). The power clothing attire enables a woman to “construct themselves” and also “be recognised” as an executive, states Entiwistle (2020:286). One such iconic piece of fashion was the famous pantsuit which was viewed as an act of rebellion and which symbolised a means to change social norms about women, such as women operating on an equal level as men, their ability to enter the labour market, and their ability to access occupations that were reserved for men. This study acknowledges that power dressing is not limited to pantsuits but can also include other signifiers of power such as skirts and jackets amongst others. Andò (2015:212) points to the example of the jacket with the shoulder pad, which imitates the broad-shouldered male body. Imitating the male body and “mirroring” male characteristics or behaviour was viewed as important to the construction of the career woman, argues Andò (2015:212).

Graça Machel is visible in an article in Figure 6, which is on the cover of the March 2020 edition of *Forbes Africa*. She is wearing an indigo double-breasted suit, with a pearl necklace. Her one hand is in her pocket and she is wearing glasses. The image is anchored by the quote in Figure 36 which directs the reader to the meaning of the image.

To be a powerful woman means to have the possibility, the right, and the responsibility to make choices that better oneself and better one's community. Power is making a conscious effort in both your private and public spaces to tear down the walls of disrespect, discrimination, and disenfranchisement wherever you meet it. Using your influence to create an impact and better the lives of others - that is what being a powerful woman means to me (Mahlo 2020:7).

The quote informs the reader that a powerful woman must have the right to make choices for themselves. It also informs the reader that in order to be powerful women must make an effort to address discrimination and disrespect, and be influential to others.

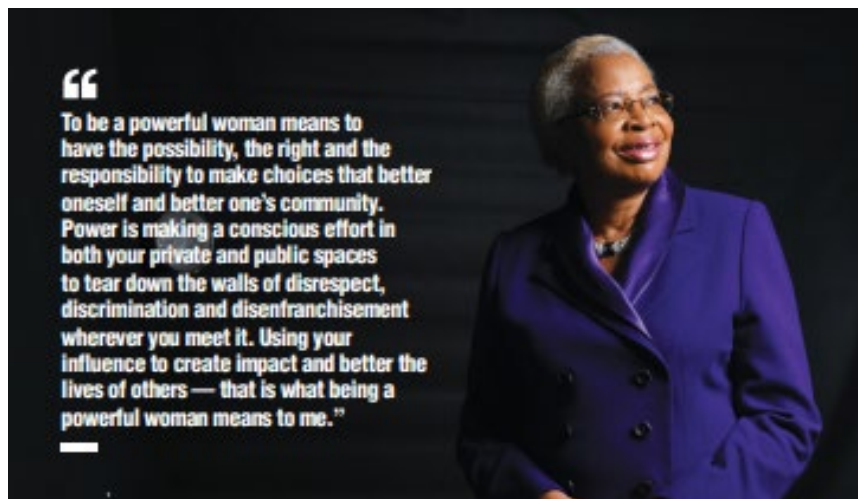


Figure 7: Graça Machel (Mahlo 2020:27)

Figure 4, below, is repeated from Chapter Three and is a full-length image of Machel's indigo suit pants. In Figure 7 and Figure 4, Machel's pearl necklace, pearl earrings, and gold and pearl ring are visible. The jewellery signifies femininity and pearls signify a wealthy or privileged status. According to Katy Kelleher (2019), pearls are a signifier of power. I will discuss pearls specifically later in this chapter, so I will return to Graça Machel's pearls in that discussion. In Figure 4 the jacket has a single flap on the side, and Graça Machel is posing with her arms folded. Her bright red nail polish, as well as the light shade of pink lip gloss, are signifiers of her feminine beauty. The suit incorporates some of the traditional design of a male suit, the colour of the suit, the

satin collar and the rectangular pocket flaps, and her accessories are all considered powerful items.



Figure 4 Graça Machel (Mahlo 2020:1)

Folorunso Alakija, is pictured in Figure 8, and Precious Motsepe, is pictured in Figure 9. The two African women are from different countries and are dressed in a dark blue and royal blue blazer respectively. The blazer in Figure 8 is embellished with various sizes of gold-bronze studs, which run down the sleeve and the body of the blazer. The lapels of the blazer are plain. She has a fitted navy blouse on underneath and wears a silver watch, pearl necklace, and earrings, which on a symbolic level can communicate her privileged lifestyle. Her hair is touching the collar of the blazer and she is wearing light tones of pink makeup. In Figure 9, Precious Motsepe is wearing a royal blue blazer with a white lace top underneath. Her hair is pulled back, and she is wearing a blue necklace, that is made up of what looks like mini balls, in different shades of blue. She is wearing gold earrings, which are symbolic of wealth and privilege, and bright red lipstick. The wearing of makeup is discussed in subsection 4.2.2.2.

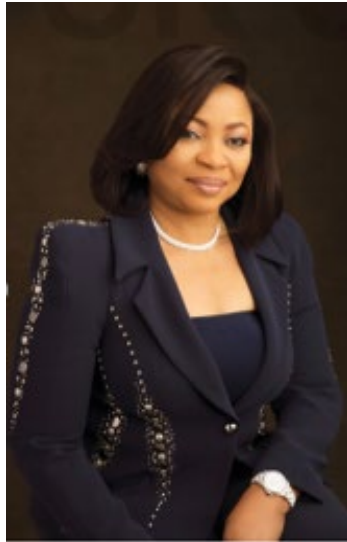


Figure 8: Folorunso Alakija (Mahlo 2020:28)



Figure 9: Precious Motsepe (Mahlo 2020:48)

On a denotative level, the next three images, Figures 10 to Figure 12, reflect a move away from the hues of blue and introduce pastel and earthy colours to the reader, whilst still maintaining the power suit look. In Figure 10 Rawya Mansour is wearing a stone blazer and her silky top is designed in pastel shades of pink and light grey. She is also wearing a silky scarf made of the same fabric and colour as that of her top. Her hair is light brown and she is wearing a gold necklace and earrings. In Figure 11 Wendy Ackerman is wearing a tweed jacket, which is predominantly brown with pastel shades of pink, green, and yellow incorporated in the fabric. She is wearing a blue silk blouse and also wears strings of blue and white pearls. Her hair is light brown with highlights in honey and she is wearing red toned lipstick. Similarly, in Figure 12, the President of Ethiopia, Sahle-Work Zewde, is wearing a multi-coloured blazer. Her collar is covered by her cream silky scarf, and the image shows a little of her blue top underneath the jacket. Her nails are painted white and her eye-makeup colour is similar to some of the colours of her jacket. She is also wearing creamy-toned pearl earrings.



Figure 10: Rawya Mansoor
(Mahlo 2020:44)

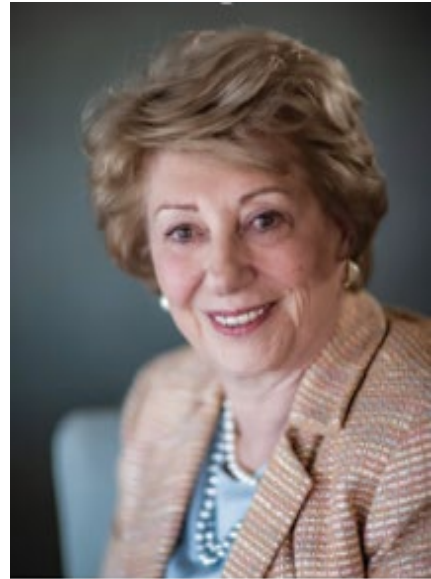


Figure 11: Wendy Ackerman (Mahlo
2020:44)



Figure 12: Sahle-Work Zewde (Mahlo 2020:44)

While this paragraph provides a brief description of the historical evolution of the pants, I do not go into a historical timeline on this topic. This timeline serves as an indication that clothing contributed to the social construction of gender and gender-related careers. Molly Steckler (2018) refers to the early 1800s, a time when very few women wore pants and women's focus was on their domestic duties. According to Steckler

(2018) in the 1900s, World War II paved the way for women to wear pants, as more women entered the workforce. Steckler (2018) also points out that it is only in the last 70 years or so that women wearing pants has become normalised. In the 1960s onwards the use of pants as a revolutionary item became visible, however acceptance from US government structures was very late, and in 1993, Steckler (2018) reveals “a number of female senators wore pantsuits in protest of an ancient rule of the official Senate dress code, and it was finally amended later that year”. Thus, clothing was a form of symbolic communication and expressed evidence “about the wearer’s social role, social standing, and personal character,” states Diana Crane (2015:242). For example, Faith Karimi (2012), reporting for CNN, covered a story where men in Malawi accused women of going against cultural norms of wearing pants, leggings, and mini skirts, instead of dresses. Karimi (2012) reported that the women were stripped naked on the street for not following tradition. Women then gathered in their numbers to protest against the attacks (Karimi 2012). Karimi (2012) also reported that sporadic attacks on women for wearing pants also occurred in other countries such as Zimbabwe and Kenya. The pantsuits or the use of pants, a symbol of masculine identity and representative of male power, were used as non-verbal resistance against male dominance by women. Women wearing a pantsuit or trousers was a way of standing against gender categorisation and inequality. Thus, initially, women dressed in suits to be on par with the male sex rather than making a fashion statement.

On a denotative level of meaning, Figures 4, and Figures 7 to 12 differ from the traditional use of the power suit, in that it has shifted from darker tones and the wide shoulder pads to a power suit that incorporates bold as well as pastel colours. Shoulder pads were a very specific fashion statement, which was also incorporated into dresses. Other complementing pieces in the images such as scarves and jewellery are signifiers of femininity, but despite this, the clothing is still regarded as power suits or power dressing and produces new meanings and relations of power. Connotatively, the clothing worn by women is performative in that it reconstructs the identity of professional women by bringing in their own characteristics. These images do not resist the historical norm of conforming to male leadership dress but they do also include feminine elements. The images reveal that the women do not imitate or replicate the darker shades of the male-dominant style or exhibit necessarily manly personalities in leadership, but instead, stand out as incorporating feminine traits. On

a connotative level/myth level, the images suggest that women are subverting the idea that men hold the power by reclaiming the power suit and incorporating feminine symbols in their attire. The reclaimed power suit also symbolically enables women to incorporate their own leadership style into the business world. In my opinion, the images in this theme continue to portray the initial intended purpose of the power suit, which was for women to attain equality in the workplace. The power suit is symbolic of achieving equality for women working in a professional capacity and operating on the same level in the boardroom as their male counterparts, whilst maintaining femininity to some extent. The pantsuit is worn daily by women across the globe and is now considered a common part of the office-working woman's wardrobe. Julie Redi (2012:47-48) contends that myth encodes the identity and establishes the construction of groups. She further asserts that "myth functions to reinforce beliefs and values, (Redi 2012:47). Therefore, a counter myth is in conflict or contradicts another myth. Thus, the counter myth creates "a new understanding" within society. The counter myth offered through these images shows women incorporating their femininity into a once masculine way of dressing and breaking barriers and creating agency for themselves. Whilst, still maintaining the original idea of power dressing, there is a noticeable change in the attire such as the incorporation of colours such as red or pastel colours, a move away from the dark shades, as well as the inclusion of feminine items which are also considered powerful. The ideology of patriarchy is subverted and the ideology of achievement is produced. This ideology means women are successful. The notion that women are successful in their pursuit of equality and economic issues are present in the ideology of achievement.

4.3 Head covering

Figures 13 to 18 reflect women from countries across Africa with different professions, ethnicities, and identities, and the images reflect the common use of the head covering or head wrap, which is also referred to locally and, therefore, in this study as the 'doek'. Figures 13 to 18 show six women, varying in ages, wearing head wraps in different colours, patterns and tied in different styles. The women in the images are professionals, with high profiles such as Executive Director of the United Nations Women, the first female President of Liberia and Nobel Prize for Peace Laureate, South Africa's Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, and the

Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations. In Figure 13, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala from Nigeria is wearing a blue head wrap, which compliments her blue dress and blue jewellery. Her hands are clasped and she is wearing glasses. The head-wrap worn by Nigerian women is known as the “gele” and is an integral part of the Nigerian identity. According to Aissatou Gaye (2019), traditionally, the “gele” is representative of the social status of a woman, depending on how it is tied. Gaye (2019) states: “When it is worn very high, wide and complexly wrapped, with luxurious textiles, the gele reveals the wealth and social status of its owner. The styles and folds even allow identifying the native region of the wearer”.



Figure 13: Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala (Mahlo 2020:36)

In Figure 14, the Executive Director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is wearing a red ‘doek’. In Figure 15 the South African Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma is also wearing a red ‘doek’, which is tied in a different style. They both appear in a seated position. Mlambo-Ngcuka is wearing a red and white floral top against a navy background. Minister Dlamini-Zuma is wearing a multi-coloured coat, with striped grey sleeves. Her top is red and matches her ‘doek’.



Figure 14: Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (Mahlo 2020:36)



Figure 15: Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma (Mahlo 2020:43).

Figure 16 is of Amina J Mohammed, who is the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations. Her head wrap is chocolate brown and the fabric appears to be either satin or silk. Her head wrap compliments her brown scarf, which is decorated with tan, beige, green, and cream embroidery. Behind her, to the right, is a flag of the United Nations in blue and white. Figure 17 shows the first female President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Her head-wrap is in the same fabric as her outfit, which is black with red, white, and black stripes. She is seated on a patterned, beige, and brown armchair, with champagne-coloured curtains in the background. She is wearing a watch and this image also showcases feminine signifiers which are her pearl necklace and earrings.



Figure 16: Amina J Mohammed (Mahlo 2020:47)



Figure 17: President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (Mahlo 2020:37)

On a connotative level of meaning, Figures 13 to 17 embody culture, ethnicity, gender, and race. It is representative of the association between identity and dress. In an interview with Eusebius McKaiser (2018) on FM radio station 702, Professor Hlonipha Mokoena, explains that the African head wrap has been historically used as a marker of slavery and trade in West Africa from India and other parts of the world. In the discussion with McKaiser (2018) Mokoena also reveals that missionaries and religion in Southern Africa played a role in women wearing 'doeks' as a sign of respectability. Similarly, Zongile Nhlapo (2017) suggests that head coverings are viewed as a "sign of respect, humility and sometimes modesty". The traditional African head-wrap is a symbol carrying meaning and reflects certain cultural values. However, the head wrap has evolved and has come to represent different cultures and ethnicities, especially in a Pan-African context.

In Africa, the head-wrap is a symbolic sign and an outward expression form of visual language. The head-wrap can be tied in various styles and there is a plethora of fabric choices and traditional designs. For centuries, the head-wrap was a means of communicating the social status of a person in the African culture. Zongile Nhlapo (2017) reported that culturally in Southern Africa, women wearing 'doeks' express a sign that they are either married, widowed, or engaged. For example, Nhlapo (2017),

points out that in the Zulu culture, a married woman is expected to wear a 'doek' as a sign of respect for her in-laws. Similarly, Nhlapo (2017) also refers to other traditional groups, such as the Xhosa population, where 'doeks' worn by women are worn as a sign of respect or to signify a particular meaning.

Historically, the head wrap is deeply rooted in African culture on the African continent and is associated with tradition and culture. These symbols were then exported to other countries across the globe and played a significant role in the lives of black women in the United States of America (USA) as well as in Europe. Carmen Kynard (2013) suggests that connotatively, the exported symbols were viewed as a sign of servitude and colonialism. There is a stark contrast between the symbolism of the head wrap in Africa compared to its symbolic meaning in the USA and Europe. As a sign of resistance against the human slave trade in exchange for goods, black women demonstrated cultural defiance through the head wrap, states Kynard (2013). In addition to wearing head-wraps for practical reasons, such as protection from the sun or as a way to keep natural hair tied, another issue related to the exotic appearance of black women was to discourage white men from pursuing them and to avoid misunderstanding about who is the mistress (Kynard 2013). The root of this idea was the attempt to make black women look unappealing or as a demonstration of ugliness. However, Nicole Willson (2021:6) argues that this notion of the "black female monstrosity and hyper-sexuality" became a symbol of black female resistance and this idea was subverted when it enabled black women to be seen as "ingenious, skillful and opportunistic". Willson (2021:5-6) explains that women were seen as skillful and ingenious through their creativity of using pieces of jewellery such as gold earrings that add to the appeal of the head-wrap and by transforming it into a visually striking piece (Willson 2021:6). Thus, the head wrap made the invisible slave visible, the powerless black women powerful, and the marginalised women also known as the "other", into a focal point (Willson 2021:6). African American women purposefully accessorised the head wrap and draped it as a form of communication, which evolved as a symbol of opposition and distinctiveness, which allowed black women to defy colonialist suppression.

