

Gender and Research in the African Academy: “Moving Against the Grain” in the Global Ivory Tower

Stephanie Y. Evans, *University of Florida*

Abstract

This article argues for a broader understanding of scholarship by and about African women, revealing comprehensive data about gender on the continent that was gathered during a 2006 faculty exchange program at the University of Dar es Salaam. This information will advance black studies scholarship by engaging definitions of African-centered research and will advance understanding of the wide range of gender issues present in the global academy. This article builds on black women’s intellectual history by placing African women at the center of inquiry and by highlighting underrecognized academic production. The assessment of women’s scholarly contributions can inform scholars throughout the African Diaspora, and it reveals the rich—and growing—legacy of gender research in academic discourse.

Introduction

Black studies scholarship must use contemporary research by and about African women on the continent in order to repair connections between increasingly parochial academic fields and to address pressing global problems. There is a rich tradition within Africana studies of women placing African women’s perspectives front and center. From the work of Clenora Hudson-Weems (1989) and Michelle Howard-Vital (1989) to work by Ghanaian Nah Dove (1998, 2002), some have made inroads into male-dominated scholarly traditions, yet a greater integration of contemporary African women’s intellectual contributions must take place. Scholars in the United States must move beyond basic appropriation to a reciprocal relationship that recognizes international and transnational scholarly agendas set by African women. *Black Women, Gender, and Families* offers much-needed

scholarship that has been marginalized in other publishing outlets; expanding the gender discussion to include African women's scholarly views is another essential element of developing this professional dialogue. In order to do so, however, there must be a clearer picture of what body of African women's scholarship actually exists.

Grace Puja's dissertation, "Moving Against the Grain," acknowledged that African women university students, particularly in the sciences, "learn under a hostile environment, are despised, their competencies doubted, are unfairly judged, [and] experience little or no acknowledgement" (2001, iii). In her essay "Black Women Intellectuals," bell hooks records a similar phenomenon for African American women, but she argues that through perseverance and solidarity "the predicament of the Black intellectual need not be grim and dismal" (1991, 163). She charges that black women naming themselves as "intellectuals" is a necessary act of activism within the academy. This is no less so in the African academy.

In this article, I situate 2004 Nobel Prize-winning scholar Dr. Wangari Maathai's environmental *Green Belt Movement* (2004) and Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf's political critique *Women, War, and Peace* (2002) within a larger African women's scholarly agenda. A focus on African gender research (work by and about African women) can help the global academy fulfill Dr. Maathai's mandate that we "improve the quality of life" (128) for those most disenfranchised, worldwide. The following article, then, provides a qualitative and quantitative overview of African women's scholarship, establishing a clearer understanding of the range of intellectual collaboration available to scholars of the diaspora. The purpose of this article is to highlight African women's scholarship and challenge the Africana studies community to include this body of knowledge in the advancement of the field. By becoming more familiar with African women's scholarly production, we can learn about parallel issues addressed in the United States (such as education, law, economics, and culture) from an alternative but nuanced perspective—in the spirit of the diaspora researcher Katherine Dunham.

In spring 2006, I taught *Interdisciplinary Perspectives of Women* at the University of Florida (UF) with Dr. Rose Mwaipopo, an associate professor of sociology from the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM). Then, for one month during the summer of 2006, I lived in the Research Flats at the UDSM in Tanzania as a visiting researcher. I was granted access to the East Africana Collection (EAC) at the UDSM library, which houses master's theses and doctoral dissertations. Through the UDSM library, I was also able to access the Association of African Universities' Database of African Theses and

Dissertations (DATAD). This research broadened my relationship with Dr. Mwaipopo and other UDSM African women scholars while also contextualizing my thinking on African American women's scholarly production.

I had three research goals for my work in Tanzania: to decipher how many and in what fields African women have obtained doctoral degrees; to see where UDSM women scholars fit into that larger picture; and to consider thematic details and gender dynamics of African women scholars' graduate research. In my book *Black Women in the Ivory Tower, 1850–1954: An Intellectual History* (Evans 2007), I show the historic patterns of black women's educational attainment in the United States and outline philosophical contributions to higher education. In this present research, I sought to construct a comprehensive picture of African women's doctoral attainment and academic production to lay the groundwork for similar intellectual studies in the future.

In this article, I draw a general picture of African scholarly production by highlighting dissertations and master's theses that address women's lives. I then compare regional findings to scholarship produced by the women employed at UDSM. I conclude with the relevance and implications of my findings. To begin, I present a brief discussion of methodological considerations that arose while conducting my study.

Methodologies: Resources and Challenges

In 2006, the Association of African Universities (AAU), founded in 1967, listed 113 universities in over thirty countries as active members. There is, however, a variance in available source materials identifying African universities. Stanford University's online library resource (LAIR), for example, provides a different list than the one provided by AAU. LAIR counts thirty-six African countries with universities—including Burkina Faso, Burundi, Congo, Djibouti, Gambia, Malawi, Mauritania, Niger, Somalia, or Senegal—but unlike the AAU, it does not include universities in Cape Verde, Eritrea, or Reunion Island. Though Stanford's list is a useful resource, I use the AAU list because it is generated by an association "on the ground" and because of the AAU's outstanding work and sponsorship of the invaluable online DATAD collection. Organized in 2000, DATAD lists the production of AAU-member master's theses and doctoral dissertations and provides the most comprehensive data source for comparing research from universities in every region of the continent.

