

WOMEN, INFORMATION GATHERING AND NATIONAL SECURITY

Edited by:

- *Mabel I. E. Ewrierhoma*
- *G. A. Wahab*

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Mabel I. E. Ekwierhoma
G. A. Wahab

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Published
by
SIPHAT Press
Abuja, Nigeria

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CHAPTER 2

WOMEN IN SOCIETY AND SECURITY

Monica Omoye ANENI

&

Chris B.N. OGBOGBO

Introduction

Modern literature on women in ancient, pre and post-colonial Africa focuses on the status of women, women's liberation, feminism and its several strands, the evolution of women's status, struggles and challenges of women, gender equality, and traditional and modern women's roles in these societies, while drawing on oral tradition and sources such as songs from Malawi, weaving techniques in Sokoto and historical linguistics, with little attention paid to roles of women in information gathering and providing security in ancient, the pre and post-colonial African societies. This chapter, therefore, attempts to discuss the personhood and status of women in ancient and modern societies, the achievements of powerful women in society, and the roles of women in information gathering in society with regard to the security of the state. The historical methodology is adopted, while the theory of African Feminism, Abraham Maslow's Theory of Motivation, and the concept of national security serve as frameworks for the study. Further studies may interrogate women's roles in the corporate world in modern-day Africa.

African history has attracted the attention of western scholars, ever since Historians, Jan Vansina and Walter Rodney had, in the 1960s, compelled Western Academia to acknowledge the existence of African societies before the advent of colonialism. African Women's history which is an offshoot of African history has equally attracted the attention of scholars across the globe. Women as an intricate part of the culture of Africans in pre-colonial times occupied positions and were respected for the roles they played. For centuries, women in Africa have been economic, historical, and social actors in every facet of their societies. Scholarly writings on women are replete with the roles of women in societies in ancient times, the pre and post-colonial eras in Africa. In some ancient African countries such as Egypt, Nubia, and Ethiopia, women held leadership

positions such as kings and queens, and others ruled alongside their husbands. In pre-colonial Africa, women held chieftaincy positions and in some cases, dynastic rights were passed down to males of royal descent through the matrilineal line. This can be found among such tribes as the Asanteman of Ghana, Balobedu in South Africa, Ijawland in the Niger Delta of Nigeria, and Wolof kingdom in Senegal. Titled females in Nigeria included Queens Moremi, Idia, Amina, Orompoto, Nana Asmau, and Efunroye Tinubu. There were also Yaa Asantewa of Ghana, Yennega of Burkinafaso, Hangbe of Benin, Makeda, Zawsitu and Embet Ilen of Ethiopia and Eritrea, Nandi of South Africa and many others. Johnson (1981) notes that, women were permitted to participate in the local governance of the people and they held a major role in the marketplace before the emergence of colonialism in Southwestern Nigeria (Matera *et al.*⁵⁵, 2011). Women like the mother of a king had titles such as queen-mother in Edo and Yoruba cultures. Some other women were also titled chiefs in their societies. Some also held the title of king. However, with the prevalence of colonialism, the power and influence of these chieftaincies, traditions and culture were eroded, and Anunobi⁵⁶ (2002) notes that Western ideas regarding patriarchy and female dependency on men were promoted by male chiefs alongside their colonial masters and they imposed this on those communities. The unfair treatment of women with regard to their status, socially, politically and economically, was met by stiff opposition from women in some parts of Africa. The Abeokuta women's revolt and the Aba Women's Riot are cases in point. The novels by Nawa El Saadawi, Flora Nwapa, Ama Ata Aidoo, and Buchi Emecheta portrayed the roles, status and challenges of women in pre and post-colonial Africa. Azodo,⁵⁷ (1997) opines that in pre-colonial African societies, women and men played complementary roles and that colonization led to the downfall of African woman from her esteemed position of power, influence, and self-sovereignty as she became the helper of the African man. Several other scholars have also interrogated the roles of women in Africa. Uchendu⁵⁸ (2007) writes about the roles Anioma women played in the Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) as she also notes the hardship they faced. Women had become the heads of

⁵⁴ Johnson, Cheryl D (1981). "Grassroots Organizing: Women in Anti-Colonial Activity in Southwestern Nigeria." *African Studies Association*. 25: 138-148.

⁵⁵ Matera, Marc; Bastia, Misty; Kingsley Kent, Susan (2011). *The Women's War of 1929: Gender and Violence in Colonial Nigeria*. Basingstoke, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan.