The head-wrap has not lost its relevance with many young women, from different cultures and races embracing its use, as we see in Figure 18. Head-wraps or head

covering is a highly fashionable piece of clothing accessory and it is being embraced daily by the youth. In Figure 18 we see a young woman, Aya Chebbi from Tunisia, an African Youth Envoy, who is wearing a multi-coloured head wrap which is knotted at the front with her hair tied in a topknot. Her red earrings are in the shape of Africa. She is wearing a white collared top with buttons. On her top, there is bold red writing, which reads “Be Whatever”.



Figure 18: Aya Chebbi (Mahlo 2020:30)

She represents youthfulness and a new generation of those wearing the ‘doek’. In 2016 in South Africa, the revolution of the headscarf or ‘doek’ became a dominant storyline, under the hashtag #RespekThe’dhoek’. This renewed embrace of the ‘doek’ was symbolic of and embodied solidarity and empowerment for women. The incident surrounded a broadcast journalist who alleged that her story was dismissed because she was captured wearing a head wrap, reports Avantika Seeth (2016). South African women stood in solidarity with the journalist. According to Rufaro Samanga [sa] in another defining moment for South Africa, the ‘doek’, was used as a sartorial symbol of womanhood and empowerment for young black African women during the Fees Must Fall campaign. The ‘doek’ took centre stage and openly defied masculine tendencies, with some visual images in the media showing a few women wearing their ‘doek’ and holding a sjambok in their hand. A sjambok can be described as a long stiff whip. Kwanele Sosibo (2015) states that the sjambok was used by the Voortrekkers to herd animals. Sosiba (2015) further alludes to the fact that the sjambok’s main purpose is to inflict harm and it emerged as a powerful symbol of apartheid violence.

The 'doek' and sjambok are thus both viewed as signifiers of power and resistance to oppression. Whilst, still maintaining African beauty standards and cultural tradition, the 'doek' connotatively in this campaign evolved to become symbolic of challenges faced by women and their ability to empower themselves to make their voices heard. The head-wrap or 'doek' represents a crown, which is symbolic of victory, triumph, and power.

The images in this section reveal a counter myth to professionalism and white supremacy culture, in which workplace practices privilege the values of white and Western employees. The counter myth revealed, through Figures 13 to 18 involves black female identity construction in a professional capacity. Aysa Gray (2019) contends that white supremacy culture favours whiteness and "discriminates against non-Western and non-white professionalism standards related to dress code, speech, work style, and timeliness". The counter myth operating in these images encodes the identity of black females as professionals. It also serves to debunk black exceptionalism. According to Ciera Graham [sa], black exceptionalism surrounds a belief that black people who are modern, articulate, or conform to what is understood or considered to be desirable traits, stemming from white culture, are heightened or commands a certain level of attention in mainly white groups. The images show black African women of different ages, serving in their professional capacity whilst still incorporating their head wraps with their historical roots in Africa. The ideology produced from the myth is strong black female excellence.

4.4 Shades of Red

The world is saturated with colour and as Theo van Leeuwen (2011:1) points out, colour is a mode for meaning. The common element in the *Shades of Red* theme is, of course, the colour red. These images are visually striking and are thus immediately noticeable. I was interested in analysing the widespread use of the colour red in my data set and exploring the possible meaning created by this representation. The following sub-themes will be discussed: Red suits, Red dresses, Red gendered occupations, and Red politics.

The colour red was a common feature in Paleolithic art, more commonly known as Stone Age art (Petru 2006:204). Humans in prehistoric times viewed red as the colour of fire and blood, which symbolised energy. An interesting point to note is that fire was also considered a sign or agent of transformation, suggests Petru (2006:206). During the Paleolithic era, the colour red represented change, power, and to large extent femininity. For example, a noticeable transformation pointed out by Petru (2006:206) is that of the female body that can undergo various changes during pregnancy and it is in this transformation that a new life is birthed. No man has been able to undergo such a drastic transformation. The idea of transformation is also expressed and “made obvious in a female figure from Dolni Vestonice, which is made of clay” (Petru 2006:206). Dolni Vestonice is an Upper Paleolithic archaeological site in the Czech Republic, and the figure is called the Venus of Dolní Věstonice. The figure is made of clay, which is soft and mouldable and undergoes an intense conversion as it goes through fire to become an end product that is “solid and lasting”. Likewise, women have gone through transformation in many areas, such as the workplace, and are expressing themselves through the colour red. They are transforming and are addressing challenges that they face head-on.



Figure 19: Venus of Dolní Věstonice, Petr Novák (sa).

Wiedemann, Burt, Hill and Barton (2015:1) argue that red is a colour that is associated with dominance in various species, including humans through social perception. It is

also interesting to note that in modern times, red is associated with dominance. The red tie worn by men is known to be symbolic of power, energy, and achievement. Alina Dizik (2014) associates the “red power tie” with strength. Similarly, Wiedemann (2015:1) associates wearing red in sport to “a greater pre-performance strength and higher testosterone levels” and states that “psychological associations of red coloration with dominance and aggression that boost red wearers’ confidence and/or intimidate their opponents, although the effect may be restricted to males”. The “red power tie” is referred to in this discussion, as its characteristics are associated with men; however, when women wear red the common association in society is different such as romance. This study is of the view that the use of red and its associated shades worn by women in the images reflects them as leaders and professionals.

Colour is anchored in historical context and has symbolic meaning. Simona Petru (2006:203) gives attention to colour symbolism elucidating that colour is electromagnetic, which means that a colour is a form of visible light that forms part of a spectrum of colours of pure energy, which influences human perceptions and emotions. Therefore, gaining knowledge of the connotative meaning of colour is important. Petru (2006:203) refers to red being the “first real colour” which has a defined and longest wavelength and one of the most visible colours in the spectrum, compared to other colours. Thus, red has an impact on the way we react or respond to it emotionally. From a representative viewpoint, the use of the various shades of red is a sign which has a range of significance and is therefore polysemous. Red possesses both positive and negative connotations and is associated with romance, love, passion, sensitivity, sexuality, power, strength, determination, and courage. It also represents danger, outbursts, anger, war, heat, and stress. Its symbolism as we understand it today is deeply rooted in history. Red also signifies power and is commonly associated with politics. I discuss Red politics in section 4.4.3.

4.4.1 Red suits

Figure 20 forms part of an advertorial by the Rwanda Development Board (2020:80) which features an image of Clare Akamanzi, CEO of the Rwanda Development Board. She is wearing a red jacket with a large collar and accessorises her outfit with a pearl necklace and pearl drop earrings. Her hair is styled in short tight braids. Her body is

slightly tilted to the right. Similarly, Figure 21 and Figure 22 show two women, Elzie Kanza, Head of Africa of the World Economic Forum, and the South African Public Protector, Busisiwe Mkhwebane, wearing red jackets. On a denotative level of meaning, Figures 20 to 22 show three women wearing red. Their outfits resonate power dressing which is discussed in section 4.2. In Figure 21 Kanza's red jacket is accompanied by a black and white top and a multi-coloured head wrap. Her accessories, a gold beaded chain which consists of multiple strands, a gold bracelet, and rings on both her fingers, are signifiers of wealth. She is holding a microphone in her hand and is speaking from a seated position. The background is indicative of the World Economic Forum (WEF) or a sponsored WEF event. In Figure 22, Mkhwebane is wearing a suit of darker red, which is contrasted with a black top. Her suit is embellished with black trimmings as well as a black and red flower on the top left side, which also signifies femininity. Her nails are painted silver and she is holding a pen in her hand. Her hair is braided and pulled tightly into a bun. She appears to be standing behind a table in a press briefing setting, as there are microphones that are branded with the emblem of a prominent South African news broadcaster. The branding in the background is the logo of the South African Public Protector's office.⁵ The image is supported by text in the caption, which, as discussed in Chapter Two, is a concept from Barthes called anchorage. The caption indicates that she is commenting about an attempt to remove her from office and that this bid is unconstitutional and unfair. The anchoring text directs the reader to understand what the image is about.

⁵ The alphabet letters N and O, which is seen as NO, in the background of Figure 1 form part of the phrase NOT FOR RESALE, as the published print e-editions were purchased from *Forbes Africa*.



Figure 20: Clare Akamanzi (Rwanda Development Board 2019/2020:80)



Figure 21: Elzie Kanza (Mahlo 2020:31)



Unjust Public protector Busisiwe Mkhwebane says the bid to be lunched in parliament to remove her from office is unfair and unconstitutional. / Antonio Mshana/Sowetan

Figure 22: Busisiwe Mkhwebane (Quintal 2020:4)

The outfits worn by the three women can be considered as a form of power dressing that still incorporates feminine signifiers. They are not wearing dresses but suits instead. On a denotative level of meaning, the red jacket is a common thread in these three images. On a connotative level, women are being constructed as powerful. The red suit is symbolic of power, strength, and achievement, despite these traits being more commonly associated with male leadership. The images demonstrate that women are empowered through the use of red to play a more equal role in the workplace, in leadership positions, and political contexts. The idea that red is associated with masculinity and sends signals of power and dominance - is being transformed through the images discussed above that show women in relation to these powerful traits. For example, in Figure 22 Mkhwebane is portrayed as exercising her power by protesting removal. Her red suit in the image signifies the power which she is embracing and the agency in which she is exercising. These images underscore the notion of power dressing, as discussed in section 4.2, as it shows women embracing the suit and exercising their power.

The representations in Figures 20 to 22 debunk the myth of a typical CEO, director, leader, or board member being a white man. This myth could have possibly survived through male dominance and the belief that males are suitable for leadership positions. The myth could have also possibly survived through its continuous depictions in business media and news in general. Julie Reid (2012:47) states, "myth may facilitate identity transference or renewal because older myths have become outdated, unfashionable or no longer appropriate within contemporary political/social climates". Thus, the myth of white men as business leaders are subverted and revised and there is identity transference to women, and in particular powerful black women. The counter myth offered through the images in this discussion is that black women now hold seats of power and are considered aptly suitable for leadership positions, and counters patriarchal ideologies. The counter myth seeks to establish women as leaders and women as excellent.

4.4.2 Red dresses

The next group of images shows four women wearing various styled dresses. The powerful colour red is used again in different shades and textures. In this section, I discuss posing as well as women incorporating femininity into the business world.

4.4.2.1 Red poses

In Figure 23, Rebecca Enonchong is dressed in a bright red dress, embellished with sequins that are shaped like flowers. The bodice has an elegant piece of flowing fabric that extends to the sleeves and she wears curved gold earrings. She is looking forward with her left hand on her hip, and her right arm positioned straight down.



Figure 23: Rebecca Enonchong
(Mahlo 2020:35)



Figure 24: Winnie Byanyima
(Mahlo 2020:39)

In Figure 24, Winnie Byanyima's body is slightly angled to the left with her right arm bent and her hand placed on her hip. Her hand is also bent with her fingers slightly curved. She is wearing a long, flowy dark-red dress that compliments her height. Her dress has a wide bronze band with a black design. On a denotative level of meaning, we view two African women wearing red dresses and posing. Enonchong is posing more like a model while Byanyima displays more of a Wonder Woman power stance.

Barthes (1977:20) argues that the underlying message of the photograph is “realised at the different levels of the production of the photograph”. Outlining a set of six procedures Barthes (1977:20) argues that “it is thus possible to separate various connotation procedures.” One of the six procedures Barthes (1977:22) refers to is pose, which is about the position of a character or a person which in itself has an associated message. The pose of the person or subject prepares the reader for the connotative meaning (Barthes 1977:22). Barthes (1977:22) explains the concept of pose through a picture of former President Kennedy in the 1960s (Figure 25) with his eyes looking up and his hands together, which at a metaphorical level suggests “spirituality”.



Figure 25: Former President Kennedy (Reuben 2014)

On a connotative level of meaning the poses in Figure 23 and Figure 24 also prepares the reader for the meanings of the poses which are symbolic of assertiveness, preparedness, power, and leadership. The ‘hand on the hip’ pose as seen in Figure 23 reflects how models in beauty pageants pose to show off their slender figure and/or to display their bodies. Using beauty pageants and modelling as an example Szymanski, Moffit, and Carr (2011:12) argue that there can be a heightened awareness of “observers’ perspectives on women’s bodies” in certain events and this enhances sexual objectification. Women are represented as an object to be looked at,

and this is aligned to John Berger's notion of the male gaze as discussed in Chapter Two. Beauty pageants were once designed only for slender white women. However, in this image, we view Enonchong destabilising the beauty queen pose by showing that women of colour are also beautiful. Laura Holson (2019) states that there is an evolution of beauty standards from "a barbie-type body" as being the acceptable standard to images of women looking like themselves in their "skin colour, body type, and curly hair".

In an attempt to acknowledge all possible meanings, the study also looks at Enonchong's direct gaze. The colonial gaze stems from colonisation, which also included imperialists taking over forms of cultural portrayals such as misinformation, or stereotypes. Karagic (2013:1-2) maintains that post-colonial theory employs the term the "colonial gaze" as they saw and represented colonies through misconceptions and stereotypes. It is through the colonial gaze that women are defined as the other, asserts Karagic (2013:4). Hunt (2002:1) further adds that imperialists had their own social structures and women from other lands did not fit into their established social structure and were often depicted to represent the "uncivilised nature of their society". In Figure 23 we see Enonchong resist a controlling system through her direct gaze in which her eyes hold the reader's attention. Her direct gaze can be interpreted as a form of resistance to imperial views, as well as the male gaze, which ultimately objectifies women. In the image, she is not only the object but through her gaze actively participates by resisting a subordinating gaze from elsewhere. She displays a unique sense of style and invites the reader to see how she projects her confidence using her beauty and modernity as a form of power. As discussed in Chapter Two, John Berger (1972:46) reveals that women are both the "surveyor and the surveyed", and through this image the way Enonchong looks at the reader and ultimately herself in turn, she reframes the colonial gaze by looking back and portraying a black powerful woman. She strikingly destabilises representations of black women by portraying them as powerful and beautiful instead of "uncivilised" as done from within colonial frameworks.

Carney, Cuddy, and Yap (2010:1366) suggest that "posing in high-power displays (as opposed to low-power displays) causes physiological, psychological, and behavioral changes." Discussing their study on power poses Carney et al (2010:1363) further

believe that “power determines greater access to resources, higher levels of agency, and control over a person’s own body, mind, and positive feelings”. In considering possible relations of social power to nonverbal communication, Figure 24 displays an inherent alignment or association to an expansive and open power pose known as the “Wonder Woman” pose or the “Superwoman” pose. Whilst Wonder Woman is a comic superhero, her iconic pose is recognised and acknowledged widely when used by women.



Figure 26: Superwoman (Hunt 2009)



Figure 27: Wonder woman pose (Howard 2018)

The body language in Figure 24 – arms slightly away from the body and placed on the hips – is expansive and open and connotatively reveals the latent meaning of powerful and confident. Delivering a TedTalk, author and speaker, Amy Cuddy (2012), suggests that the Wonder Woman pose or power posing leads to hormonal changes that affect the brain and create feelings of either assertiveness or confidence. The Wonder Woman pose is globally recognised and used by women irrespective of nationality. However, as Reid (2007:83) points out, a myth can be powerful if it “is communicated regularly and widely”. She also highlights that “myths are constantly finding new objects of signification while discarding old ones”. The Wonder Woman pose discards the myth that only men can be powerful and counters the “Superman” pose. As indicated in Chapter Two, Wood (1994:32), as well as Nino Abesadze et al (2019:645),

assert that in general, men are portrayed as dynamic, bold, forceful, heroes, someone to depend on, powerful and ambitious. Therefore, the Wonder Woman pose subverts and disrupts such views that only men are powerful. The revised myth offers new objects of signification, which are women on the African continent who are constructed as powerful. Women now play a more powerful role, through their inclusion in the workplace and in leadership posts that were once only designated for men. The myth subverts the ideology of patriarchy and the notion that only men are powerful and heroes. It introduces the notion that women are heroes, who are achieving their goals, despite societal norms and pressures placed on them.

4.4.2.2 *Femininity in the business world*

Figure 28 and Figure 29 construct another meaning that is attributed to the colour red in that women are using it through clothing and posing to showcase their powerful influence and leadership whilst incorporating femininity in the business world. On a denotative level of meaning, Bonang Matheba, in Figure 28 is a media personality and entrepreneur who is wearing a red dress with a scattered floral design. Red is the dominant colour of the dress and the design is in shades and mixtures of blue, green, and white. The dress has long sleeves with cuffs and a tie-up bow at the neck. She is wearing bracelets and earrings. Her makeup, bow, and jewellery are signifiers of femininity. Her nails are long and painted in a light shade of pink and her hair is in a side braid and tied midway with a band – all known signifiers of beauty and femininity. Her left arm is across her waist providing support for her right arm, which is held upright, and her finger touching her temple. Her head is slightly tilted forward. Her pose exudes confidence and happiness.