While DATAD offered an essential tool to help answer my research ques-

tions, there were some challenges accessing the information. For example, some doctoral entries are listed under “PhD” (without periods) and some as “Ph.D.” (with periods). Doctorates of education (EdD) were listed separately, while a few medical or law degrees were also listed and had to be factored out. In another methodological challenge, the East Africana Collection library database at UDSM listed MA theses and PhD dissertations together. Although the individual file distinguished MAs from PhDs, there was no separate list for doctorates. As a result, I was only able to confirm the type of document by walking each aisle and checking each manuscript on the shelf.

In addition to physical challenges, I faced significant methodological decisions with data collection. Names provided a significant hurdle: some names were common for both genders, while some authors provided only initials. In these cases, I checked the abstract, introduction, and/or the acknowledgment section of the dissertation or sought assistance from library staff to find a defining pronoun that spoke to the author’s gender. Further, I had to distinguish research *by* women from research *about* women. After clarifying the gender of the author (research by women), I also searched the keywords “women,” “gender,” and “feminism” in the dissertation titles (research about women), thus covering both distinct areas while differentiating between the two.

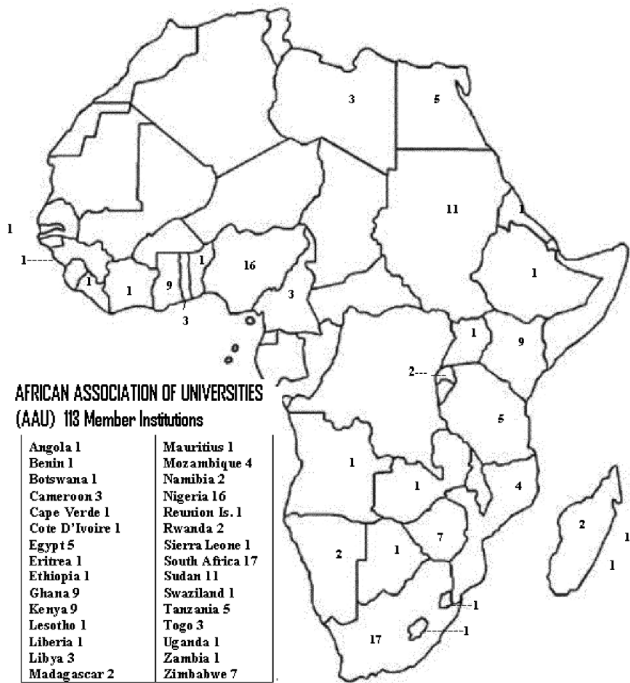
There was also a difference between dissertations housed at and those earned from UDSM. Many African women who are affiliated with UDSM had dissertations in the bibliography but earned their degrees from European or American universities. Also important was the realization that there was no clear way to determine the race of the women who produced the dissertation. For example, one author whom I met in Dar es Salaam, a Jewish woman from New York, moved to Tanzania in the late 1960s, married a Tanzanian man, took his family name, and acquired Tanzanian citizenship. She definitely defined herself as African, but she very definitely was not black. What impact would this have on my findings? This particular woman had worked with Ella Baker and cited the United States Civil Rights Movement as a major influence in her thinking, which in turn positively impacted many black women activist academics in Dar es Salaam. Clearly, “African” presents similar complexities as “Africana” that must be recognized in the research process.

These issues tempered my approach. As a result, I simply chose to count and consider dissertations by African women with an understanding that not all listed were black and that not all black scholars had earned their degrees from African universities. Though these aspects of the data provided a contemplative research process and required me to qualify my findings, these procedural

considerations did not significantly alter my initial query or impede my ability to make general conclusions regarding African women’s scholarship.

General Findings: Mapping Academic Africa

Map 1 (below) shows that as of 2006, there were eight AAU institutions in North Africa, thirty-six in West Africa, thirty-nine in Central and South Africa, and twenty-nine in East Africa.¹ This grouping demonstrates significant gaps in AAU participation, particularly in Morocco and the Congo region. Nonetheless, with the data available, I was able to make basic assessments about academic production in disparate areas of the continent. Generally, I found that doctoral degrees came fairly late for African women (in the 1970s and 1980s) and that the 1990s were a numerically significant decade for African women earning MAs and PhDs. Many of the degrees earned were



Map 1. Association of African Universities (AAU): Institutional count by country. Map by Stephanie Y. Evans. 2006.

in East Africa or the United States, with a select few earned in Europe, and work was largely in the social sciences and education. Despite the limited access to higher education and other precious resources (or perhaps because of limited access), African women have largely concerned themselves with gender issues.

Research About Women

In June 2006, DATAD listed well over one thousand theses and dissertations. Of these, I found only 312 PhD abstracts. Thus, the vast majority of DATAD holdings are master's theses. Of the total DATAD listings, I found 706 documents (630 theses, 76 dissertations) that refer to "women," "gender," or "feminism" in the title. Approximately 499 authors wrote about women, 190 wrote about gender, and 17 wrote about feminism. In personal conversations, I found that many scholars were familiar with the term "womanism," but no reference was made to this construct in the database. Often, white feminists have been charged with imposing their interpretation in non-Western areas of women's lives; an interesting discussion must take place about how black women's interpretations might involve the same difficulties.²

Table 1 shows the countries where the sixty-one English-language PhD dissertations on women, gender, and feminism were produced. Table 2 shows the institutions where the 570 English-language master's theses on women, gender, and feminism were earned. The data reveals that, at the doctoral level, approximately half of the scholars who study women, gender, and feminism had earned their degrees from institutions outside of Africa. However, master's-level theses show a strong and growing presence of such scholarship within Africa, with the strength of such studies coming from the eastern, western, and central regions. In particular, scholars from Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya have made the most significant contributions in this area.