⁵⁶ Anunobi, Fredoline (2002) "Women and Development in Africa: From Marginalization to Gender Inequality," *African Social Science Review*: Vol. 2 (1):41-63. DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University

⁵⁷ Azodo, Ada Uzoamaka. (1997). "Issues in African Feminism: A Syllabus". *Women's Studies Quarterly*. 25 (3/4): 201-207

⁵⁸ Uchendu, Egodi. (2007). *Women and Conflict in the Nigerian Civil War*. Africa World Press Inc. Trenton New Jersey.

the homes in the absence of their husbands who had gone to war or elsewhere, and responsibility for catering for the households fell on them, especially in instances when their homes had been destroyed by Federal troops. She mentions women's responses to the war as it raged; women in Anioma migrated to where they could be secured and some, for various reasons, got enlisted into the Biafran army serving in various capacities, until Anioma came under Federal occupation. Despite of the new situation, Anioma women continued to surreptitiously trade with Biafrans on the east side of the river Niger who were still at war with the Federal troops. These women were in danger of being caught by the Federal army. However, they continued to maintain contact with Biafran friends, traders, as well as, kit and kin. The author further examines women's roles and activities in post-war Anioma and cultural identity evidenced in Anioma during the period. Other scholars such as Bolanle Awe⁵⁹, Eldredge, Elizabeth⁶⁰, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch⁶¹ and M.J. Hay and Sharon Stitche⁶² discuss the status of women and their historic roles in such countries as Ethiopia, Egypt, Morocco, Nigeria, Lesotho and sub-Saharan Africa Mizrahi⁶³ (2015) and Musau⁶⁴ (2019) in advocating for women's rights, discuss the status of women in politics in the 21st-century Africa and stating that an African woman does have a long way to go to achieve parity with men in the political arena. The reasons are not farfetched. Women are still dealing with several issues such as disproportionate levels of education and poverty, lack of political power, poor health, lack of proper nutrition, violence against women, female genital mutilation and early or child marriage.⁶⁵ Boserup⁶⁶ (2007) mentions that in pre-colonial Africa women played a crucial role as economic producers, but that this role was disrupted by colonialism. Presley⁶⁷ (1992) discusses the gendered nature of domestic production in pre and post-

⁵⁹ Awe, Bolanle. (1992). *Nigerian Women in Historical Perspective*. Sankore Publishers, Lagos, Nigeria.

⁶⁰ Eldredge, Elizabeth A. (1991). "Women in Production: The Economic Role of Women in Nineteenth-Century Lesotho". *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. 16 (4): 707–731. University of Chicago Press.

⁶¹ Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch. (2018). *African Women: A Modern History*. Taylor & Francis

⁶² Hay, Magareth Jean and Sharon Stitche. (1995). *Women in Africa South of the Sahara*. Longman.

⁶³ Mizrahi, Simon (May 2015). *Empowering African Women: An Agenda for Action*. Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire: African Development Bank.

⁶⁴ Musau, Zipporah. (2019) African Women in Politics: Miles to go before Parity is Achieved. *Africa Renewal*. Retrieved on 7 June, 2022 from [African Women in politics: Miles to go before parity is achieved | Africa Renewal \(un.org\)](https://africarenewal.com/2019/06/07/african-women-in-politics-miles-to-go-before-parity-is-achieved)

⁶⁵ Mlambo-Ngcuka, Phumzile (2017). "We have opportunities as much as we have challenges." Remarks by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, at the closing of the 9th African Union Gender Pre-Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Retrieved on 7th June, 2022 from [We have opportunities as much as we have challenges | UN Women Africa](https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/6/statement-2017-6-7-9th-afu-gender-pre-summit)

⁶⁶ Boserup, Ester. (2007). *Woman's Role in Economic Development*. London ; Sterling, VA : Earthscan.

⁶⁷ Presley, Cora Ann (1992). *Kikuyu Women, the Mau Mau Rebellion, and Social Change in Kenya*. Routledge, New York.

colonial Kenya. She also explores the legal status and political leadership between 1880 and 1910. The study mentions female labour activists, labour protests, political movements, female education, and women who opposed or supported the missionaries. Women's participation in the Mau Mau rebellion and how their involvement led to change in the social policy of the colonialists in Kenya were discussed by Presley. Oyèwùmi⁶⁸ (1997), explores the status of women in pre-colonial Nigeria noting that, in some cases, the word 'woman' cannot be applied in pre-colonial contexts. Several other scholars have interrogated women's roles and status in ancient Africa and pre-and post-colonial Africa, with little attention paid to the roles of women in society with regard to information gathering geared towards security in all its ramifications. This study adopts the historical methodology as it engages and interrogates women's roles in ancient Africa, the era before colonialism, and that of colonialism. Sources for the study include the works of Ancient writers. The writings and scholarly debates of contemporary scholars on women were also accessed. The theory of African Feminism, Abraham Maslow's Theory of Motivation and the concept of security serve as frameworks for the study. Further studies may interrogate women's roles in the corporate world in modern-day Africa.

At this juncture, it is imperative that certain terms and concepts be clearly defined and expatiated as they would aid further discussions on the subject matter. First and foremost, the theory of African feminism is highlighted here.

African Feminism

African feminism is a response to white feminism, womanism, and other strains of feminism that did not take into cognition the experiences of black women in Africa. Womanism addresses the conditions of black women in the Western world. Ahikire,⁶⁹ (2016) notes that African feminism addresses cultural issues that pertain to the complex experiences women in Africa face. Nkealah⁷⁰ (2016) mentions the several strains of African feminism to include Motherism, Femalism, Stiwanism, Snail-sense Feminism, and Nego-feminism. Some of these feminisms are more common or specific to certain groups of African women than others. Therefore African Feminism sometimes is aligned with, argues, or disagrees in thought with other Feminisms such as Black Feminism, Womanism, and other Feminist movements in other countries and continents, e.g.