Figure 28: Bonang Matheba
(Mahlo 2020:40)



Figure 29: Irene Charnley
(Mahlo 2020:30)

Similarly, on a denotative level, in Figure 29, Irene Charnley, is wearing a dress coat with a high collar and ruffle layer sleeves. Her hair is a light brown and is styled with wavy curls. She accessorises with a belt, a bracelet, and a string of white pearls. She is standing slightly to the right with her left hand across her abdomen. The outfits of both of the women in these two images are smart, stylish, fashionable, and bold. It is also highly noticeable that both women are wearing makeup, with striking bold red lipstick and skin-toned eye makeup. In Figure 28, Matheba's accentuated long (artificial) black eyelashes are noticeable. Connotatively, makeup and the frilly sleeves function as signifiers of female beauty and serve to underline their femininity.

In Linda Nochlin's (1971) famous essay, "Why have there been no great women artists?", she questions why women were hindered from achieving top careers as artists. In the essay, Nochlin (1971) examines Rosa Bonheur, an accomplished artist, who refers to the term "frilly blouse syndrome". This alludes to the direct opposite of power dressing and rather focuses on professional women who over-emphasise their femininity by wearing particular items of clothing and rejecting the power suit as it is considered too masculine. For example, in the film *Legally Blonde* by Robert Luketic (2001), the character, Elle Woods overstates her femininity, through her style, personality, and beauty regimes. Her character is depicted as a woman who struggles

to conform to societal standards of what is accepted as an educated, professional woman. She subverts the dark colours of the power suit, through the use of shades of pink and other 'frivolous' elements such as hats, handbags, and matching outfits for her miniature chihuahua.

In Figure 29, it can be argued that Charnley's ruffled sleeves are a form of frilly blouse syndrome, which attempts to emphasise femininity in the business world. Susan Bordo (1993:27) states that "reproducing feminine practices trains the female body in docility and obedience to cultural demands, whilst still being experienced as a source of power and control". Kirsten Dellinger and Christine Williams (1997:151) posit that when a person is attractive, they are considered to have better career potential. Dellinger and Williams (1997:174) point out that feminine signifiers, such as makeup or ruffles, can be considered essential for women to gain credibility in the workplace. The images in the discussion reveal that women are expected to look in a specific way, and therefore because of such patriarchal tendencies and social pressures, they reject any form of masculine dress and traits and overperform their femininity. By overperforming their femininity, they are in a way also being powerful in that it is an avenue to ensure that they are treated as professionals and at the same time not lose their feminine identity. By incorporating over-female signifiers it cements their choice to reject masculine forms of dressing and adopt masculine traits.

Like the ruffled sleeves, another sign of femininity is the noticeable makeup in the considered images. Devon Carbado, Mitu Gulati, and Gowri Ramachandran (2006:5) contend that in the 1600s makeup was used by women and men to signify status and wealth, and by the 1900s makeup was used as a tool to distinguish class and race. In the mid-twentieth century makeup became standardised and was commercially positioned as a "necessary part of being a woman," maintains Carbado et al (2006:8). However, as more women entered the workforce, makeup functioned as a means to maintain distinct roles between men and women. Through makeup women signified "femininity and gender difference". In other words, despite men and women doing the same job, the use of makeup showed that women and men were not equal and that the hierarchal power of men could not be disrupted (Carbado, et al 2006:9). For example, there is a belief that women take much longer to get ready for work than men, and this can possibly be attributed to the high standards of beauty that they are

expected to conform to. On a connotative level, the makeup signifies a culturally accepted beauty standard, in which if women desire beauty and use makeup they are more likely to grow and succeed. On the other hand, a woman wearing no makeup does not create a shield for herself and is, therefore, less likely to be perceived as attractive. Thus, the absence of makeup can lead to discrimination against those who do not conform to overperforming femininity. The beauty myth functions in these images and serves to reinforce cultural practices that oppress women. Naomi Wolf ([1991] 2002) exposes the enslavement of women through the beauty myth. Beauty myth holds women to unrealistic beauty standards, and advances the idea that beauty is an asset. It serves a consumer culture in that women are made to feel compelled to purchase certain products so that they live up to idealised beauty norms.

4.4.2.3 Red gendered occupations

The next two images, Figure 30 and Figure 31, also reveal women wearing different shades of red. The visual images under discussion in this section adopt and reinforce the notion that red is a powerful and assertive colour that is used by women as discussed in the images above and applies the same meaning to Figures 30 and 31. However, the discussion offered below centres around gendered occupations and the caring role of women towards their children. The founder of an artificial intelligence medicine lab, Shamim Khallisa from Uganda, is featured in Figure 30. On a denotative level of meaning, she is wearing a flowing, contemporary red dress with black abstract elements printed on it. Her earrings are long gold drops with pearls, and her hair is shoulder length and tightly curled. The image is accompanied by a quote that mentions her mother, which is also discussed later in this section.

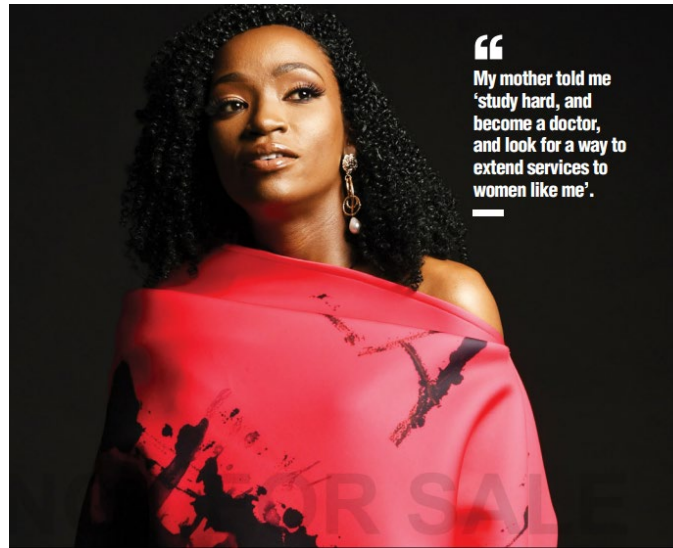


Figure 30: Shamim Khallissa (Mwendera 2020:30)



Figure 31: Zinhle Jiyane (Lethole 2020:96)

It is commonly recognised that when women can make strategic choices in their own lives, the process of empowerment continues. The United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (2001:26) states in its report, Empowerment of Women Throughout the Life Cycle as a Transformative Strategy for Poverty Eradication, that “women’s empowerment is assumed to be attainable through different points of

departure, including political mobilisation, consciousness-raising, and education”. One of the main reasons for the disempowerment of women is patriarchy, in the home and the workplace. The enforcement of patriarchal views and practices also resulted in the gendering of occupations. Anne Witz (1992:2) argues for the link between gender and professions, and states that with the growing participation of women in “male-dominated professions” there is a norm that highlights the challenges women have in adjusting to “typically male career patterns”. However, the images in this discussion are indicative of women showing agency for themselves in careers traditionally deemed more suitable for men.

Figure 30 and Figure 31 relay further connotative meaning which is directed by anchorage – the text accompanying the images. The anchoring text in Figure 30 clearly directs the reader that it was her mother that encouraged her to “study and become a doctor”, thus motivating her to not shy away from a male-dominated industry. Similarly, in Figure 31 the anchoring text informs the reader about the hard path DJ Zinhle had to endure to achieve “platinum success”, once again in a male-dominated industry (Lethole 2020:96). Mo Adeji (Sa) states “there is no denying the fact that females are under-represented in positions of power and business. One major industry that is still suffering from female under-representation in its sector is the DJing world.” Khallissa’s mother encouraged her to aim for the top healthcare-related career, instead of confining herself to the jobs that were commonly executed by women such as nurses and caregivers. Similarly, the image of DJ Zinhle with her daughter beside her, reveals both women as role models and as those who defy the norms of what can be achieved even in a male-dominated industry. Loes Meeussen and Colette Van Laar (2018:2) state that more parents face the challenge of childcare tasks together with a paid job, especially since more women are entering the workforce – further suggesting that a parent or parents have to think about how they divide their time between family and pursuing career ambitions. However, in the case of DJ Zihle, we can see how she defies the norms in a profession that requires her to be out a lot, especially at night. Her representation goes against the idea of “intensive mothering norms which prescribe women to be perfect mothers” (Meeussen & Van Laar 2018:1-3). In fact, there is no real definition of a perfect mother, as each family setting is unique and faces its own challenges. However, DJ Zinhle’s image reveals that she can be a mother and at the same succeed in a male-dominated industry. The image defies the

myth that reinforces gendered occupations and undermines and works against the ideology of patriarchy. In defying the myth, a radical transformation of women from the domestic space to a boardroom or public space is shown. Through the depiction of DJ Zinhle's daughter, it also defies the norm of public and private spaces being mutually exclusive. It shows that there can be a collaboration to a certain extent, between these spaces. It further reveals that women identify themselves as professionals. The anchors in both the images clearly show that Khallissa's mother and DJ Zintle are directing and empowering their daughters to enter into spaces that were once not considered "female careers".

4.4.3. Red politics

Figures 32 to 35 are images of women representing various political parties from different countries. The images in this theme are predominantly from *Business Day*, with the common thread being women dressed in red clothing. Political colours and emblems are known to represent a particular political ideology. The discussion surrounding the images considers the intersection of political ideology and colour symbolism. The colour red is more often associated with communism, socialism, and left-wing ideologies, which will be discussed later in this section. Figure 32 and Figure 33 both show German politicians from the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), namely Angela Merkel and Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer. On a denotative level, the two women are wearing what could be considered conservative suits as they have no frills or abstract designs on them.



Figure 32: German Chancellor Angela Merkel (Mavunda 2020:1)



Still finding her feet: Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, as leader of the Christian Democrat Union, gets to choose who will fight the election of the German chancellor in 2021 but her popularity is low, and challengers are lining up should she decide to step aside. /Bloomberg

Figure 33: Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer (Bloomberg 2020:5)

Figure 32 is of now former German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, who is wearing a red jacket with buttons and flaps on the side. On a denotative level, we see a white woman who is wearing a black watch and her hair is blonde and short. She is standing behind the podium, which is branded with the South African coat of arms, signifying that it is a government event. Her head is turned to the left towards the South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa. The image is reflective of them having a conversation. President Ramaphosa is wearing a business suit, white shirt, and a red tie with black stripes. He is also standing behind a branded South African coat of arms podium. In the background are flags, which are not fully opened, but it is clear that they are the

national flags of South Africa and Germany. The image leads one to assume both Chancellor Merkel and President Ramaphosa gave an address because they are standing behind podiums. While the focus of the discussion is not on Ramaphosa in Figure 32 it is noticeable that he is wearing a red tie with stripes, which as mentioned in this Chapter, is considered a sign of male power. The image also shows him slightly leaning in towards Chancellor Merkel. His pose captured in the image can either be interpreted as trying to intimidate the female figure or just saying something softly or in confidence. He appears higher than her in the picture plain – a phenomenon that usually constitutes visual dominance. However, in considering all possible meanings, it could be that he is just physically taller than her. The image is anchored by the text and directs the reader to the meaning which is that there was a meeting at the Union Buildings about investing in South Africa and the general conditions attached to any potential investments. It gives the reader an impression of economic investment and bilateral engagements between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of South Africa, represented by their Heads of State.

Figure 33 shows another leader from Germany's Christian Democratic Union, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, wearing a red blazer with a white top, quite similar to Merkel's outfit in Figure 32. Kramp-Karrenbauer is also standing behind a podium that shows the symbolic colours of the Christian Democratic Union, which are black, red, yellow, and white. "De Mitte" is written in the foreground of the political colours and the logo of CDU is in capital block letters, in bold red, appears next to it. "De Mitte" is the slogan of the CDU and means "The Middle" in English. There is a glass of water to her right on the podium. The image shows that she is delivering an address at a CDU event, as the white background has "CDU" written in shades of black. The image is also anchored by text which informs the reader that she is the leader of the CDU, and will determine who will be contesting the election of the German Chancellor in 2020. The anchorage of the image further alludes to her low political popularity and that it could determine if she steps down from her role. The CDU logo is often in red. The colour red in the blazers worn by Merkel and Kramp-Karrenbauer is aligned to the CDU logo on the podium and is a sign of imparting the political-ideological views of the CDU to the reader.



Figure 34: CDU logo (Bloomberg 2020:5)

In the CDU party manifesto, Konrad Adenauer-Stiftung (2008:6) describes the CDU as liberal-conservative and is considered centre-right in German politics. The party's ideological positions are based on Christian values, as stated in its party manifesto from 2007, "we take our bearings from the Christian concept of mankind and his [sic] inviolable dignity from which are dependent the basic values of freedom, solidarity, and justice. We strive for the right correlation between the basic values" (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung 2008:5). The use of the word *his* in the quote aligns to the outdated idea that the masculine pronoun refers to all humankind universally, and it thus comes over as conservative. The political philosophies of the CDU are based on the ethics of the Christian church. It is interesting to point out that the colour red associated with the CDU is also strongly associated with the Christian faith in the form of Christ's blood and the martyrdom of other Biblical figures. The red colour of the blood signifies Christ's death on the cross and redemption. In the Christian faith, the blood of Christ is also viewed as life, and humans are saved through the cross, following the death of the physical body. According to the Biblical scripture in the New International Version, Ephesians 1:7, states: "In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." Similarly, on a connotative level of meaning, the ideological views associated with the CDU are based on Christian beliefs and therefore the CDU can be considered as the "redeemer" in Germany, especially in its historical context. The CDU was established by people who wanted Eastern Germany to be fundamentally based on Christian principles following the communist rule in the country.

On the first level of meaning, the denotative level, in Figure 35 we see an image of political leaders, Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi and China's Xi Jinping, who are

shaking hands. Aung San Suu Kyi is a Myanmarian (formerly Burmese) politician and the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Xi Ping is a politician and President of the People's Republic of China since 2013. Aung San Suu Kyi is dressed in a red long sleeve dress in flowing red fabric extending from the bottom of the sleeve, which is also a signifier of femininity. Her string of pearls and her brooch on the upper left side of the dress also identify with her femaleness. She has white and red flowers in her hair and is holding a black clutch purse. Like President Ramaphosa in Figure 31, President Xi Ping is dressed in a suit with a pin on the lapel of the jacket. He is also wearing a tie in a shade of red, a sign of male power, and his head is slightly tilted forward. In figure 35, Aung San Suu Kyi looks frail and she does not extend her arm completely but keeps it closer to her body, which makes her look either apologetic or like a woman who is intimidated by the man next to her.

Figure 35, contains another prominent symbol, namely Aung San Suu Kyi herself. She is a sign and is considered central to the democratic revolution in Myanmar. Her stance against the military has been globally accepted and admired. Roberta Zappulla (2017:4) posits that Aung San Suu Kyi is a “symbol of democracy and the icon of the struggle of the Burmese citizens for self-determination”.

China's Xi to hunt deals in Myanmar



Figure 35: Aung San Suu Kyi (AFP 2020:5)

Figure 35 is anchored by the text in the form of the headline, which reads, “China’s Xi to hunt deals in Myanmar” and the accompanying anchoring text which reads, “Corridors of power: Myanmar’s Aung San Suu Kyi and China’s Xi Ping seen here in 2017, will meet this week” (AFP 2020:5). The anchorage enlightens the reader as to who the powerful leaders are and that they have met in 2017. The headline directs the reader that China, through its elected leader Xi Jinping, is seeking some sort of “deal” with Myanmar, through its elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Aung San Suu Kyi’s red dress is symbolic of the liberal democratic political party in Myanmar, the National League for Democracy (NLD). The dominant colour of the NLD is red, yellow, and white. The NLD is recognised for its opposition to political repression and military dictatorship and its fight for the improvement of human rights. Aung San Suu Kyi’s red dress is reflective of the main colours of the National League for Democracy, which represents the ideals of a democratic state. The NLD flag is predominantly red, and the flag features a golden peacock on a red background and a five-pointed white star at the top left (NLD political policy 2018) as can be seen in Figure 36.