Table 1. Countries awarding English-language doctorates about women, gender, and feminism, as listed by DATAD

Kenya	15	Zimbabwe	3
United States	13	South Africa	2
Other (Australia, Sweden, etc.)	10	Ghana	1
United Kingdom	6	Uganda	1
Nigeria	5	Cameroon	1
Tanzania	4		

Table 2. African universities awarding English-language master's degrees about women, gender, and feminism, as listed by DATAD

Makerere (Uganda)	182	Kenyatta	44
UDSM	102	Other	20
Ghana	89	Jos (Nigeria)	19
Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)	64	Dakar (Senegal)	2
Zimbabwe	47	Nairobi (Kenya)	1

Doctoral Dissertations

At the doctoral level, education is the clear discipline of choice for gender-focused research and represents 25 percent of all doctoral production (fifteen of the sixty-one dissertations). Sociology (eleven dissertations), literature and languages (seven), anthropology (six), and history (five) are also significant areas of interest for such studies and concerns. In African PhD programs, research about women is spread throughout the disciplines, but education is a clear concern. In education, the majority of researchers addressed issues related to primary and secondary education (five dissertations) or the social implications of female access to education (six). Scholars also approached themes of gender difference in higher education as well as in science and technology, but to a lesser degree. The earliest degrees on gender issues were earned in the 1970s (eight) from U.S. institutions, but the majority of the degrees were earned in the 1990s.

Several themes emerged from the dissertations in education: religion, literacy, and employment were among them. Most works examine areas connected to values, social status, and gender-role expectations. Equity in personal and social development was a fourth major concern. In sociology, the second-most popular area of doctoral research, women also focused on equity issues. Reoccurring themes included politics and power, history, economic and employment opportunity, family status, and reproductive issues.

While there was a wide range of dissertation topics throughout the continent, the geographic locations that scholars dealt with were fairly concentrated. Major geographic locations of interest in dissertation production were as follows: Kenya (sixteen dissertations), Tanzania (twelve), Zimbabwe (seven), and Nigeria (seven). Gender dissertations offer much potential for comparative national research of issues and themes in the academy of the African Diaspora.

Table 3 lists the dissertations focusing on gender issues, as indicated by DATAD.

Table 3. Dissertations in gender studies ~~produced at African universities,~~
as listed by DATAD

Anthropology

- “Sex, Work, and Social Class (Youth Attitudes) in Cameroon” (Koenig, Northwestern, 1978)
 “Socioeconomic Position and Prostitution in Ethiopia” (Dirasse, Boston, 1978)
 “Family Dynamics among Agro-pastoralists in Tanzania” (Tobbison, Acta, 1986)
 “Women’s Fresh Produce Marketing in Zimbabwe” (Horn, Michigan, 1988)
 “Women Food Sellers and Fisherman in a Tanzanian Oxfam Program” (Tierney, London, 1997)
 “Modern Women in Gendered Worlds in Tanzania” (Haram, Bergen, 1999)

Arts and Sciences

- “Gender Roles and Status of Kenyan Women” (Wamue, Kenyatta, 1999)

Biological and Physical Sciences

- “Nutrition of Placental Tissues of Kenyan Women” (Ramsay, California, 1979)
 “Factors Affecting Appropriate Technology by Rural Kenyan Women” (Mburugu, Kenyatta, 1994)

Communication and Information Studies

- “Access to Gender and Development Information by Rural Tanzanian Women” (Kiondo, Natal, 1998)
 “Improving Ugandan Information Delivery Systems Targeting Women” (Nassanga, Makerere, 2002)

Development and Population Studies

- “International Migration of Ghanaian Women to Cote d’Ivoire” (Anarfi, Ghana, 1989)
 “Gender Relations and Land Resettlement in Zimbabwe” (Jacobs, Sussex, 1990)
 “Gender Dimension of Land Rights in Tanzania” (Koda, Dar es Salaam, 2000)
 “Participation of Women in Tanzanian Economic Activities” (Mohamed, Dodoma, 2001)

Education

- “Education, Women and Development in Kenya” (Riria, Nairobi, 1986)
 “Women’s Roles, Status, and Education in Coastal Kenya” (Wamahiu, Kenyatta, 1988)
 “Nonformal Education in Kenyan Women’s Self-help Groups” (Kimokoti, Kenyatta, 1990)
 “Perceptions about Female Enrollment in Science Courses in Nigeria” (Biu, Kenyatta, 1993)
 “Determinants of Female Participation in Kenyan Primary Education” (Juma, Kenyatta, 1994)
 “Gender Differences in Access to Postsecondary Ugandan Institutions” (Kasente, Kenyatta, 1996)
 “Evaluation of Women’s Basic Literacy Programs in Nigeria” (Ofoegbu, Jos, 1997)
 “Community Development in Tanzania: Socioeconomic Projects and Educational Strategies among Women” (Ghamunga, Dar es Salaam, 1997)
 “Young Women’s Education in Traditional Zimbabwe and Relevance to Home Economics Curriculum” (Siyakwazi, Zimbabwe, 1997)
 “Quality of Education in Zimbabwe Primary Schools” (Chung, Zimbabwe, 1999)
 “Traditional Practices, Psychological and Educational Development of the Nigerian Girl-child” (Utulu, Ibadan, 2000)
 “Gender Mobility and Top Level Educational Management in Kenya” (Wanyama, Kenyatta, 2002)
 “Influence of Gender on Technical Education in Zimbabwe” (Makore, Zimbabwe, 2002)
 “Misinterpretations of Islam and Impact on Girls’ Education” (Maina, Kenyatta, 2003)
 “Gender Values, Schooling, and Transition to Adulthood, Urban Kenya” (Chege, Cambridge, 2003)
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Table 3. (cont.)

Engineering

“Technological Alternatives [and Women’s Groups] in Rural Tanzania” (Chungu, Asian Institute of Technology, 1993)

Environmental Studies

“Small-scale Farming and the Role of Women in Kenya” (Mutoro, Amsterdam, 1997)

History

“Social and Economic Change in Twentieth-Century Ghanaian Women” (Robertson, Wisconsin, 1974)

“Ideology, Economics, Missionary Education, and Women in Rhodesia” (Schmidt, Wisconsin, 1987)

“Position of Women in Kenyan Society” (Ayot, Kenyatta, 1990)

“Impact of Male Migration on Rural Kenyan Women” (Janlang, Kenyatta, 1991)

“Women-headed Households in Tanzania: Rejection of Patriarchy” (MacDonald, Australia, 1996)

Law

“The Betrayal of the ‘Return to Self’ Project in Zimbabwe” (Maboreke, Warwick, 1996)

“A Comparative Study of Gender Equity under Nigerian and South African Law” (Imasogie, Pretoria, 2001)

Literature and Languages

“Conflicting Identity and Search for Self in D. H. Lawrence’s Work” (Mbhuh Mbuh, Yaoundé, 1994)

“A Literary History of Nigerian Women Writers, 1950–1990” (Sylvester, Jos, 1995)

“Husbands, Lovers, and Dream Lovers” (Eriksson, Uppsala, 1997)

“The Rhetoric of Recovery in Africaribbean Women’s Poetry” (Mcmaster 1997)

“Images of Women in African Oral Literature (Swahili Proverbs)” (Ndungo, Kenyatta, 1998)

“Race, Class, and Gender in Writings of Four Harlem Renaissance Women” (Osaki, Florida, 2000)

“Gender Stereotypes in Ugandan Folktales and Proverbs” (Kiyimba, Dar es Salaam, 2001)

Political Science

“Gender, Population as a ‘Problem,’ Family Planning, and the Tanzanian National Population Policy” (Richay, North Carolina, 1999)

Public Health

“Gender and Power Dynamics in Sexual and Reproductive Health” (Chikovore, Umea, 2004)

Religious Studies

“Women Power and Liberation in an African Church” (Hinga, Lancaster, 1990)

Sociology

“Power of Women in a West African Society (Beer and Matriliney)” (Hagaman, Northeastern, 1972)

“Social History of Muslim Women in Kenya” (Strobal, California, 1975)

“Social and Economic Factors in Migration of Kenyan Women” (Knotts, Maryland, 1977)

“Extended Family and Urbanization in Tanzania” (Flanagan, Connecticut, 1977)

“Politics of Female Status in North Africa” (Marshall, Massachusetts, 1980)

Table 3. (cont.)

“Social Relations of Production and Reproduction in Zimbabwe” (Pankhurst, Liverpool, 1988)
“Politics of Gender and Fertility Regulation in Kenya” (Chenga, Lancaster, 1993)
“Gender Antagonism and Socio-economic Change in Kenya” (Silberschmidt, Stockholm, 1999)
“Institutional Sexism in Commercial Banks in Nigeria” (Igube, Jos, 2001)
“Livelihoods, Diversification, and Inequality in Tanzania” (Larsson, Lund, 2001)
“Ghanaian Female Transnational Trades” (Darkwah, Wisconsin, 2002)

Zoology

“Epidemiology of Malaria in Pregnant Women and Newborns in Nigeria” (Egwunyenga, Jos, 1997)

Note: Original dissertation titles have been abbreviated.

Master's Theses

Master's studies are heavily weighted toward development, education, and social sciences. Table 4 indicates the AAU master's theses on gender issues listed in the DATAD. In African countries, as in much of the world, education is a primary concern. Thus, degree attainment in the field of education tops the charts at the master's level as well. Here, scholars of education are evenly distributed in many programs around the continent, though different programs specialize in either adult education, teacher preparation, or curriculum development. This also speaks to the feminization of the field of education over other academic areas. The fields of sociology, development,

Table 4. Disciplinary areas of master's degrees in gender studies earned at African universities

African/Oriental Studies	12	International Affairs	3
Agriculture/Forestry	10	Law	19
Animal Science	1	Language/Literature	33
Anthropology	5	Library Science/Information	6
Architecture	3	MBA	18
Geography/Development/ Environment	42	Nursing	1
Biochemistry/ Microbiology/ Science	5	Nutrition/Food Science	4
Communications/ Public Health/Medicine	32	Philosophy	3
Economics/Finance/Statistics	20	Physical Science	2
Education	110	Political Science/Public Administration	18
Gender/Women's Studies	82	Psychology	2
Home Economics	10	Religious Studies	13
History	4	Sociology	48
Industrial/Fine Arts	4	Social Work	4
		Theatre Arts	3
		Textile Science	1

religious studies, language and literature, business, law, and economics are also widely studied, in broad geographic areas.