Figure 36: National League for Democracy flag
(Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats) (Sa)

Kristian Stokke, Khine Win, and Soe Myint Aung (2015:13) explain that the NLD's political foundation and body of ideas stem from the pro-democracy movement. Their ideological position underpinned the start of resisting the Junta rule, and as per Shibani Mahtani (2021), there have been renewed calls for resistance. Kristian Stokke, Roman Vakulchuk, and Indra Øverland (2018:31) relate the colour red to the Buddhist monks in Myanmar who have been at the forefront of pro-democracy movements. The colour saffron, which is a shade of red, relates to the colour of the Myanmar monk's robes, who played a role in the "Saffron Revolution". The phrase was coined after the so-called "Saffron Revolution" that started in 2007 following the increase of oil and gas prices, in which Buddhist monks were central figures in the protest. David Steinberg (2008:51) states, "the dissent expressed in the Saffron Revolution is a product of economic degradation, the frustrations of youth and young monks." This shade of red is symbolic of their stance against the doctrines and practices of the ruling military. The colour red/saffron also further reinforces the identity of Buddhists and Buddhism which is known for their support of the poor (Steinberg 2008:54). Steinberg (2008:54) further points to the religious dissent transforming into "cries for democracy" as monks were allowed to walk past the house where Aung San Suu Kyi was held under house arrest. Therefore, the connotative meaning of the colour red, in this instance, is related to resistance and an awakening, bravery, and calls for human rights and socio-economic improvements. The colour red also subverts the notion that monks are quiet, peaceful, and confined to spirituality, and are rather portrayed as vocal and proactive citizens. The image below, Figure 37, shows another female politician, Nancy Pelosi. Pelosi is the elected Speaker of the House in the US Senate and the first woman assuming the role in the history of the United States of America. She is wearing a bold red outfit. Whilst, the full image of her outfit is blocked by the podium, the reader can see she is wearing bright red.

Democrats are pressing for trial rules and upfront commitments to subpoena Bolton, acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, and others

Business Day 9 Jan 2020 Steven T Dennis, Laura Litvan and Billy House Washington



Waiting game: US speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi has reportedly told legislators she is not ready to send the articles of impeachment to the Senate until she hears more details about how the trial will be conducted.

Figure 37: US Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi (Dennis, Litvan, House 2020:5)

It is recognised universally that in the United States of America parties are strongly associated with the colour blue. Indeed, blue is also the main colour of the Democratic Alliance in South Africa. Ron Elving (2014) posits that in 1976 NBC, which was the first colour television network at the time, unveiled an illuminated map, which showcased red and blue during the United States of America election coverage. After some time, and although the colours were not officially assigned to political parties, the Republicans were automatically associated with the colour red and Democrats associated with the colour blue (Elving 2014). However, Nancy Pelosi – a representative of the US Democratic Party – is paradoxically dressed in red in Figure 37, a colour that over the years has been strongly linked to the Republicans, the opposition political party. On a denotative level of meaning, we see a white female politician wearing a red jacket or dress. Her choice of colour is not symbolic of the adopted dominant blue of the democrats but on a connotative level, it shows the reader that clothing and colours can communicate various messages. Her choice of wearing red is symbolic of power dressing and what it represents, equality for women even in a sitting. Nancy Pelosi herself is symbolic of advancing the ideologies of the Democratic Party and symbolises a powerful force.

Describing Pelosi, Ball (2018) says:

Pelosi is one of the most consequential political figures of her generation. It was her creativity, stamina, and willpower that drove the defining Democratic accomplishments of the past decade, from universal access to health coverage to saving the U.S. economy from collapse, from reforming Wall Street to allowing gay people to serve openly in the military. Her Republican successors' ineptitude has thrown her skills into sharp relief. It's not a stretch to say Pelosi is one of very few legislators in Washington who actually know what they're doing.

The people that are standing behind her in the image are assumed to be members of the house, and represent support for the argument or information that she has delivered in her address. The words written on the podium "for the people" connotes the message that the citizens' needs are put first and form the basis of socialist ideals. Her red blazer is symbolic of socialism. The 2020 Democratic Party Platform (2020:5-6) highlights the party's approach which favours social equality, equal opportunity, and minority rights.

Another well-known incident of a red blazer covered by the media is that of Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a New York Democrat, who delivered what became known as the "speech of the decade" while wearing a red blazer. Ocasio-Cortez's blazer and the power it yields connotes resistance to workplace sexism and violent language becoming culturally accepted. Emma Firth (2020) describes the speech as:

A speech that masterfully schooled the world on sexism and misogyny in the workplace, in a retort to Republican Ted Yoho, who, she says called her a "fucking bitch" on the steps of the Capitol Building in Washington DC. A speech that called out the "entire structure of power" that enables "violence and violent language against women", delivered so concisely it's impossible for those watching not to pay attention to every single word.

The discourse ensued as a result of Ocasio-Cortez's red blazer speech which provides further support for women to stand against discrimination and to use power to create agency for themselves, as reflected by Nancy Pelosi wearing a red blazer in this

image. The red clothing worn by the democrats has become symbolic of power and cultural influence in the fight against sexism and misogyny for women. However, it is important to point out that the use of red by the women in this discussion goes against the norm of thinking that pro-democracy or democratic beliefs are aligned to the colour blue.

The myth of international relations is evident in this theme of red. The semiotic elements that construct this myth are political leaders of countries who are featured either alone or together, emblems such as the South African coat of arms, and the national flags shown in the images. The signs in the discussed images – that of Presidents representing the positions of certain countries – become the signifier in the second-order of the myth. Halvard Leira and Benjamin de Carvalho (2018:222) unpack the myth of international relations stating that “states are the key building blocks of international relations, and the state system is the structure binding them together.” International relations are built on the idea to maintain peace and enable the survival of countries or states as a system. As explained by Halvard Leira and Benjamin de Carvalho (2018:224) myths can build on already constructed myths and thus the myth of international relations builds on the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. The Peace of Westphalia ended a series of wars in Central Europe, which lasted for thirty-eight years, and as Steve Patton (2019:91) points out, it formed the foundation for international relations, which is still relevant today. The myth functions and allows states to build diplomatic relations or strengthen ties especially when countries participate in international organisations. As in the case seen in Figure 33 we see a white female leader in a bilateral briefing with a black male leader. Similarly, in Figure 35 two leaders from different nations, a male and female, with similar interests are viewed shaking hands, which can also be interpreted as a sign of agreement. Thus, the myth of international relations is crucial as it does not display superior power but shows a level of understanding between sovereign nations. Nationalism as a political ideology is produced from this myth. Nationalism prioritises the interest of nations. The ideology of nationalism creates belonging for its people, and they readily identify with their nation and political loyalty. In this ideology, the nation and its identity are elevated.

4.5 Pearl power

A common signifier of femininity and power in many of the images under discussion in this chapter is the pearl. The pearl is mainly portrayed in the form of jewellery, such as a string of pearls, earrings, and a ring. In Figure 4 and Figure 7, Graça Machel is wearing a pearl necklace, earrings, and ring. Pictured in Figure 8, Folorunso Alakija is wearing a string of pearls. Similarly, in Figure 11 Wendy Ackerman, in Figure 12 Sahle-Work Zewde, in Figure 17 Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, in Figure 20 Clare Akamanzi, in Figure 30 Shamim Khallisa, and Figure 35 Aung San Suu Kyi, are all wearing pearl jewellery, mostly in the form of a necklace.

George Frederick Kunz and Charles Hugh Stevenson (1908:3) state that pearls are one of the earliest precious gems known to humankind. Kunz and Stevenson (1908:3) suggest that the “Vedas, the oldest sacred book of the Brahmans” refers to pearls, which were held in high esteem. Dona Dirlam, Elise Misiorowski, and Sally Thomas (1985:63) further allude to the different eras, communities, and people that were known for wearing pearls, such as, “Roman statesmen, Renaissance kings and queens, and Victorian ladies”. Thus, throughout history, there is special attention given to pearls, especially by people that are in powerful and authoritative roles such as royalty. Pearls were earmarked for those who were privileged or those in the upper ranks of authority. The images of women wearing pearl jewellery are the signifiers of sophistication in this discussion. On a denotative level of meaning, the data set reveals women wearing various items of pearl jewellery. In particular, white or cream pearls appear to be the preferred choice in the images under examination. Dirlam, Elise, and Thomas (1985:65-66) suggest that from early times pearls were known to have medicinal value, and were known for curing eye disease, heart palpitations, and other health-related issues. Thus, on a connotative level, it signified healing and restoring health and strength. Pearls were also signifiers of “hope of the Kingdom of Heaven, or charity and the sweetness of celestial life,” as Dirlam, Elise, and Thomas (1985:66) point out. It also signified purity and incorruptibility. In the late Middle Ages, pearls resurfaced as a representation of rank, and efforts were made to restrict their use to nobility (Dirlam, Elise & Thomas 1985:66). During the sovereignty of Queen Elizabeth I pearls was highly valued and the queen used them to “silently demonstrate her power, opulence, and regal dignity”. She demonstrated her power by having

thousands of pearls sewn onto her garments in a particular crisscross style and had them removed before washing the garment (Dirlam, Elise & Thomas 1985:69). Furthermore, she owned large pearls, wore glamorous pearl earrings and several “ropes of large fine pearls,” states Dirlam, Elise, and Thomas (1985:69). Even in her death, pearls were used as a signifier to show her regal strength and purity. The image below shows how Queen Elizabeth I, used pearls to signify her regal, power, and strength.



Figure 38: Depiction of pearls worn by Queen Elizabeth I
(Dirlam, Elise & Thomas 1985:69)

Pearls have long been a symbol of wealth, sophistication, and power, and more recently pearls have been used by powerful women to convey similar meanings. The image from the video clip below, shows Queen Elizabeth II delivering a public broadcast addressing the coronavirus pandemic in April 2020. She is seen wearing pearl earrings and a three-strand pearl necklace.



Figure 39: Queen Elizabeth II (Foster, Bashir & Dewan 2020)

Kim Parker (2021) reported that gems have a unique sense of refinement, sophistication that “resonates deeply with the idea of matriarchal power right now”. This means that it represents a powerful woman as a head of a family or an organisation. Sharon McKee (2018) alluded to many powerful women, who are well-known, wearing pearls such as Oprah Winfrey, the Duchess of Cambridge, Michelle Obama, and Angelina Jolie, amongst others. The pearls show their presence and their power. Similarly, in the images discussed in this chapter, pearls have come to signify power, authority, and presence. Through the use of pearls, the women in the images are stating their presence and showing their matriarchal power. They are also showing their discernment and good taste. Most of the women shown in the data set are professionals, leaders of organisations, and countries, and the use of pearls is viewed as a marker for success as it is generally considered an expensive gem. It also shows that these women are celebrating or showcasing their accomplishments through the ‘power pearl’. The power that the pearl commands is no longer confined only to nobility, as in the days of Queen Elizabeth I, but the images reveal that such power is also being drawn upon by women in business and other leading women.

The myth of power and class exclusively assigned to royalty, and the rich and famous are subverted through these images. The considered images reveal a counter myth that women across all races and classes can be powerful and make their presence known. The counter myth serves the interest of women across society and is not confined to a particular group of women. Capitalist ideology is produced from this myth. Through the capitalist ideology, women are free to participate in the economy, grow their wealth, and even own corporations. This ideology is based on an economic

system that enables women to invest, own, and make their own decisions without interference.

4.6 Summary

Chapter Four considered the visual portrayal of women in *Business Day* and *Forbes Africa* in terms of the dominant themes derived from my analysis of these images. The images reveal several underlying meanings related to women and counter myths constructed through the images. The discussions centre on power dressing, head covering, the use of the colour red by women, and pearl power. The images examined in terms of power dressing reveal how women in business still consider the business suit as a power suit and subvert the idea that men continue to hold all the power. In the discussion about head coverings, a counter myth is offered to white supremacy culture in the workplace and encodes the identity of black women as leaders and debunks black exceptionalism. Because of the vast amount of images that include red, the section on shades of red is divided into subsections, namely red suits, red dresses, political red, and red-gendered occupations. The discussions show how the colour red is a sign and signifies various meanings at the connotative level. A quite interesting feature is how women use the colour red and posing to resist the colonial gaze and debunk the notion that only men are powerful. The myth of international relations is also discussed and highlights how myths build on each other and function to allow diplomatic relations. The chapter ends with a discussion about pearls – a signifier that is common in the images in this chapter. Through the connotative meaning of the pearl, women in the considered data portray their matriarchal power. Chapter Five will consider the main discourses emanating from the considered data.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FOUCAULDIAN DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the second analytical framework employed in this study, which is Foucauldian discourse analysis. A discursive analysis is applied to ascertain the dominant discourses surrounding the discursive object, which is women, and their portrayal in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*. The criteria applied in the selection of the extracts, is that it had to refer to women by containing words such as: “woman”, “women”, “female”, “she”, “her” or an indication that the text pertains to a woman or women. The two dominant emerging discourses that will be discussed are empowerment and women in the workplace.

5.2 A discourse analysis of ‘empowerment’

5.2.1 *The word ‘empowerment’*

This discussion on the discourse of empowerment surrounds the term ‘empowerment’ and how it is used in relation to women in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*. Conceptualising the term empowerment, Srilatha Batliwala (2010:113) refers to power, which is the main concept within empowerment and relates it to moves or changes of power by individuals or groups in a socio-political and economic environment. The concept of empowerment is imbued in history and the fight to attain equality. In the same way, women’s “empowerment refers to the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability,” states Naila Kabeer (1999:435). It is also important to note that the term empowerment, as Batliwala (2010:114) points out, replaced earlier concepts such as “women’s welfare”, “women’s development”, and “women’s upliftment”. As discussed in Chapter One, there is growing interest in empowering women and girls across the globe (SIDA 2015:5; Schwab 2017:V; United Nations 2014:3). The following examples of the considered extracts underscore the general acceptance and acknowledgment of women as the object of empowerment. The pink highlights in the extracts are to show words related to women such as female, women, woman, her, businesswoman.

This pink highlighting is applied throughout this section. The blue highlights indicate a specific contribution to the discourse, and are also highlighted throughout this chapter. For example, in the below extracts the blue highlights indicate ‘empowerment’ and how its associated implications such as “economically empowered” or “advance security”.

Extract number	Extract	Source
Extract 1	“Female empowerment is allowing women to be whoever they want to be and enabling them to achieve their full potential by giving them the tools needed.”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Renuka 2020:96).
Extract 2	“The first step would be gender equality, to enable women to be fully part of the economy.”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Renuka 2020:96).
Extract 3	“Riria has made it her career to empower and enable women to advance their security and prosperity through active partnerships with governments and community-based organizations.”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Mahlo 2020:30)
Extract 4	“As one of South Africa’s most accomplished businesswomen, Luhabe has broken countless stereotypes in the male-dominated environment of private equity and in doing so, has economically empowered many women through her strides.”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Mahlo 2020:34)
Extract 5	“Davies-Okundaye saw a way to help women to become economically empowered.”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Hyde 2020:80-81)
Extract 6	“The hitmaker has been vocal about the importance of female empowerment.”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (2020:96)
Extract 7	“For me, the way forward is using my platform to empower and embolden the women coming after me. This can occur in two ways...” “The first is working on empowering the women who are in the workforce and especially in positions of leadership to reach their full potential and engage in activities that provide opportunities for the next generation of women leaders...” “The second is helping female students at both the university and high school levels to ensure that we have a steady stream of competent, educated and confident women ready to take over.”	Extracted from <i>Fobes Africa</i> (Methil 2020:44)

The extracts and keywords, highlighted in blue, are indicative of the acknowledgement, desire, and attaches importance to empowering women. This is seen by the continuous repetition of the word ‘empowerment’ in the extracts. The use of phrases such as “achieve their full potential”, “reach their full potential”, “empower and bolden women”, “advance their security and prosperity”, acknowledges the benefits of empowering women show women as needing to be successful through empowerment. The extracts also link the empowerment of women to benefitting themselves such as “the next generation of women leaders”, or ensuring the next

corpus of leader for example the use of “steady stream of competent, educated and confident women ready to take over.” Embedded in the discourse of empowerment are sub-themes that form part of the discussion. The focus of the discussion is not on a specific woman or “article” but rather centres around women and empowerment in general as they appear in the extracts.

5.2.2 Is women’s empowerment equal empowerment for all?

There is a common thread in the extracts presented above and below that positions women as the lead, or the hero, or as a catalyst, that if empowered, will ensure the progress of her children, family, community, as well as the development of a nation. As an example, the following two extracts are repeated.

“The first is working on empowering the women who are in the workforce and especially in positions of leadership to reach their full potential and engage in activities that provide opportunities for the next generation of women leaders.” Extract 7 from *Forbes Africa* (Renuka Methil 2020:44).

“Whenever women gain, everybody gains and nobody loses...” Kagame reiterated to attendees at the summit.” Extract 12: from *Forbes Africa* (Naringwa Fiona Muthoni 2020:24-25).

The extracts anchor the implications of empowering women; in which it is highlighted that women are critical for the empowerment of others. This becomes evident through the following phrases embedded in the extracts, such as “working on empowering the women who are in the workforce and especially in positions of leadership”, “women to be fully part of the economy”, or “whenever women gain, everybody gains and nobody loses”.

Golla et al (2011:3) suggest that when women are empowered through means of finance they contribute more to their families and communities, and by devoting additional finances to children it delivers growth in their lives. Similarly, Vanessa Mounzar and Yero Baldeh (2020) allude to women in Africa who reinvest almost all their income into their families to attain positive outcomes in health, education, and

nutrition. Thus, women are positioned as the instrument to achieve progressive development across the board.

Shahrashoub Razavi and Carol Miller (1995:3) highlight that the 1970s was a time that focussed on social justice for women and advocacy centred around including women into economies to improve their status. While “social welfare” and “reproductive concerns” were also key features during this period, more attention was paid to getting women into equal employment opportunities and the economies (Razavi & Miller 1995:3). The importance placed on women’s economic inclusion meant that the inequalities and challenges they faced could be solved within an economic approach (Razavi & Miller 1995:4). This notion was also comprehensively looked at by Simone de Beauvoir [1949] (2010:753) in her book *The Second Sex*, with part 2 of the book titled *Woman’s life today*. De Beauvoir [1949] (2010:753) believes in women’s liberation and equality between women and men, including on an economic level. As such, a woman had to earn their own living to avoid the risk of secondary status or reliance on a man such as a husband. De Beauvoir [1949] (2010:753) states: “This liberation can only be collective, and it demands above all that the economic evolution of the feminine condition be accomplished”. The following extracts position women as the ‘deliverer’ to improve outcomes of others, instead of themselves. Deliverer in this sense means someone who will save others by improving the lives of others.

Extract number	Extracts	Source
Extract 8	“The safeguarding of women’s rights may be of more importance to regional growth.”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Mahlo 2020:31)
Extract 9	“It has been proven that whenever women are involved, the profitability of that company goes up. There are clear statistics to prove that; [that] EBITDA ⁶ have increased by 20%-30% in instances when women are involved.”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Mahlo 2020:40)
Extract 10	“The full and meaningful participation of women will make economies more dynamic; peace agreements more durable; governance more inclusive and societies more resilient.” “When women enter spaces once dominated by men, it changes those spaces; bringing in new perspectives, correcting blind spots, and ultimately improving decision making.”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Mahlo 2020:47)
Extract 11	“What is more fulfilling than this; impacting the lives of women and seeing the returns?”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Mwendera 2020:39)

⁶ EBITDA means earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization and is a measure of an organisation’s overall financial performance.

Extract 12	“Whenever women gain, everybody gains and nobody loses,” Kagame reiterated to attendees at the summit.”	Extracted from Forbes Africa (2020:24-25)
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The extracts highlighted in blue reveal the economic aspect of empowerment and that women are discursively framed as the “deliverer”. This means that when a woman’s economic opportunities are widened and when a woman is empowered, she, in turn, helps others such as her children or community, and delivers them from poverty, for example, by supporting and providing for them. The responsibility of a mammoth task to improve the lives of others and ensure their well-being is placed on the shoulders of women, which is evident in phrases such as “whenever women gain, everybody gains and nobody loses” or “the safeguarding of women’s rights may be of more importance to regional growth,” as highlighted in the extracts. While this discourse appears to be profitable and beneficial for everyone, it possesses a different dimension which can be to the detriment of women. The concern in this discourse is that it narrowly zooms into the economic, and financial relief that empowering women will bring about, and it largely ignores other social inequalities that exert power over women. For example, while some women might be economically astute or financially secure, the power in the home could largely be held by the male presence in her life, therefore, subjecting them to patriarchy and discrimination. Looking at this retrospectively, the discourse in *Forbes* suggests that the disempowerment of women is largely linked to poverty or lack of financial resources. This is misleading as there are other forms of oppression or disempowerment that women face which are not linked to finances. Their entrance into the workforce and labour does not exempt them from other forms of discrimination such as gender-based violence, emotional and psychological abuse as well as financial abuses, such as the confiscation of wages by partners. The presented discursive extracts focus on finance as a form of empowering women, and an implication of the focus on finance as empowerment is that women will no longer be oppressed in other avenues such as the home, in the wider family setting, or society if they are empowered economically. It legitimises a woman’s status based on finances or material wealth. It also reveals that women are represented as working for development, under the umbrella of empowerment instead of this development being beneficial for women per se.

However, Andrea Cornwall (2016:343) argues that empowerment is about “inequalities in power” and asserting oneself, and taking action to bring about change. Based on Cornwall’s argument there is a concern of linking women’s empowerment to finances and economic growth only, as the holistic transformative concept of empowerment could be lost. The discourse needs to move away from the linkages of development and a women’s status through financial means, to one that caters for shifting the power balance between men and women in all avenues that affect women. This study acknowledges that each woman is different and as such will face different forms of oppression and discrimination as well as different degrees of privilege, however, the premise of laying empowerment at the feet of economic development of women does not fill the vacuum to shift the balance of power, so that empowerment of women is implemented and happens realistically. Women gaining power, as a result of economic inclusivity for women, is viewed as the ability to change others, and this needs to be reconstructed as the power that enables women to assert their rights, choices, and opinions on an equal level as men in social, political and economic contexts. Kabeer’s (1999:462) study shows that the economic empowerment of women, or their entrance into markets, does not necessarily transform inequalities on a wider scale, “but they do create the vantage point of alternatives which allows a more transformatory [*sic*] consciousness to come into play.” Despite the added vantage point of alternatives, the question of whether women will have the authority or control is crucial to understand the transformative aspect of their lives or careers. For example, if a woman is in a leadership or managerial post, the budgetary control and approval of an activity could well fall under the institution or that of a male financial officer, which puts her as a manager at a disadvantage. The power then rests with those that are in authority. The literature review in Chapter Two highlights that men still hold those authoritative roles, which means that the power to control these aspects also lies with them. The United Nations (2015:6) resolution adopted by the General Assembly on “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” seeks to build strong “economic foundations for all countries” and one of the avenues identified is gender equality and economic empowerment of women. The resolution states that “women and men and girls must enjoy equal access to quality education, economic resources, and political participation” (United Nations 2015:6).

5.2.3 Access to finance

The extracts discussed above emphasise the economic inclusivity of women and portray them as the figures that will assist others economically, such as family members, communities, or the country. As is evident in the extracts presented under 5.2.1, the discourse also presents women as empowered if they have access to credit, land, and other resources. In addition to the extracts already shown in the discussion above, the following extracts reveal that there is an intensified attempt to highlight financial inequalities between women and men and that access to financial opportunities is available to women.

Extract number	Extract	Source
Extract 13	<p>“But in Africa, women dominate the small and medium-sized enterprises and they are better business people, and they pay back their loans more than men, maybe at least 95% of their loans are paid back.”</p> <p>“But they don’t get access to finance...”</p> <p>“...to encourage banks to provide financing to women...”</p> <p>“Financial institutions will be ranked based on their lending to women...”</p> <p>“So by getting equality for women in finance, African economies will finally be able to fly with two wings.”</p>	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (De Villiers 2020:31-38)
Extract 14	<p>While only 23% of women have access to credit in Africa, over 70% of women are financially excluded...</p> <p>“...many women in Africa operate in informal sectors with limited banking facilities...”</p> <p>“Millions of women in Africa are vastly restricted in their ability to access the finance they need to prosper. Right now, the tools women need are financial ones: fairer access to credit”.</p>	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Methil 2020:96)
Extract 15	<p>“According to the AfDB, currently, the continent has a \$42 billion financing gap between men and women, and 70% of women are financially excluded...”</p> <p>“...if the continent intends to reduce poverty, “the angle of investing credit towards women enterprises is the right way to go...”</p> <p>“The Attijariwafa Bank to leverage over \$50 million to serve women-owned and managed enterprises in North Africa.”</p> <p>“The AfDB also unveiled the Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa (AFAWA) Risk Sharing Facility seeking to accelerate growth and employment creation across African economies, by closing the financing gap for women.”</p> <p>“AFAWA is expected to release \$3 billion in private sector financing to empower female entrepreneurs through</p>	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Muthoni 2020: 24-25)

	capacity building, access to finance, and policy, legal and regulatory reforms aimed at supporting women-led enterprises.” “Women are an asset worth investing in...”	
Extract 16	“Women are bankable,” Riria says with authority...	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Mahlo 2020:30)

The highlights in blue perpetuate the idea that economic growth lies within the empowerment of women. The extracts describe women as “better business people,” or as responsible to “pay back their loan”. They also reveal the vast inequality between men and women, especially in Africa, and the number of investment drives and financial packages that are and should be made available to women. The phrases in the extracts, such as “don’t get access to finance,” “vastly restricted in their ability to access finance,” or “closing the financing gap,” shows the inequality women face in accessing finance. The notion of the unequal finance between women and men is furthered by the phrases such “23% of women have access to credit and over 70% of women are excluded,” “leverage over \$50 million to serve women-owned and managed enterprises in North Africa,” “\$42 billion financing gap between men and women”. As such these phrases show the wide inequality chasm between women and men, and imply that women are still discriminated against when it comes to finances and accessing credit.

The text also highlights some of the qualities of women, such as their ability to pay back loans and that they are an “asset worth investing in” and that they are “bankable”. A key observation is the repetition of statements about the unequal financial availability between men and women. Another noticeable repetition of this type of statement is about making credit available to women. Banks, financial institutions, and other organisations are visible in the arena of empowering women through finance. Cornwall (2016:343) argues that the term “empowerment” is being used expansively by “organisations, governments, and development donors” which means that women and their empowerment are a topical issue and the link between women and empowerment is critical. Andrea Cornwall and Karen Brock (2005:1043-1044) examine empowerment as a “buzzword”, and argue that it suggests transformation, and has an appeal for “optimism and purpose”; however, the question of whether it has yet “permeated the terrain of development policy” remains.

Another term associated with empowerment in the literature is “smart economics” which refers to the connection between gender equality and economics. Ana Revenga and Sudhir Shetty (2012:41) argue that gender equality improves economic efficiency and other development outcomes in three ways, which include “increasing the skills and talents of women”, “greater control over household resources by women,” and “empowering women as economic, political, and social actors.” Revenga and Shetty (2012:43) highlight that one of the ways to achieve economic efficiency and development outcomes is through widening women’s access to economic opportunity which includes improving “women’s access to credit”. John Issac (2014) contends that when women have access to finances it achieves inclusive growth, by enabling them to participate in the economy and improve their lives. Furthermore, Issac (2014) highlights that women play a crucial role in small-to-medium enterprises and access to credit can open up economic opportunities for women.

Women are constructed as an untapped market in the empowerment discourse, with many institutions responding to this by creating products and encouraging entrepreneurship by women. The financial offerings made available demonstrate that women are now the vehicles to expand consumer markets. In other words, women are now part of the value chain, firstly portrayed as the redeemer to improve outcomes for others, secondly, they are given the tools to access finance, and thirdly they become entrepreneurs and through consumerism expand the economy. The extracts above have established that credit offerings have become a vital step to achieve “smart economics”. The question that arises, however, is whether this is also not a form of discrimination against women as the narrative suggests that it is women having access to finance, which they will have to pay back and not as Kabeer (1998:1) points out “subsidised loans”, which one doesn’t necessarily pay back. This means that women who access such credit offerings can pay back the loan at the same or higher interest rates as that of banks. Women are becoming instrumentalised in the extracts, in that they are now a market that banks can make money off of. If women had access to subsidised loans, it would mean that they would have no repayment or minimal repayment.

One prominent financial offering frequently aimed at women is micro-financing, which pushes the agenda of microenterprises and is built on the argument that such

financing takes women out of poverty. Countering this view, women can be subjected to paying back the loan with high interest rates and may not necessarily have the skills or knowledge on how to use the loan to make a profit, argues Yeboah, Arhin, Kumi and Owusu (2015:904). The financiers do not consider the environment of the women and subsequent consequences such as power struggles, maintain Yeboah et al (2015:902). Unpacking the example of Thailand, Yeboah et al (2015:899), contend that “wealthier households already participate in some form of business and benefit from micro-finance significantly more than the poor”. Yeboah et al (2015:899) also point to the fact that in some cases micro-finance is used to expand smaller enterprises and because they are family-run businesses, children are used for production and marketing and subsequently neglect their education. The example of Thailand shows that very poor women could be excluded from accessing finance and children or families could also be negatively impacted.

Kim, Watts, Hargreaves, Ndhlovu, Phetla, Morrison, Busza, Porter and Pronyk (2007:1794) looked at the impact of microfinancing on women’s empowerment and reducing intimate partner violence in South Africa. Kim et al (2007:1794-1795) maintain that whilst there are positive outcomes of microfinance such as economic benefits or self-confidence, “the relationship between women’s empowerment and microfinancing is complex”. The access to credit by women does not necessarily guarantee their control over the finance, and the pressure to pay back the loan adds to the responsibilities of poor African women (Kim et al 2007:1795). Attempting to empower women can also lead to defying existing gender norms, in which men have the power, and this could incite violence. However, Kim et al (2007:1799) further contend that the risk of violence could also diminish over time as women spend more time in microfinancing support programmes, and the programmes themselves become a common feature in their communities.

In another example of how microfinance affects women, Juliet Hunt and Nalini Kasynathan (2000:44) reflect on the transformation of gender relations in South Asia and how it is linked to micro-finance. Hunt and Kasynathan’s (2000:44) study shows that power is not inherently transferred to women because of their ability to access a micro-loan, but instead, wives are given respect to a certain degree as husbands view the micro-loan as a means of revenue for themselves and they receive the money.

This highlights the unequal power distribution in the home. Adding to this view, Hunt and Kasynathan (2000:44) also indicate that there is a general assumption by those granting the loans that men will “control and use the credit” thus subjecting women to questions “about whether their husbands would be able to provide for repayments”. The possibility of women facing intimate partner violence, because of empowerment, or the preconceived notion that men will control women’s finances, highlight unequal cultural and social norms that need to be addressed under the umbrella of empowerment.

Women accessing finance to improve their lives is a clear smokescreen as culture has entrenched the “breadwinner role” belonging to the man and subsequently finance is a resource that is controlled by men. Kabeer (1998:3) also indicates that women giving loans to their husbands could also be obligatory or coerced into doing it because of socially entrenched norms. Thus, this discussion supports Kabeer’s point that access to credit cannot fully empower women if other social inequalities are not addressed and power between women and men is not placed on an equal footing. The discourse in the extracts also further highlights that deeply rooted patriarchal and socially prescribed tendencies, still largely plays a role in modern society, such as:

“But they don’t get access to finance...”, “...to encourage banks to provide financing to women...” Extract 13 from *Forbes Africa* (De Villiers 2020:31-38).

“...while only 23% of women have access to credit in Africa, over 70% of women are financially excluded...”; “...many women in Africa operate in informal sectors with limited banking facilities...”; “...millions of women in Africa are vastly restricted in their ability to access the finance...”. Extract 14 from *Forbes Africa* (Methil 2020:96).

“According to the AfDB, currently, the continent has a \$42 billion financing gap between men and women, and 70% of women are financially excluded.” Extract 15 from *Forbes Africa* (Muthoni 2020:24-25).

If these inequalities persist and are not addressed across all spheres of society, a woman can never be fully empowered economically, especially in terms of making

choices, being equipped with relevant skills and knowledge to utilise the loan, and having control over it.

5.2.4 Summary of the women's empowerment discourse

Overall, the empowerment discourse in this study's data represents women as what I have termed the deliverer, in that through empowerment and development women will improve the lives of those around them, the community, and ultimately their country. Women are framed and positioned as heroines and their ability to transform and bring about change is highly motivated in both the extracts and in previous studies mentioned in the discussion. The focus of this discourse is the empowerment of women through financial means. The discourse of empowerment creates a representation of reality and presents it as common knowledge, which is widely accepted and articulated by individuals and institutions. However, the financial acknowledgement and inclusion of women presented through language do not give full disclosure of other realities that are inherently aligned to holistically empowering women such as social inequalities. It also takes away the focus of other forms of injustices and oppressions that women face and ultimately places the task of transforming lives and nations on women without addressing historical forms of discrimination against women. Thus, it shows that women must carry the burden of improving lives and economies, while men and institutions are excluded from this burden. The interest of children, families, and nations is being mobilised and serves to ultimately impact the growth of national economies. This, paradoxically, does not include women in particular and how they will be empowered as individuals and as a group.

In addition, the empowerment discourse in these extracts also reveals that women are framed and positioned as an untapped market for financial institutions. The message of ensuring that women have access to credit is constructed as development and this is represented as imperative. The interests of institutions, banks, and expanding consumerism to grow the economy are also being served in this discourse. However, the holistic interests of women are excluded. The attractiveness of improving one's life that comes from accessing credit lures vulnerable women into debt traps and more

poverty as smaller enterprises sometimes do not make a profit or high turnover, leaving women deeper into poverty and still responsible for paying back loans.

The discourse lacks ideas and prominent voices that could create or take into consideration how women can make empowerment work for themselves. What is important to note is that the discourse presented reiterates deeply rooted social inequalities which are believed to be the norm, such as men being the head of the house. The discourse reveals that men still control and access finances more than women, and highlights unequal power relations. Because men still largely control and access finance, they still hold the power and the genuine intention of empowering women is not yet realised.