Interestingly, the Gender and Women's Studies master's program at Makerere University in Uganda is a significant contributor to gender research in Africa, producing eighty-two theses—second only to the discipline of education. Table 5 shows the leading areas of study in the gender program at Makerere.

Family-and-housing studies lead gender research at Makerere. Thesis topics in this area range from assessments of the housing situation in urban areas and childcare options for working mothers to the factors involved in food acquisition and the impact and use of fuel-efficient stoves. Health, labor, and agriculture are also central points of scholarly interest. Other key areas of gender studies at the master's level are law and criminal justice, economics, politics, and land rights. The least-studied areas for master's degrees in gender and women's studies are media and literature.

Research by Women

At both the doctoral and master's level, gender research *about* women presents an interesting interdisciplinary picture. Research *by* women offers an equally intriguing view of academic inquiry.

Due to technological and human resource inequities, AAU institutions have not been able to enter all of their holdings into the DATAD system. There are significantly more women's dissertations at African universities than are listed online. For example, the UDSM East Africana Collection houses at least twenty-five women's dissertations earned at UDSM, but DATAD only lists ten from that particular institution. This disparity between actual institutional holdings and the AAU digital record signals a need for universities to allocate more time and resources toward data entry. Unfortunately, this is just one of many areas where university libraries need to direct their limited resources. Until full records are available online, scholars must access the rich

Table 5. Disciplinary areas of gender study at Makerere University, Uganda (the leading African program in gender studies)

Agriculture and Farming	14	Health	12
Economics and Politics	12	Labor	12
Education	11	Language and Literature	2
Environment and Land	6	Law and Criminology	3
Family and Housing	21	Media	2

institutional resources at each location in order to supplement the limited materials available via DATAD.

Of the 312 digital records of PhDs in DATAD, women authored approximately thirty-seven (13 percent) of all dissertations. These were produced fairly evenly over five decades: 1960s (six), 1970s (three), 1980s (nine), 1990s (twelve), and 2000s (seven). Table 6 provides a list of women's dissertations by university, discipline, and author. Of AAU members, the University of Dar es Salaam is the leading institution in women's doctoral studies—producing ten women doctorates, while Makerere (Uganda's largest university) is second with six. However, a clear plurality (thirteen) of women earned their doctorates from universities in the United States.

Most doctorates by women were earned in the social sciences. Anthropology led with seven degree earners, while the fields of education and political science produced four each. It is noteworthy that women earned an impressive number of degrees in natural and physical sciences (nine) and that Makerere University in Uganda awarded almost half of those degrees. This is a very recent phenomenon, as most of these degrees have been awarded since the early 1990s.

In the natural and physical sciences, women researched a wide array of topics: carbon reactions in chemical chains (Arman); bovine leukemia (Azuba); ecology and conservation of the redbellied monkey (Barenga); the central nervous systems of insects (Boulton); enzyme and digestive processes (Kivaisi); manmade lakes (Kaduma); microfood production (Mascarenhas); designs for harvesting systems (Majaja); and sediment movement and wave measurement (Ngusaru). Knowledge of these academic accomplishments and the corresponding shift that has occurred recently can bolster programs interested in improving and building upon women's participation in the sciences.

In arts and letters, dissertation topics provide insight into the depth and range of women's interests. Amandina Lihamba, presently a dean at UDSM, earned her doctorate in theatre from Leeds University in the United Kingdom. Her dissertation investigated the relationship between political development, social activism, and theatre production in Tanzania following the 1967 Arusha Declaration, which provided a "socialist blueprint" for the nation. She provided social, cultural, and political insights regarding the use of Kiswahili as the language of choice, documented the major playwrights in the era, and discussed the impact of state control of the theatre during the time. Her methodologies, according to the DATAD abstract, included "field research, interviews, questionnaires, archival sources, information from theatre practitioners and cultural activists as well as published plays and theatre material" (1). In doing

Table 6. Dissertations written by women listed in DATAD

Natural and Physical Sciences			
University	Discipline	Author	Year
Makerere	Chemistry	Arman	1969
Makerere	Veterinary Medicine	Azuba	1998
Makerere	Zoology	Barenga	1993
Makerere	Zoology	Boulton	1968
UDSM	Microbiology	Kivaisi	1990
UDSM	Engineering	Kaduma	1977
Clark	Agriculture	Mascarenhas	1986
California	Agri-Engineering	Majaja	1990
Memorial	Agri-Engineering	Ngusaru	2000
Social Sciences			
University	Discipline	Author	Year
UDSM	Education	Mvungi	1982
UDSM	Education	Qorro	1999
UDSM	Education	Ghamunga	1997
UDSM	Sociology	Snyder	1970
UDSM	Political Science	Meena	1995
UDSM	History	Honey	1982
UDSM	Development	Koda	2000
Makerere	Geography	Biteete	1995
Cape Town	Sociology-Anthropology	Mwaipopo	2001
Natal	Communication	Mukangara	2000
Nairobi	Business	Rutashobya	1992
Acta	Anthropology	Tobisson	1986
Northwestern	Political Science	O'Barr	1970
Northwestern	Political Science	James	1968
Pennsylvania	Sociology-Anthropology	Dauer	1984
Boston	History	Behrman	1965
Chicago	Anthropology	Reining	1967
North Carolina	Political Science	Richey	1999
Indiana	Education	Dyken	1984
Minnesota	Sociology	Little	1987
Stanford	Anthropology	Charnley	1994
Oxford	Anthropology	Daley	1989
Bergen	Anthropology	Harem	1999
Stockholm	Geology	Scaghude	2001
Arts and Humanities			
University	Discipline	Author	Year
UDSM	Literature	Kiyimba	2001
Florida	Literature	Osaki	2000
Leeds	Theatre	Lihamba	1985
Wisconsin	Linguistics	Scotton	1967