Up until this point, this study acknowledges that the extracts and statements above are from *Forbes Africa*. This means that the discourse on women's empowerment is present in *Forbes Africa* and not in *Business Day*. The focus on women's empowerment is possibly due to the longer feature articles based on institutions covered in the magazine, compared to the smaller news items in *Business Day*.

5.3 A discourse analysis of 'women in the workplace'

The discourse analysis of women in the workplace focuses on how women are represented in the workplace. The discourse in the extracts underscores how women are portrayed as second to men in the workplace. The secondary gender role assigned to women is examined by De Beauvoir ([1949] 2010:26), where she asserts that women are categorised as 'other'. De Beauvoir ([1949] 2010:195) maintains that women are portrayed as the opposite of men. De Beauvoir ([1949] 2010:330), asserts: "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman," asserts and contends that gender is something that a person becomes through socialisation. This means that individuals are taught how to behave in accordance with their sex, and therefore gender for the most part is viewed as a masculine-feminine binary. The discussion of the discourse below is based on De Beauvoir's notion that women are portrayed as secondary to men. Women being represented as the 'other' or secondary to men is also discussed in Chapter Two.

5.3.1 The secondary syndrome

The secondary syndrome theme looks at how women are positioned as inferior to men in the workplace, thus rendering them as the 'other' or 'second'. The main concepts in the discussion of the secondary syndrome are regarding the gender pay gap and unpaid labour, gendered occupations as well as how the narrative on professional women are overshadowed by men holding onto power and using it in the workplace to keep women inferior positions.

5.3.1.1 The gender pay gap and unpaid labour

There has been an exponential rise in female employment and participation in the labour market, but despite this, there remain challenges and hurdles that women still face, such as unequal pay, unpaid care work, and the slow pace of women progressing into managerial positions. The World Economic Forum's 2021 Global Gender Gap Report (2021:5) reveals that "on the one hand, the proportion of women among skilled professionals continues to increase, as does progress towards wage equality, albeit at a slower pace. On the other hand, overall income disparities are still only part-way towards being bridged and there is a persistent lack of women in leadership positions, with women representing just 27% of all manager positions."

The extracted pieces of text, such as "the issue of gender pay parity, gender-based violence," "gender pay gap," "women's retirement savings is lower than men's" "lifetime salary is low," or "unpaid labour", show the gender gap and income disparity between women and men. The World Economic Forum (2021:78) defines gender pay gap, "as the difference between male and female median wages divided by male median wages". This definition is internationally recognised and is a result of social and economic blockages that reduce a woman's earnings. Despite the acknowledgement that the income gap is closing, Tom Spiggle (2021) maintains that "it's a slow process and at the current rate, the gender pay gap will remain until 2059". Whilst, the income gap is indeed closing, Spiggle's quote above suggests that the gender pay gap is a problem that will remain for some time.

In the extracts presented below, there is a contribution to the discourse from both *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*. This means that the discourse is presented in both publications.

Extract number	Extracts	Source
Extract 17	“For example, the issue of gender pay parity, gender-based violence and developing the next layer of women leadership is key on our agenda.”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Mahlo 2020:40)
Extract 18	“Japan’s gender pay gap is one of the widest among advanced economies.” “According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Japanese women make only 73% as much as men.” “One reason women’s retirement savings is lower than men’s is that the lifetime salary is low.” “One of Abe’s stated goals is to encourage more women to keep working after giving birth. But according to a recent government study, almost 40% of women who had full-time jobs when they became pregnant subsequently switched to part-time work or left the workforce.”	Extracted from <i>Business Day</i> (Katanuma 2020:11)
Extract 19	“She also emphasised the importance of tackling barriers that women from all backgrounds face, such as unpaid labour and gender-based violence.”	Extracted from <i>Business Day</i> (Bass 2020:5)
Extract 20	“It’s gender pay gap is the highest among developed countries, with women making only 66% of what men earn.” “Many face promotional barriers at work while carrying heavy childcare burdens, often forcing educated women to give up their careers.” “...while working mothers face pressures to excel at both childrearing and their jobs.” “Those pressures have led many South Korean women to reject motherhood.”	Extracted from <i>Business Day</i> (AFP 2020:5)

As an implication of these statements, women are presented as subordinate and are positioned as inferior, whilst men are viewed as the preferred choice in the workplace, hence the wide gender pay gap, which is a form of discrimination against women. The discourse in the extracts foregrounds the fact that women earn less than men and that women do more work than men. The statement in Extract 17 “developing the next layer of women leadership” indicates that there is a concerted effort to equip and develop the next generation of women managers and leaders. However, social and economic contributing factors to a woman’s career progression, such as the availability of opportunities for better-paying jobs for women or family responsibilities, are ignored in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*.

A related issue to the gender pay gap is the social issues that women face, which could affect them in the workplace, such as having to bear the lion's share of family responsibilities. Looking specifically at promotions, Alison Booth, Marco Francesconia, and Jeff Frank (2003:296) apply the "glass ceiling or sticky floor" model at an executive level in the workplace. Booth et al (2003:96) probe whether women and men are not equal because of levels of qualifications, experience, household responsibilities or offers from outside firms. Booth et al (2003:96) argue that women are not promoted because of discriminatory practices and social factors in their lives. Thus, social factors and discriminatory practices are affiliated with aspects that may add to the gender pay gap. The findings of their study prove the "sticky floor" concept, in that women who are in management are subjected to discrimination, and may not be able to move or obtain a high profile post in a less discriminatory firm because of their private life, for example, women who have children are or could be less mobile compared to men (Booth et al 2003:316).

A problematic dimension in the extracts above is that social factors, that can contribute to closing the gender pay gap, are not considered or voiced in the discourse in the publications in this study. The interests of women are not being served in this discourse, in that actually closing the gender pay gap means needing to address other social factors that also contribute to relegating women as secondary to men. The fact that there is unequal pay between women and men is normalised in this discourse and not positioned as a consequence of several historical factors. A major factor that should be considered is how organisations move towards an approach that considers all outside factors that hinder women in growing in the workplace.

The discourse further constructs women as the "other" through unpaid labour in the form of care work, also known as the burden of care. Gendered social norms link unpaid care work to women and they are expected to meet their domestic and reproductive roles. This creates a double burden for women who work paid jobs. Gaëlle Ferrant, Luca Maria Pesando, and Keiko Nowacka (2014:1) argue that the "unequal distribution of caring responsibilities is linked to discriminatory social institutions and stereotypes on gender roles". Because of the unfair expectation and wide-spread socio-cultural practices of women taking responsibility for care work, it puts women who want or have children, and want to enter the workforce or grow their

careers, at a disadvantage and it has major implications for the attainment of gender equality. Ferrant et al (2014:2) argue that the discrimination women face because of unequal distribution of care work is a core aspect to address in terms of the gender pay gap. The discourse in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* ignores the implications that unpaid work has for women, such as not being able to actively participate in the labour market or educating themselves. The discourse fails to mention or examine how women can utilise the many hours that they dedicate to unpaid care work for their own benefit. It also reveals that men do not share in the responsibility of unpaid care work. Ferrant et al (2014:2) state: "...overall, women spend more time on unpaid care activities than men representing on average two to ten times that of men's." This quote highlights that the discourse does not reveal the implications and unfair practice of society ascribing this role to women. Rather, the exclusion of men from the discourse in this regard makes it acceptable or normative for men to be excused from assisting with unpaid care work.

5.3.1.2 Women's struggle for power and recognition

Another issue that frames women as secondary in the workplace is the struggle for power and the resistance of women assuming more executive roles. Women in powerful positions can hold both men and women accountable – even those in authoritative roles. The extracts below expose the power struggle of those women in such positions. It reveals that powerful women are also subjected to threats and are often undermined. The extracts below position women as inferior and incompetent. Despite showing agency to address challenges, women are still subjected to and have to fight male oppression. The discourse highlights that despite women executives – or those in top management – being at the apex of their professions, they still have to fight for power or remain vulnerable to their male colleagues.

Extract number	Extract	Source
Extract 21	"Nancy Pelosi is running out of leverage in her stand-off over the impeachment trial of President Donald Trump."; "Others suggested the battle was all but over..."; "Welch praised Pelosi for her effort but said there are limits to what she can do."	Extracted from <i>Business Day</i> (Dennis et al 2020:5)
Extract 22	"She [Busisiwe Mkhwebane] is fighting for accountability of holders of public power but also on an underlying argument that Ramaphosa is expecting 'special	Extracted form <i>Business Day</i> (Maughan 2020:3)

	treatment.”; “She, in turn, has argued that Ramaphosa is a president who is seeking to avoid accountability, bolstered by his popularity with ‘the dominant classes’.”	
Extract 23	“US President Donald Trump demanded the dismissal of Marie Yovanovitch.”; “Get rid of her!” Trump says on the tape, addressing a White House aide at the dining table. “Get her out tomorrow. I don’t care. Get her out tomorrow. Take her out. OK? Do it.”.	Extracted from <i>Business Day</i> (AFP 2020:5)
Extract 24	“The president’s lawyers criticised her [Busisiwe Mkhwebane] investigation of his ANC presidential election campaign funding as ‘unlawful’ and ‘malicious’ driven mostly by a ‘reckless determination to malign the President.’”; “Mkhwebane will face off against Ramaphosa.” “The outcome of this case could have profound implications for Mkhwebane, who is facing the imminent prospect of a parliamentary inquiry into her fitness to hold office.”	Extracted from <i>Business Day</i> (Maughan 2020:1)
Extract 25	“Busisiwe Mkhwebane’s competence was again brought into question.” “Ramaphosa asked the high court in Pretoria to review and set aside the report and remedial action based on Mkhwebane’s investigation.”	Extracted from <i>Business Day</i> (Mailovich 2020:3)

The following statements paint women as incompetent, “there are limits to what she can do,” “fighting for accountability of holders of public power,” “get rid of her,” “profound implications for Mkhwebane,” “inquiry into her fitness to hold office.” The implications of these statements show women as inferior and not equipped for high-level posts. There is a resistance to women in the statements, such as “there are limits to what she can do”, “is fighting for accountability of holders of public power,” “get her out tomorrow. I don’t care. get her out tomorrow. Take her out. OK? Do it,” “criticised her investigation”. The implications of these statements show how women still have to fight for power in the workplace and at the same time still face resistance from men. This notion of resisting women and challenging them further contributes to the other inequalities faced by women. The extracts above also focus on Busisiwe Mkhwebane’s competence and her ability to hold the post of the public protector. This study acknowledges that at the time of this study, her court cases received widespread media coverage and contributed to the data set. However, these statements contribute to the view that women are portrayed as incompetent, even though some of the criticism against her can be justified in the courts.⁷

⁷ The researcher acknowledges the complexity of the legal cases surrounding Mkhwebane, and that if she is indeed found guilty of the accusation levelled against her, then the statements about her in the data set is justified.

Alison Pullen and Sheena Vachhani (2021:233) explain that women leaders have been persistently scrutinised and shown as subordinate and if women continue to “be understood in relation to men”, they will remain subordinate. The extracts above support Nicole Cundiff and Meera Komarraju (2008:6) suggest that if men are more easily identified with authority, it may contribute to women in authoritative positions being treated with “negative attitudes”. The extracts support Cundiff and Komarraju’s (2008:6) suggestion by showing through language that men are displaying negative attitudes towards women and this reinforces their power in the workplace. It is evident through the use of words and phrases such as “demanded the dismissal of Marie Yovanovitch, or “Get her out tomorrow. I don’t care. Get her out tomorrow. Take her out. OK? Do it...”, or “...criticised her investigation of his ANC election campaign...” The extracted phrases show that women are dismissed physically and metaphorically, they are criticised, and their capability is questioned. Through the language deployed in these statements, we see that men resist the higher command of women and take action to ensure that women are powerless, for example, commanding women to be removed, taking them to court, or strategically making them look incompetent. The discourse also exposes women as having to defend their position and identity through statements such as, “fighting powerful people, block corruption, in her stand-off, the battle, fighting for accountability, face off against”.

Overall, the discourse shows that women are represented to a certain degree in a professional capacity and positions of power and authority, through their roles such as a politician or public protector and the agency they show for themselves, like the public protector defending herself. They also exercise their duty to hold men and women and those in powerful positions accountable. However, the narrative on professional women is sidestepped and overshadowed by another meaning, which shows how men still have power and how they use this power against women. This overshadowing of the narrative is problematic as it continues to reflect and advance societal thinking that women are secondary in executive posts and leadership roles. The discourse represents women as victims who are struggling to retain their identity and hold those accountable in the workplace. As such they are secondary because they are framed as incompetent and powerless. The narrative fails to mention the outcomes of the action taken by women in their professional capacity. If the narrative about women holding men accountable is expanded or covered extensively in *Business Day* and

Forbes Africa, it could assist in turning around the notion that some/most men are better suited for executive or leadership positions than some/most women.

The discourse in these extracts brings to the fore that there is a concentrated resistance towards the action taken by women in leadership, and by highlighting this aspect it further mobilises and reinforces the notion that men should be the sex that is in powerful executive roles. This further subjects women to a secondary role. Social expectations of gender roles have been entrenched historically and despite more women entering the workforce, these expectations still influence gender stereotypes and attitudes. The discourse normalises the fact that women still experience power struggles in the workplace and this practice appears to be accepted by society. As a counterpoint to this narrative, the discourse should uplift women in their professional capacity. Organisational culture and voices are clearly excluded in this discourse. Leaders of organisations should be challenged to accept diverse leadership styles and resist the traditional manner of male leadership. By challenging this notion and developing an alternative approach to leadership, it can possibly result in defying unequal power relations in the workplace.

5.3.1.3 Gendered occupations

As highlighted in Chapters One and Two, women are subject to gendered inequalities including gendered occupations. Gendered occupations are also a finding of the semiotic analysis in this study, which reveals that despite women gaining entry into what is considered male-dominated careers, there are still some industries, such as science or engineering, that have minimal women representation especially in leadership positions. In addition to lower pay or no pay and unequal working conditions that have plagued women, another inequality is occupational gender segregation. This occurred historically and still manifests in the present day across social, cultural, political, and economic settings. Anne Witz (1990:675) argues that the broad perception of occupation is “gendered as it incorporates class-privileged male actors at a particular point in history” to be the model of the profession in labour markets. Whilst there has been much progress in women entering the workplace, there remain sectors and places that women have not predominantly entered into.

The statements below show some of the industries where there is minimal participation by women, especially in leadership positions. These are evident in the texts, such as “First female anchor breaks the glass screen in South Korea,” “economically advanced but still culturally dominated by men,” “unconscious biases lead to “masculine” traits being associated with particular careers,” “women to become tech creators is extremely critical “ which show women are still excluded and underrepresented in certain industries. Women are relegated to non-leadership roles such as “much younger female sidekick delivering lighter items.” For example, women’s exclusion from the IT sector shows that there is no inclusivity and that men are the preferred sex in the industry, further highlighting a lack of inclusivity. The statements acknowledges the need for women to be in certain industries like mining as there is an imbalance of representation, however, the extracts point out that “the problem with mining is that women are never given space. Even if they’re appointed they’re appointed because people want to comply, but they’re not committed to allowing them (women) into their spaces.” The implications of this statement shows that industry is complying with hiring women but their career growth is limited because of “cultural and traditional stereotypes”, as it is still largely viewed as a male profession. Similarly, the IT industry is also viewed as a male profession, with “84% of workers in IT are men. In Silicon Valley, 82% of venture capital funding goes to male-run firms.”