so, she hoped to reveal distinctive developments—particularly the relationship of the state to art production—pertaining to the history of Tanzanian theatre. In a very different direction, Lilian Osaki, a professor at UDSM, studied women authors in the Harlem Renaissance. Osaki’s work on Anne Spencer, Angelina Weld Grimké, Alice Dunbar Nelson, Georgia Douglass Johnson, Mercedes Gilbert, and Marita Bonner demonstrates African women’s desire to connect with women of the diaspora. Abasi Kiyimba’s research (supervised by Dr. Lihamba) investigated positive and negative gender stereotypes in traditional folktales. She argued that the construction of both males and females in folktales and proverbs was not inherently bad, but in both cases, the intended meanings of gender and social role construction need to be disentangled and better understood. These later dissertations depart from Scotton’s earlier work on Swahili sentence construction and linguistics and reflect the relative newness and evolving nature of African women’s gender scholarship and approaches.

Again, the incomplete status of the DATAD online collection limited analysis. For example, at the time of my search, Grace Puja’s “Moving Against the Grain: The Expectations and Experiences of Tanzanian Female Undergraduates” did not appear in DATAD. This excellent study of Rimi people in Tanzania reveals that though female students face significant barriers, they have continued to push forward and have succeeded at very high rates despite cultural and institutional opposition. Similarly, Marjorie Mbilinyi’s eight-hundred-page 1972 UDSM dissertation, “The Decision to Educate in Rural Tanzania,” is not listed in DATAD, though it is in the EAC holdings. These and other contributions must be made available to a larger audience if we are to fully understand and appreciate the scholarship of African women as well as its similarities and dissimilarities with scholarship produced throughout the diaspora.

Women’s dissertations, though too few, are present in Africa. There are variances in topics, degree-granting institutions, and approaches. What can be said, generally, is that there has been a deep interest in creating scholarship aimed at investigating social welfare, recognizing creative contributions, and advancing justice policies. A case study of women associated with the University of Dar es Salaam further reveals this interesting range of socially committed research.

Case Study: University of Dar es Salaam

There are five AAU-member universities in Tanzania: University of Dar es Salaam, Mzumbe University, Open University of Tanzania, Sokoine Univer-

sity of Agriculture, and Tumaini University. University of Dar es Salaam was founded in 1970. By 1999, women constituted only 16 percent of the approximately five thousand students enrolled. As women's scholarship programs expand for undergraduate studies, more and more women will enter graduate studies. Some have already paved the way. DATAD lists fifty-three dissertations penned at UDSM. Of these, at least ten have been written by women:

- Kiyimba, "Gender Stereotypes in the Folktales and Proverbs of the Baganda" (Literature, 2001)
- Mvungi, "Relationship between Performance in Instructional Medium and Performance in Selected School Subjects in Tanzania Secondary Schools" (Education, 1982)
- Qorro, "A Qualitative Study on the Teaching and Learning of Writing in English in Tanzania Secondary Schools in Relation to the Writing Requirements of Tertiary Education" (Education, 1999)
- Ghamunga, "The Community Development Process in Tanzania: An Analysis of Needs, Socio-economic Projects and Educational Strategies among Women in Four Rural Districts" (Education, 1997)
- Snyder, "The Role of the Institute of Adult Education in the Process of Development in Tanzania: A Study of its Direct Teaching Function in the City of Dar es Salaam" (Sociology, 1970)
- Meena, "The Impact of Divergent Interest in an Aided Project Process: The Case of Swedish-Aided Folk Development Colleges in Tanzania" (Political Science, 1995)
- Honey, "A History of Indian Merchant Capital and Class Formation in Tanganyika c. 1840-1940" (History, 1982)
- Koda, "The Gender Dimension of Land Rights in Tanzania: Case Study of Msindo Village, Same District" (Development, 2000)
- Kivaisi, "Anaerobic Degradation of Cereal Residues by a Rumen Derived Process" (Microbiology, 1990)
- Kaduma, "Man-made Lakes: Their Social, Economic, and Ecological Impacts: The Case in Tanzania" (Engineering, 1977)

In addition, there are at least three women's dissertations earned from UDSM that are not yet listed on the DATAD database. These include:

- Hollender, "Out of Tradition: Position of Women in Kenya and Tanzania during Pre-colonial, Colonial, and Post-independence Eras" (History, 1979)
- Temu, "Utilization of Chloroquine Chemoprophylaxis among Pregnant Women Attending Mwananyamala Antenatal Clinic, Dar es Salaam" (Microbiology, 1984)
- Nchimbi, "Gender and Entrepreneurship in Tanzania: Comparative Analysis

of Male-female Start-up Motivation, Individual Characteristics and Perception of Business Success” (Business Administration, 2002)

The UDSM cohort reflects the overwhelming interests present in the larger sample, with education remaining the most representative field. Additionally, there has been interest in culture, business, and the environment. What is clear is that African women’s scholarship at UDSM, like the larger sample, reflects a concern about the study of gender issues.