Extract number	Extract	Source
Extract 26	<p>“First female anchor breaks the glass screen in South Korea. Lee So-Jeong cracks a nod from the old boys’ club in a society that is economically advanced but still culturally dominated by men. South Korean television news broadcasts have long followed the same format: a serious-looking older male anchor announcing the day’s big developments, with a much younger female sidekick delivering lighter items.”</p>	Extracted from <i>Business Day</i> (AFP 2020:5)
Extract 27	<p>“Worldwide, the dominance of men in the IT sector is startling. In the EU, 84% of workers in IT are men. In Silicon Valley, 82% of venture capital funding goes to male-run firms.”</p> <p>“Such firms tend to design products with men in mind, creating a sector that exudes maleness. While society has begun to take cracking the glass ceiling more seriously, Karen Ashcraft has created the term ‘glass slipper’ to describe another process whereby unconscious biases lead to “masculine” traits being associated with particular careers — including leadership and the IT sector.”</p> <p>“A career derives identity from the people who are associated with it. These traits are in the vocabulary we use to describe it and job adverts for positions in it, leading</p>	Extracted from <i>Business Day</i> (Cook 2020:7)

	<p>women to self-select out by not applying if the picture painted feels alien. When a woman metaphorically tries on the shoe of that career, it feels like it does not fit.”</p> <p>“Women may be reluctant to apply not just because they are women but perceive their personality to be incompatible with the career. A job requiring dominance, assertiveness, ambition, and competitiveness, they may feel, is just not ‘me’, regardless of gender.”</p>	
Extract 28	<p>“Growing up, it was tough being a young female singer as people would associate it with being a prostitute...”</p>	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Renuka 2020:96)
Extract 29	<p>“As the first female president of the SAMRC, she is proud to promote the careers of women and black scientists.”</p>	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Mahlo 2020:33)
Extract 30	<p>“As one of South Africa’s most accomplished businesswomen, Luhabe has broken countless stereotypes in the male-dominated environment of private equity.”⁸</p>	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Mahlo 2020:34)
Extract 31	<p>“Empowering more women to become tech creators is extremely critical to her pursuit. She asserts that half of the population cannot be left outside of building and creating technological systems that people use every single day. As part of her efforts, she sits on the board of <i>I am the CODE</i> which plans to close the digital inequality by enabling one million women and girl coders by 2030”.</p>	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Mahlo 2020:38)
Extract 33	<p>“Inspiring women to lead in the energy sector and industry at large to improve the imbalance of representation is an ambition to be realised by all, according to Mariam Kane-Garcia, the newly appointed CEO and Managing Director of Total South Africa.”</p> <p>“However, the presence of women leadership in the energy sector is still insufficient, despite progress. The ‘Global Energy Talent Index Report 2020’, found that women make up only 8% of the workforce in the global oil & gas sector, 9% in each of the petrochemical and power sectors, 12% in the nuclear sector, and 15% in the renewables sector.”</p> <p>“Furthermore, says the report, only 17% of women (of an already small pool) are placed on leadership training programmes, compared to 22% of men. And the fact that women have shown a preference for training, learning, and development suggests that they’re still coming up against a glass ceiling and are eager for opportunities to smash through it. The reasons for women’s underrepresentation in the sector are complex.”</p> <p>“There are historical factors. Even today, research suggests that young girls are not encouraged to eye careers in what is considered a technical, or masculine industry. She feels strongly that women should be represented, not as a minority, but because they are deserving. This will ensure that the wrong message is not sent and that it does not dilute the impact of their performance in achieving their status.”</p> <p>“Not only do women have to be placed in more leadership positions, but they also need more exposure to technical roles, starting with education and vocational training.”</p>	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Total South Africa 2020:65)

⁸ Some of the statements are repeated for ease of reference.

Extract 34	<p>“Mining and Brand SA also want more South Africans to be included in the mining industry, especially women.”</p> <p>“The problem with mining is that women are never given space. Even if they’re appointed they’re appointed because people want to comply, but they’re not committed to allowing them (women) into their spaces.”</p> <p>“If you look at boards – for instance - they allow women to sit on boards but there are those cultural and traditional stereotypes where people feel that women don’t belong there and therefore from their own subconscious, they make them feel uncomfortable.”</p> <p>“And until such time that we claim our space, that mining is for us as women, because for as long as women are not in the mining sector society will never improve...”</p>	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Brand SA 2020:88)
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The extracts above show that women are excluded intentionally or placed in a position that makes it difficult for them to enter, let alone grow, within certain industries as we can see in the following statements, “such firms tend to design products with men in mind, creating a sector that exudes maleness. While society has begun to take cracking the glass ceiling more seriously, Karen Ashcraft has created the term ‘glass slipper’ to describe another process whereby unconscious biases lead to “masculine” traits being associated with particular careers — including leadership and the IT sector,” and “a career derives identity from the people who are associated with it. These traits are in the vocabulary we use to describe it and job adverts for positions in it, leading women to self-select out by not applying if the picture painted feels alien. When a woman metaphorically tries on the shoe of that career, it feels like it does not fit, as expressed in “women may be reluctant to apply not just because they are women but perceive their personality to be incompatible with the career.” Some industries are known for being dominated by male professionals, thus largely discriminating against women and placing them at a disadvantage.

As indicated in the literature review of this study, the 2015 GMMP findings show that women are unacceptably underrepresented in major occupational categories such as politics and government, business, the police and military, and science and technology. The findings also show that men are seen to be the expert voice of authority and dominate categories of hard news such as politics, government, business, and the economy. However, the 2020 GMMP (2020:4) findings reveal that

despite an increase of news in health and science, and mostly because of COVID-19 reporting, it was “accompanied by a fall in women’s voice and visibility in the stories.” The study also showed that there was more visibility of the voices of men as the media coverage on science and health increased because of COVID-19 (GMMP 2020:21). The report states: “While the news share of science/health stories was significantly higher in 2020 compared to earlier periods (from 10% in 2005 to 17% currently), women’s presence in this topic declined by five percentage points after a steady rise between 2000 and 2015” (GMMP 2020:21). It is very concerning that the 2020 GMMP report (2020:21) reveals that the presence of men was more than that of women in the science/health category despite women being represented more as subjects in the media coverage. “Men appeared in the stories overwhelmingly as opinion givers (65%) rather than women, whom the stories were about (35%), in contrast to women’s lower presence as information sources (57%) and higher as subjects (43%)” (GMMP 2020:21).

The continued underrepresentation of women over several years is problematic in this discourse, as it reveals that men are preferred in certain industries, such as science or technology, thus reinforcing the notion of the gendering of occupations and that gender differences are socially constructed and culturally moulded. For example, in the science sector, Alcina Pereira de Sousa and João Silva (2017:88) posit that women were barred from accessing science and this was only mitigated in the latter twentieth century. De Sousa and Silva’s findings on women’s representation in science and technology point to a distinct pattern that showed that men are prominent in media coverage of Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET) compared to women. This is in direct alignment with the GMMP 2015 and 2020 results.

Overall, in the discourse in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*, women are excluded from certain industries. They are once again framed as subordinate to men and not the preferred choices in certain industries. Their exclusion from industries is problematic as it perpetuates and reinforces gendered occupations and harmful stereotypes about women and men’s work. An even more concerning problem is the acceptance and normalisation of men being the dominant sex in these industries. The discourse rather aims to convince the reader that women in these industries are different compared to men and that men are at the top of the hierarchal order in certain professions. The

discourse reproduces the traditional division or segregation of gender and occupations. It also shows women’s experiences in certain industries, and this is in contrast to institutional ambitions to ensure women are economically empowered. It is clear that the discourse is pointing out gender bias as an issue.

The discourse highlights that there is a need for more women to enter into leadership posts, and also reveals the absence of organisational voices. The absence of boards or organisational voices contributes to the minimal participation in such leadership roles. The lack of women represented in these statements normalises the notion that men are leaders and the preferred sex. Anne Hewlett (2014:4) contends that senior leaders in the United States of America, China, and India believe that “a woman would never achieve a top position at their company, no matter how able or high-performing.” Thus, the historical exclusion and full participation of women, for example, in science and information technology, is present in the extracts, which point to women being subordinate and men or masculine traits as the exceptional or the ideal sex who can succeed in these areas.

5.3.1.4 Stereotypes in the workplace

A gender stereotype is a general stance or notion of ascribing specific characteristics to women and men. Stereotypes are reflected in the extracts and contribute to the discourse of women in the workplace. The following corpus of extracts appears, on a general level, as positive and presents women as “strong, fearless, poised and quiet.” The discourse also presents women as “faltering leaders” and “struggling for relevance.”

Extract number	Extracts/s	Source
Extract 35	“Women from the market are amongst the strongest and most resilient women I’ve ever encountered.”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Renuka 2020: 96)
Extract 36	“What these women have in common is their ability to be very firm in what they believe in. They are fighters and they are fearless.”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Mwendera 2020:84)
Extract 37	“She defines resilience and tenacity.”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Kirsch 2020:12-13)
Extract 38	“...unraveled, featuring inspirational women...”	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Lethole 2020:81)

Extract 39	<p>“Iron Lady’ brings rich experience to Ramaphosa panel...”; “Nigeria’s formidable first female finance minister...” “Nicknamed Okonjo “Wahala” (troublemaker) by Nigeria’s lively press, the “Iron Lady” is competent and courageous, with a strong sense of public service.” “For all her undoubted brilliance, her criticisms of the World Bank and IMF’s devastating structural adjustment programmes on African guinea pigs from the 1980s are often extremely muted.” “‘She sometimes comes across as an ideological proselytizer.” “Her economic orthodoxy and obsession with economic growth have earned her many enemies on the intellectual left”.</p>	Extracted from <i>Business Day</i> (Adebajo 2020:9)
Extract 40	<p>“It is typical of her faltering leadership of the governing Christian Democrats (CDU)...” “...ill-at-ease, isolated and struggling for relevance. The woman otherwise known as AKK has been hurt by a series of gaffes and ill-judged jokes while struggling to define what she stands for.”</p>	Extracted from <i>Business Day</i> (Delfs 2020:5).
Extract 41	<p>“People usually do not trust that women are able to handle businesses for a long period as it is believed that we would get married someday, start having babies, and ‘abandon’ the business.”</p>	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (Mwendera 2020:34)
Extract 42	<p>“Women still struggle to be recognized and valued for their potential to transform our economies.” “... [Through] our programs with women, [we] intend to firstly encourage [women] to build their self-confidence, that they know that nothing and nobody can impede them from doing what they want to do.”</p>	Extracted from <i>Forbes Africa</i> (2020:26)

The extracts indicate various stereotypes attributed to women. These stereotypes relate to the discussion in 5.3.1.2, as they also indicate the power struggle that many women experience in the workplace. However, I have grouped these extracts in a separate section to draw attention to the fact that women are still subjected to stereotypes, while they struggle for power. Even though women are described as “firm” or “fearless”, that in itself is a stereotype.

In this set of extracts women are described as “strong”, “resilient”, “very firm”, “fighters”, “fearless”, “formidable”, and one as an “iron lady”. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two reveals that women are represented generally as passive, dependent, and beautiful and men as unafraid, independent, and powerful. Similarly, the literature reviewed also shows us that characteristics that are ascribed to women seek to undermine them, such as “iron lady”, which refers to a particular uncompromising style of leadership. The original “Iron Lady”, Prime Minister of the UK, Margaret Thatcher, is known for her “militaristic exception to the rule of peaceful women leaders,”

according to Madison Schramm and Alexandra Stark (2017). Thus, women in leadership who are strong-willed are stereotyped as such. This style of leadership also referred to as assertive and competitive leadership, is in direct conflict with the known socially constructed characteristics of women, for example, as warm and tolerant, as Conrad Baldner and Antonio Pierro (2019:565) point out. The characteristics ascribed to women in the extracts highlight traits that are normally associated with males or masculinity, such as “strong”, “fearless,” “formidable”. Thus, the discourse prioritises traits that are conventionally considered masculine in its description of women, positioning them once again as secondary.

The idea of women performing male leadership characteristics normalises these male characteristics as the main characteristics of leadership. The discourse highlights gender stereotypes and gendered ways of understanding leadership and appears to prioritise men over women. Women are portrayed as embodying masculine leadership styles and traits rather than their own ways of executing leadership. The problem with representing women as adopting and implementing masculine traits in the workplace suggests that women in positions of authority cannot be successful, effective, or competent if they do not possess masculine qualities. By virtue of exhibiting male leadership characteristics, women’s own behaviour or characteristics are subdued. Hanson et al (2018:61-62) indicate that women are represented as “non-leaders or other” and that their credibility is lessened. Alice Eagly (2020) posits that people prefer “that women be nice and kind and not overly tough or dominating”; and this preference is further reflected in the extracts. For example, in the extracts, phrases such as “very poised and quiet” are noticeable but this is inconsistent with the description of progressive women, who when display characteristics of being tough are then disapproved of. Therefore, the understanding of a leader or the traits ascribed to a leader becomes problematic for women in attaining such positions and executing their role in organisations. The discourse reveals the inequality and continuous re-establishment of disparate power between men and women. It also implies that men are in the authoritative position in the workplace and that they retain control, power, income, and status. This form of inequality towards women thrives because the representation and practice of women and men as essentially and fundamentally different continues to exist and to be amplified unceasingly.

The extracts reveal that women are actually considered as “faltering in leadership” and struggling for relevance. The identity of women leaders as key role players in business is lost. There is a constant struggle for recognition. This frames women as weak, lacking confidence, different, and the “other” in the professional world. In comparison to the “powerful” or “iron lady” phrases assigned to women, victimhood and discriminatory practices are concealed in the discourse and not made evident in the extracts. Rather, it proves or supports the notion that women are not leaders and the stereotypes assigned to them are actively disruptive to their career progression and practice as leaders.

5.3.1.5 Summary of discourse analysis of women in the workplace

Overall, the discourse analysis of women in the workplace reveals that women are represented as secondary or the ‘other’. There is a common thread that masculine tendencies and characteristics are preferred, and that male leaders are the preferred choice. There is a dearth of self-confidence and value of women in the workplace compared to their male counterparts. Across different periods of history the pattern of portraying women as secondary to men, whether it be in characteristics ascribed to them, in the gender pay gap, or gendered occupations, reveals that women are valued lesser and portrayed as secondary. It also functions to serve men as the pinnacle of the hierarchal order, and show that power largely still belongs to men. The concept of secondary-ness or insubordination emanates from a patriarchal ideology, and ultimately convinces the reader about the dissimilarity between men and women, and that these differences are appropriate and acceptable. It also places an obligation on women leaders to perform in a masculine manner, for them to be deemed worthy or successful.

5.4 Summary

Chapter Five analysed the dominant discourses that surround the representation of women through Foucauldian discourse analysis. The two main discourses identified are that of empowerment and women in the workplace. The extracts in this chapter bring to the fore the biases faced by women. The discussion of the discourse analysis of empowerment acknowledges the need to empower women so that the lives of

others and nations can improve. Thus, women are portrayed as the 'deliverer'. The discourse reveals that development is used to advance women economically; and that women have to work for development instead of development working for women. Women are still not on an equal level as men, with a clear need for women to access finances. The discourse of women in the workplace portrays women as secondary to men. Women are still subjected to historical discrimination such as men appointed in higher posts than women. The discourse presents the experiences of women and their struggle to attain power and recognition, especially in leadership positions. Unfortunately, women are still discriminated against and struggle to make headway in certain industries such as science technology. This is an issue that has been reflected upon in the GMMP studies. The discourse highlights that men have power and control and that women are still considered subordinate, despite advances to bring about gender equality.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction and summary of chapters

This study examined the representations of women in business media. Barthian semiotic analysis and Foucauldian discourse analysis were applied to the data set from *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*. This chapter will provide a summary of the dissertation and key research findings towards answering the research question, as stated in Chapter One, *How are women portrayed in Forbes Africa and Business Day?* The limitations of the study will also be discussed.

Chapter Two provided the literature review and theoretical discussions underpinning this study. The literature review started with media representation and acknowledgment that the media is considered a site that creates meaning. The study draws from previous studies that indicate that the media influences ideas and perceptions of gender and creates social and cultural norms. The literature reviewed showed how women are constructed as the “other” to men. The study also relied on the GMMP studies, which showed a very slow transformation of the representation of women in certain news categories. This is concerning as the GMMP study started in 1995, and twenty-five years later the representation of women is not on the same par with men in many areas of media coverage. From the literature reviewed, I identified a gap in research which indicated that there is a lacuna of studies that conduct fine-grained analyses of the portrayals of women, specifically in business media. It is this gap that the research hopes to contribute towards filling. The foundations of the theoretical frameworks are theories of representation and gender studies. This chapter is located in representation and through communicative practices such as semiotics the study looked at constructed representations of women.

In Chapter Three, the methodological approach of the study is discussed. The operationalisation of the study was also explained. The chapter locates the study in qualitative methodology, and as such Barthian semiotics and Foucauldian discourse analysis are the analytical frameworks. I motivated for the choice of the selected

population, which are *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*, and provide the criteria for the selection of units of analysis.

Chapter Four paid specific attention to the visual images of the data set onto which a Barthesian semiotic analysis was applied. The analysis was applied as per Barthes' levels of meaning, which are denotation, connotation/myth, and ideology. The chapter discussed the dominant themes emerging from the data set, which include *Power dressing*, *Head coverings*, *Shades of red*, and *Power pearls*. The findings show how women are constructed as powerful through the use of colour, clothing, posing, and using signifiers such as pearls.

Chapter Five examined the dominant discourse emanating from the representation of women and the Foucauldian discourse analysis applied. The two dominant discourses explored were the discourse of empowerment and the discourse of women in the workplace. The discourse of empowerment portrays women as the "deliverer" to others, i.e. helping them improve their lives through empowering women via development. The discourse also portrays women as an untapped financial market. The statements in this chapter bring to the fore the biases faced by women.

6.2 Conclusions

The analysis of the representation of women in the considered data published from *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* reveals that women are portrayed as powerful, yet they are still subjected to forms of discrimination, and stereotypes. The findings of Chapter Four show women expressing themselves through the colour red, and through clothing which shows them as powerful and in leadership roles. For example, the business suit, which was once used as a non-verbal form of resistance against male dominance, is present but also incorporates other signifiers such as strings of pearls, which come to signify power, authority, and is viewed as a marker of success. Another clothing item frequently shown is the 'doek', which is a signifier of power and resistance to oppression. The 'doek' is symbolic of challenges faced by women and their ability to empower themselves to make their voices heard. Through the incorporation of femininity, women are able to show their own leadership styles and subvert the ideology of patriarchy. The use of the colour red is highly noticeable in the

images under consideration, and as a sign, it has a range of significance and is thus polysemous and associated with both positive and negative connotations. For example, red suits which forms part of the data set is symbolic of power, strength, and achievement, despite these traits being more commonly associated with male leadership.

An overview of Chapter Five highlights two dominant emerging discourses. The extracts reveal the benefits of empowering women, for their own gains and links their empowerment to the critical empowerment of others. Yet, the discourse also shows unequal power relations. The discourse further surrounds the development of women through financial means. Women are further constructed as an under explored market for financial institutions. However, the discussion in Chapter Five shows that the development of women must be holistically implemented and not only confined to financial empowerment. The findings in Chapter Five also reveal the unequal gap between women and men in terms of pay, unpaid care work, and that women still struggle for power and recognition. The findings further reveal that women are still subjected to inequalities, gendered occupations, and stereotypes.

A key finding present in both Chapters Four and Five surrounds power and women. In Chapter Four the images reveal that women, many in leadership positions, use clothing such as power suits or the 'doek' as a form of power and resistance, and subverts the notion that men still hold the power. However, in the discourse analysis in Chapter Five, the findings show that women still struggle to attain equality, power and recognition, especially in leadership positions. Women are visually constructed as powerful in Chapter Four, and the images subvert the myth that only men can be powerful. However, in the discourse analysis, power, which is the main concept within empowerment, shows a concentrated focus on the financial empowerment of women and their ability, if empowered financially, to improve the lives of others. However, the discourse largely ignores other social inequalities that exert power over women. Both the semiotic analysis of the images and the discourse analysis of the extracts take away the focus of other forms of injustices and oppressions that women face by portraying them visually as empowered and placing the focus of the narrative on the aspect of financial empowerment.

The images of women in the data set, under the section Red Gendered Occupations, in Chapter Four are indicative of women portrayed as having agency for themselves in careers traditionally deemed more suitable for men, which undermines and works against the ideology of patriarchy. The discussion also acknowledges that despite women gaining entry into what is considered male-dominated careers, there are still some industries, such as science or engineering, that have minimal women representation especially in leadership positions. Similarly, the findings in Chapter Five reveal that women are excluded intentionally or placed in a position that makes it difficult for them to enter or grow, within certain industries.

Another key finding in Chapter Four is Figure 35, which shows a frail Aung San Suu Kyi whose arm is not extended completely but kept close to her body, making her look either apologetic or like a woman who is intimidated by the man next to her. Related to this latent meaning of the image, is the findings in the discourse analysis wherein the extracts underscores the narrative about how professional women are overshadowed by men holding onto power and using it in the workplace to keep women in inferior positions.

The discussion below is in relation to answering the research sub-questions in Chapter One, which I repeat below for ease of reference:

- What is the overall coverage of issues relating to women in contrast to men in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*?
- Is the masculine the norm in the publications under investigation? If so, how does this influence the portrayal of women?
- How are women portrayed and what stereotypes are attributed to women in business media?
- Do the dominant discourses and images in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* reflect women in positions of authority or as experts?

The overall coverage of issues relating to women in contrast to men in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* was observed as minimal. The study employed a qualitative research methodology and a general observation made indicated that men were

featured more than women. The study specifically focussed on women's representation and did not include the examination of the representation of men. The study also did not employ quantitative methodology, thus a statistical representation of women and men in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* were not undertaken. This study relied on the statistical findings of the GMMP studies. However, in Chapter Three, the researcher acknowledged that most of the data examined in this study were produced because of the special feature in the March 2020 edition of *Forbes Africa* on the 50 most powerful women in Africa. In the absence of this feature, the data set would have been minimal. Looking holistically at the representation of women, the 2020 GMMP (2020:1) report revealed that from 1995 women, in proportion to men, are "dramatically under-represented and made invisible" in the media. The GMMP (2020:1) also revealed that women were less frequently heard, even when the issue represented them such as stories on gender-based violence. The lack of women's representation observed by the researcher in *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*, and the lack of representation of women as exposed in the GMMP reports, divulges a glaring disparity between women's and men's representations in the media.

The findings of the study further contribute to the narrative that men and masculinity are the preferred choices in the workplace. The textual extractions from *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day* maintain the biases faced by women. The textual data in this study shows men as the preferred choice, in that they receive higher pay compared to women, men are in leadership posts, and men are still the preferred choice in certain industries. Women are then exemplified in the workplace as secondary. This resonates with De Beauvoir's ([1949] 2010:195) notion that women are portrayed as the second sex. Women, on the other hand, are subjected to disparities and demonstrated as inferior to men. Women are constructed as second, incompetent, and as having to fight for power. Women are subjected to male oppression, their femininity is scrutinised and they are understood in relation to men and masculinity, therefore remaining subordinate. Occupational gender segregation in certain industries reinforces women's secondary status. The masculine nature of organisational leadership and the need for more women in leadership posts further reinforces the notion that masculinity is the norm in these positions. Women are represented in relation to men and are portrayed as embodying masculine leadership styles and traits rather than their own ways of executing leadership. It is evident that

androcentrism continues to prevail. Secondary-ness convinces the reader about the dissimilarity between men and women, and this is problematic for women, as it hinders their role in the workplace, as well as in other areas of society.

Through the application of Barthian semiotics on the considered visual images, it is revealed that women are visually constructed as powerful. In the images under *Power dressing*, it can be inferred that women do not resist the historical norm of conforming to male dressing. However, women incorporate femininity and by doing so reconstruct the identity of professional women by bringing in their own characteristics. The wearing of pantsuits or pants, a symbol of masculine identity, and representative of male power, have been used historically by women as non-verbal resistance against male dominance. So the notion that men hold the power is subverted by women in these actions. The images in this study show that subtle and feminine styles are equally as powerful as the original business suit. Thus, it can be suggested that there is a reformation of power dressing through a hybrid of masculine style and feminine influences. Entwistle (2020:286) states that power clothing enables women to “construct themselves” and also “be recognized” as an executive.

Just like power dressing, the use of the head-wrap has also advanced to become symbolic of challenges faced by women and their ability to empower themselves to make their voices heard, specifically in Africa. A counter myth to professionalism and white supremacy culture is revealed, and it encodes the identity of black females as professionals. In contrast to power dressing, the findings also explore images that reveal that women can also over-perform femininity through particular items of clothing. Linda Nochlin (1971) addresses the idea of over-performing femininity, which rejects the masculine form of dressing and dark colours and adopts feminine signifiers such as frilly sleeves or the overuse of pink shades, amongst others. Over-performing femininity could be considered essential to some women for gaining credibility and growth in the workplace.

The study also concentrated on the use of the colour red as a sign which has a range of significance. It was found that the use of the colour red and its symbolism explored in the data set, demonstrate that women in leadership positions are empowered. The wearing of red subverts the notion that red is masculine and debunks the myth of a

typical CEO, director, leader, or board member being a white man. The counter myth shows identity transference from white males to black women in top posts. The findings show how posing in red outfits destabilises the beauty queen image and portrays the evolution of beauty standards from slender and white, to women looking like themselves. The considered images of poses subvert the myth that only men can be powerful. Women on the African continent become subjects of signification that are constructed as powerful. The findings further reinforce power in women with regards to gendered occupations. The considered images show women are entering into careers, once dominated by males. The myth that reinforces gendered occupations is defied through the images. The findings also show that the colour red plays a central role in politics, and is more often associated with communism, socialism, and left-wing ideologies. Through clothing, amongst other signifiers, we see the colour red used as a representation of the ideologies of political parties. The colour red also represents socialism and any form of resistance to democracy. It highlights the “for the people” stance and is viewed in the images in Chapter Four. Thus, the colour red becomes a symbol for human rights and socio-economic improvements and also a symbol for the opposition of capitalist movements. The myth of international relations is revealed in the images of red politics and functions to maintain peace and enable nations to build and strengthen diplomatic relations.

In the images, the denotative layer, connotative layer (myth), and ideologies worked together to create specific meaning. To summarise, the findings of the Barthian semiotic analysis revealed the following:

- The myth that men hold the power is subverted by women who are reclaiming the power suit and incorporating feminine symbols in their attire. The ideology of patriarchy is subverted and the ideology of achievement is produced.
- The myth of white supremacy culture is countered and the myth of black women in a professional capacity is present.
- The myth that reinforces gendered occupations is subverted. The revised myth undermines the ideological position of men being the preferred sex in certain industries or professions. In defying the myth, a radical transformation of women from the domestic space to a boardroom or public space is shown.

- The myth of white men as business leaders are subverted and revised and there is identity transference to black women. The ideology of black women leaders and black intellectuals is produced.
- Through posing, a revised myth that women are powerful and are heroes are present. The myth subverts the ideology of patriarchy and the notion that only men are powerful and are heroes. Thus the new ideology is put forward in that women are powerful and can be heroes too.
- The beauty myth is also revealed and serves to reinforce cultural practices that oppress women. The beauty myth holds women to unrealistic beauty standards and advances the idea that beauty is an asset. It further contributes to consumer culture.
- The myth of international relations is revealed and serves to enable countries to maintain peace and nations to survive. The ideology of nationalism is produced, which serves the interests of nations.
- The myth of only those who are in power or have a privileged lifestyle can wear or own pearls are subverted. A counter myth of power for all women is offered. A capitalist ideology is produced from this myth, which functions positively, in this case, to allow women to operate freely economically.

The findings showed two dominant emerging discourses which are the discourse of empowerment and the discourse of women in the workplace. The main concept of empowerment is power. Through empowerment, women are able to make strategic choices for their lives. While this is viewed as a positive approach for women, the extracts from the texts show that empowerment for women is framed financially and excludes other forms of empowerment. The extracts attach women's empowerment to financial means and ignore other social realities that require empowerment. This gives a false sense of empowerment, as finances do not necessarily translate into empowerment in all areas of a woman's life. The findings show that women are now positioned as the "deliverer", in that if they are empowered they will positively contribute to improving the lives of their families, and communities. This removes the responsibility and burden from organisations and men in particular. The discourse legitimises a woman's status based on finances. Therefore, as Kabeer (1999:462)

alludes, the financial or economic status of women does not necessarily transform other inequalities that women face.

Linked to empowerment, is the notion that if women had access to credit they would be further empowered. This discourse perpetuates that economic growth lies within the empowerment of women. It draws attention to the widening chasm between men and women accessing credit. It inadvertently positions women as untapped consumers for financial products. Women are now framed as a necessity to expand consumerism. Micro-financing is one of the products that is offered as a form of empowering women and taking them out of poverty. While this may have many benefits, the discourse analysis considers the implications of micro-financing on women. Kim et al (2007:1795) contend that pressures to pay back the loan and other forms of inequalities can add extra burdens on poor women. Furthermore, they can also be subjected to paying back higher or similar interest rates as that charged by the banks. Similar interest rates will still add an extra burden on women to pay back the loan amongst other responsibilities, whereas if the loans are subsidised women will probably pay far less. The breadwinner role has been entrenched by society as the responsibility of a man, therefore, deeply rooted patriarchal and socially ascribed tendencies are considered in the discourse.

The findings also showed women as secondary to men, a concept that was put forth by De Beauvoir ([1949] 2010 26). The discourse of women being the “other” in the workplace is based on the gender pay gap and unpaid labour, gendered occupations as well as how the narrative on professional women are overshadowed by men holding onto power. The discourse reveals that women are still underpaid in comparison to men, despite women doing more work than men. This is further worsened by other barriers that women face such as unpaid labour or gender-based violence. The discourse emphasises that there is a concerted effort to develop women leaders; however, the discourse ignores social and economic contributing factors to a woman’s career progression.

The discourse further shows the struggle for power that is faced by women in the workplace, and this renders them second to men. Women are represented as incompetent and inferior to men. Their suitability for executive posts and their ability

to lead are scrutinised. Therefore, men are then viewed as the ideal leader. The discourse reveals that women are subjected to negative attitudes and any form of resistance from women is unwelcomed, to the extent that action is taken to render women powerless. Whilst the discourse acknowledges women as professionals, it is pushed aside in the discourse and is overtaken by the angle of men being powerful and how they use this power against women. The discourse normalises the fact that women still experience power struggles in the workplace, and this is problematic as it is a challenge that is has become socially accepted.

Occupational gender segregation is highlighted in this discourse. While the images in this study show women breaking barriers into careers once deemed only for men, the extracted text highlights challenges that women face in certain sectors. Occupational gender segregation is not a new phenomenon and is an issue that has historical links to inequality experienced by women. The 2020 GMMP (2020:17) report indicates that women are still underrepresented in major occupational categories, further emphasising the need for women to enter sectors such as politics or the economy. The findings of the analysis also highlight that women are still subjected to stereotypes such as “strong, fearless, poised and quiet”, whilst at the same time they are also stereotyped as “faltering leaders” and “struggling for relevance”. The discourse normalises male characteristics in leaders and women are expected to conform to them when they are in leadership positions. This is problematic, as victimhood and discriminatory practices towards women are concealed in the discourse and not made evident in the extracted statements.

6.3 Limitations of the study

The study was conducted on *Forbes Africa* and *Business Day*, and not all financial publications in South Africa were selected. The visual images were confined to women only, and while this was deemed appropriate for the aim and intention of the study, it did place a limit on comparing how men and masculinity were portrayed. Despite these limitations, the study could contribute toward the body of knowledge of representation of women in business media. The sample for this study, although purposefully selected and with the aim of limiting the scope of the study, is small. However, it has provided

a good exploration of the issues and lays the groundwork for further studies to be conducted on this topic.

6.4 Recommendations for future research

This exploratory study could provide the basis for further research in the following:

- Intersectionality should be widely explored in relation to women in leadership roles as well as media representation of women in business.
- Barthian semiotic analysis of women and men in business news should be applied to determine the extent of latent messages, myths, and ideologies.
- Readers' perceptions or opinions created by the media of women in leadership roles should be scrutinised.
- How entrepreneurial women in Africa are portrayed in comparison to men should be investigated.

6.5 Concluding remarks

The applications of Barthian semiotics and Foucauldian discourse analyses on images and text highlight the need for the media to deliberate on the latent meanings produced through their coverage and its impact on women. The semiotic analysis applied reveals that women are visually constructed as powerful and reconstructing their identity as professionals. However, the textual discourse analysis reveals the challenges that women continue to experience in the workplace. Furthermore, this study showed that women are still being relegated as secondary to men through their portrayals. Their minimal representation in business news is shocking and is a cause for concern, as the findings portray women as a catalyst for economic growth.

The findings of this study further highlight the burning need for the social and economic inequalities of women to be addressed. Inequalities that women face cannot be addressed in isolation where empowerment is concerned. Whilst economic empowerment will aid women, holistic development which empowers women in other avenues is also crucial. Organisations need to start implementing smart economics

and change the narrative of empowerment through economic liberty to a narrative that addresses the needs of women.

This study has highlighted certain experiences, inequalities, and challenges that are concealed and not made prominent. The portrayals of women are critical to understanding challenges and opportunities for women as they are present in and continue to enter the business world. The researcher is confident that this study will contribute to the body of literature that examines women's representation. It is my hope that media and communications worked will come to a point where they seriously reconsider their current portrayals as they function in a site that creates meaning. If the overall representation of women in major news topics is increased significantly, it will contribute towards addressing socially and culturally constructed norms that relegate women as inferior and contribute towards closing the inequality gap in many areas.

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ADDENDUM A: Ethical Clearance Certificate



COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

6 August 2021

Dear Mary Magdalene Dorasami

Decision:
Ethics Approval from 6 August
2021 to 6 August 2026

NHREC Registration # :
Rec-240816-052
CREC Reference # :
52215289_CREC_CHS_2021

Researcher(s): Name: Mary Magdalene Dorasami
Contact details: 52215289@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Supervisor(s): Name: Dr Leandra Helena Koenig-Visagie
Contact details: KoenigVisagie@nwu.ac.za

Title: An analysis of the representation of women in Forbes Africa and Business Day.

Degree Purpose: MA

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Human Science Ethics Committee. Ethics approval is granted for five years.

The *negligible risk application* was reviewed by College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee, in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the



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confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No fieldwork activities may continue after the expiry date (21 July 2026). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.


Note:

The reference number 52215289_CREC_CHS_2021 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Signature : 

Prof. KB Khan
CHS Research Ethics Committee Chairperson
Email: khankb@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 8210

Signature : PF 

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