At the master’s-degree level, 159 theses housed at UDSM address the topic of women, gender, or feminism. Many theses are in areas of business (twenty-six) or law (thirty-four). There are twelve theses on education and eight in sociology. The UDSM Department of Development Studies has generated a significant amount of gender scholarship, producing eighteen master’s theses in that area. The topics include gender roles in religious choirs, microfinancing, the impact of energy crisis on women, women in television advertisements, female music artists, comparative Muslim and non-Muslim girls’ education, domestic violence, agriculture changes, and sociology-based studies of female prisoners. Clearly, African women have produced much valuable work on gender in the African context. However, women scholars at UDSM not only have contributed research but also have helped operationalize their scholarship, and they have helped make way for others throughout academia. Women scholars, for example, have increasingly taken administrative roles, and in the process, they have greatly advanced gender diversity in African institutions of higher learning.

Of the thirty-seven women whose dissertations are in DATAD, twelve are presently engaged as faculty and/or administrators at UDSM. Six of the most influential women scholars at the University of Dar es Salaam earned their degrees there: Ruth Meena, Bertha Koda, Ameila Kivaisi, Martha Qorro, Florence Ghamunga, and Abasi Kiyimba. Six graduated from institutions in other countries: Lettice Rutashobya, Amandina Lihamba, Lillian Osaki, Fanella Mukangara, Ophelia Mascarenhas, and Rose Mwaipopo. These scholars not only have proven themselves academically but also have contributed to higher education at UDSM by taking on administrative roles. Surely there are many more women who are changing the face and culture of African universities; their work and scholarship must be recorded on the international database as well if we are to fully understand the significant changes already underway.

In March 2006, the UDSM established the Gender Center, which was the culmination of a decade of campuswide concern for incorporating women into academia. The center helps raise awareness regarding gender issues, rang-

ing from the experiences of women in science and technology to cases of sexual harassment in the academy. Diversity is clearly an issue that is receiving increasing attention in Africa. On campus, women like Rose Shayo, Ruth Behsa, Penina Mlama, and Ndyanao Balisidya have been essential to UDSM's development as well as its increasingly prominent gender agenda. Women's participation in all areas of institution building must be seen as a vital part of UDSM's academic credibility and growth.

In Dar es Salaam, women academicians are part of campus/community networks such as the Tanzanian Gender Networking Programme (TGNP) and Women's Research Development Project (WRDP). Marjorie Mbilinyi, Vivan Bashemerewa, Blandina Mapunda, Fabia Shundi, Priscilla Nanyaro, and Amina Mlawa connect UDSM (a campus "on the hill") to the surrounding areas. Women's activism has yielded excellent results for Tanzania. Gertrude Mongella, a graduate of University of Tanzania who majored in education and tutored at Dar es Salaam's Teacher Training College, was elected the first president of the African Union in 2004. Her expertise in gender and education, legislative experience, and prowess in international relations (particularly in chairing the 1995 Beijing Conference) bode well for the improvement of women's lives as well as the advancement of political affairs throughout the continent. African women's academic contributions will be essential for Africa to create a positive, just, and sustainable future for citizens of all nations.

Conclusion

In summary, graduate students in Africa are writing about gender issues and, though few in number, African women are producing useful scholarship in a range of disciplines. Like the two inaugural issues of *Black Women, Gender, and Families*, African scholars are concerned with gendered aspects of labor, violence, social-assistance programs, health, environment, national and local politics, cultural transmission, and community empowerment. In both African and U.S. contexts, women scholars identify education as a central concern, especially as it remains a feminized field in the elementary and secondary ranks and male-dominated in postsecondary arenas. Geographically, East Africa had the strongest recorded contributions by women scholars (Tanzania, Kenya, and Ethiopia), with concentrated production in Nigeria and Ghana. Of particular interest is the established and commendably dynamic gender studies program at Makerere University in Uganda. Interestingly, Makerere also produced 50 percent of the women's dissertations in the natural and physical sciences. That university program certainly

warrants investigation to see what aspects might be used as a paradigm for those institutions seeking gender equity and support for African women's academic advancement. Most research, regardless of region or institution, addresses policy issues, so it is no wonder that education and social sciences dominate the disciplinary foci of African women scholars.

Of the thirty-seven recorded doctoral dissertations in DATAD written by African women, the United States was the leading source of degree attainment (thirteen) and was largely the origin of scholarship relating to gender. From environmental and urban studies to political-cultural theater and international relations, African women academics offer critical questions, insight, and perspective. Scholars of womanist and black feminist studies must surely become more familiar with this body of research, since neither theoretical framework is an overt feature in African women's discourse and clearly much exchange can be beneficial to various scholarly communities. Further, as I learned when team-teaching with Dr. Mwaipopo, even among those who name themselves black feminists, there is significant cultural variance that must be addressed if both African and U.S. scholars are to contribute and benefit.

Thanks to the Gender and Development Faculty Exchange Program between UDSM and UF, I was able to host Dr. Mwaipopo in my course and study in Tanzania. I believe that we both benefited, but surely I learned more than I taught. In addition to meeting my initial three goals of information-gathering research, I have also sought to produce a document that will be useful to scholars at UDSM and AAU-member institutions, especially those in charge of the DATAD record. Beyond offering a survey of existing African scholarship by and about women, I wish to continue discussions with African scholars and to recognize their efforts in a way that enhances their international reputation and policy influence. Highlighting their work—and making it accessible online—was an essential goal of this publication. In one next phase of my research agenda, I wish to compare experiences and ideas of black women scholars and gender research in the United States and Africa with those in other global contexts, particularly the United Kingdom, Brazil, the Caribbean, Canada, and Australia. Clearly, edited volumes featuring black academic women in the diaspora would bolster mainstream disciplinary knowledge as well as Africana studies knowledge bases.

Ample scholarship exists that lends greater understanding to the contributions of African scholars. Resources are available that contextualize the sources highlighted in this article. These publications present social dynamics of African educational institutions, reveal positions and aspirations of

women graduate students, and clarify larger social issues that affect national and international aspects of African postsecondary education and scholarship. This work offers historical, political, and cultural analysis of different African nations that is helpful for black studies scholars who are interested in exploring linkages and discontinuities between scholars in the diaspora (Bendera and Mboya 1996; Beoku-Betts 2004; Brock-Utne 1999; Chachage and Mbilinyi 2003; Hughes and Mwiria 1989; Ishumi 1998; Koda 2004; Kwesiga 2002; Lindsay 1997; Luhanga 2003; Lulat 2005; Mannathoko 1999; Marah 1987; Martineau 1997; Mbilinyi 2003; Mukangara 2003; Mukangara and Koda 1997; Sudarkasa 1982; Yahya-Othman et al. 2003).

In 2004, Wangari Maathai became the first African woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. She has also been hailed as the first African woman to earn a PhD in East and Central Africa (1971, University of Nairobi). Dr. Maathai is in a company of African women who have contributed to higher education in Africa and to a critical analysis of the world. Much research remains to be done to illuminate the intellectual heritage of scholars who, at the intersection of race, gender, class, and nation, have, in the words of Dr. Maathai, improved “ecological sustainable development” (ix) for poor women and children caught in the crossfire of globalization, racism and ethnic hatred, social and institutionalized sexism, and capitalist greed. For those who have been the victims of destructive world powers bolstered by a short-sighted international academy, African women’s research agenda inspires much-needed change and direction toward a more equitable future. Yet Dr. Maathai’s dissertation is not yet listed in the DATAD online resource. This demonstrates the long effort that lies ahead in digitizing, recognizing, and expanding upon the academic work done by and about the experiences of African women in particular and African scholars in general.

Mark Christian uses the term “opportunist” (700) to capture scholars of Africana studies who benefit from Civil Rights Movement–era struggles that brought about the institutionalization of black studies departments but who have not sought to further social, political, and economic gains (or professional equity) for black people. Unfortunately, many see themselves in black studies, but not of it. I also see those as opportunists who mine African resources or claim African cultural references but who do not seek to raise awareness and status of African scholars—especially women. Similarly, those who obtain large grants or private funding in the name of Africana studies projects but do not share those resources with scholars in the diaspora are engaging in a form of opportunism (Christian 2006; Evans 2006).

Scholars in African and African American studies have generated a signifi-

cant body of African-centered research. This body of scholarship, which exists between faculty of the United States, Caribbean, and Africa, is complicated. There has been fruitful disagreement about exactly what “African-centered” means. It has often prevented more dialogue than it has encouraged. The designations of “African,” “African American,” “Africana,” and “black studies” reflect a significant discord in missions, theoretical frameworks, departmental agendas, and disciplinary approaches. While this discord is beyond the scope of this article, African women’s scholarship needs to be central in all such discussions. The paucity of black women faculty who are ranked and tenured in U.S. and African universities begs the question of the commitment of those in the field to race *and* gender equity.

In *Women, War, and Peace* (2002), Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf provided findings from qualitative research done in fourteen countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Columbia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, East Timor, Macedonia, Kosovo, Guinea, Israel, Liberia, Palestine, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Somalia. They placed women’s voices at the center of their study. We must do the same. As scholars of Africana studies, we must give more credence to those who are marginalized in the academy. For those who are not already doing so, engaging—and citing—African women’s scholarship is a great place to start. Additionally, creating opportunities for graduate student and faculty exchange programs will surely be mutually beneficial.

Black women across the world have much to offer in solving the world’s problems. The educated class constitutes national leaders. Thus, there must be an effort to increase women’s access to higher education and therefore leadership positions in existing university and political institutions. There must also be an effort to transform the academy so that it honors the knowledge base of indigenous populations *and* integrates women’s perspective into epistemological structures. Only by considering African women scholars’ social standpoint, engaging their scholarly production, and encouraging fruitful exchange programs can we begin to offer holistic, comprehensive “African-centered” research worthy of the name.

Endnotes

1. As of December 2007, AAU’s membership had increased to 127 members; this article reflects the summer 2006 AAU numbers and DATAD listings.

2. To get the number 312, add the 176 documents listed under “Ph.D.” (with periods) and 136 listed as “PhD” (without periods).

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