⁶⁸ Oyèwùmi, Oyèrónké. (1997). *The Invention of Women Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. University of Minnesota Press.

⁶⁹ Ahikire, Josephine. (2016). "African Feminism in Context: Reflections on the Legitimation Battles, Victories and Reversals." *Feminist Africa*. Vol. 19: Pp 7-23.

⁷⁰ Nkealah, Naomi (2016). "(West) African Feminisms and Their Challenges". *Journal of Literary Studies*. 32 (2): 61-74, DOI: [10.1080/02564718.2016.1198156](https://doi.org/10.1080/02564718.2016.1198156)

feminism in Sweden, India, Madagascar, Germany, and Russia, etc. In support of African feminism, Kolawole⁷¹ (2002) stated that an inclusive and accommodating understanding of the generic and general issues is needed to address the needs, challenges and experiences of women in Africa. Nkealah⁷² (2006) also states that African feminism attempts to create, within the heterogeneous cultures of Africa, a new, free, productive and self-reliant African woman, and that the ultimate aim of feminism in Africa is to modify the culture as it affects women in various societies. Although some scholars such as Baderoon⁷³ (2018) and Swaim-Fox⁷⁴ (2018) argue that African women have been the first feminists and have been known to encourage and recognize each other's contributions to the progress of society, another scholar, Busia⁷⁵ (2018) argues that African Feminism had to be propounded because white feminism that describes black women as women of colour, suppresses the peculiarities, historical trajectory and experiences of the African woman in the African continent.

Understanding the Strains of African Feminism

Motherism

Acholonu⁷⁶ (1995) defines Motherism as a "multidimensional theory that comprises the dynamics of ordering, reordering, creating structures, building and rebuilding in cooperation with mother-nature at all levels of human endeavor." She further states that Motherism is a response to Western Feminism and that Motherism consists of motherhood, nature and nurture. She emphasizes that a Motherist is one who cares about the human struggle and is committed to the survival and maintenance of Mother Earth. This branch of African Feminism has no sex barriers for at the centre of Motherism are partnership, cooperation, tolerance, love, understanding and patience. Motherism works effectively when there is male-female complementarity that ensures the fullness of human existence in a secure system.

⁷¹ Kolawole, Modupe Mary (2002). Transcending Incongruities: Rethinking Feminism and the Dynamics of Identity in Africa. *Agenda, Empowering women for gender equity*. Vol. 17:54, 92-98.

⁷² Nkealah, Naomi (2006). Conceptualizing Feminism(s) in Africa: The Challenges Facing African Women Writers and Critics. *English Academy Review*. Vol. 23:1, pp. 133-141, DOI:

[10.1080/10131750608540431](https://doi.org/10.1080/10131750608540431)

⁷³ Baderoon, Gabeba; Decker, Alicia C. (2018). "African Feminisms Cartographies for the Twenty-First Century". *Meridians*. 17 (2): 219-231.

⁷⁴ Swaim-Fox, Callan (2018). "Decade for Women Information Resources #5 Images of Nairobi, Reflections and Follow-Up, International Women's Tribune Center". *Meridians*. 17 (2): 296-308.

⁷⁴ Busia, Abena P. A. (2018). "Creating the Archive of African Women's Writing Reflecting on Feminism, Epistemology, and the Women Writing Africa Project". *Meridians*. 17 (2): 233-245.

⁷⁵ Acholonu, Catherine Obianuju. (1995). *Motherism: The Afrocentric Alternative to Feminism*, (Women in environmental development series). Afa Publications

Femalism

Chioma Opara cited in Nkealah⁷⁷ (2016) defines femalism as a shade of African Feminism, a softer tone of Liberal Feminism, but different from radical Feminism. In sum, femalism draws attention to the body of African Women.

Stiwanism

This branch of African Feminism propounded by Omolara Ogundipe-Leslie emphasizes women's response to institutionalized structures. Stiwanism argues that the struggle for African woman was borne out of colonial and neo-colonial structures that placed males at the peak of the social stratification ladder.

Nego-feminism

Nnaemeka⁷⁸ (2004) defines and explains Nego-feminism as the feminism of negotiation. It also stands for 'no ego' feminism. It is structured by cultural imperatives and modulated by the continuously shifting local and global demands. Negotiation in Nego-feminism demonstrates giving and taking. In other words, to be free, win, and be successful, African feminists need to negotiate and also compromise where necessary. In Nego-feminism, the African woman understands how to use the culture of negotiation to navigate patriarchal routes for her benefit.

Snail-sense Feminism

Akachi Adimorah-Ezeigbo cited in Nkealah⁷⁹ (2016) defines this feminism as an ideology where the Nigeria woman is encouraged to work like the movement of a snail in her dealings with men since the society is a tough patrilineal one. Akachi Adimorah-Ezeigbo insists that the Nigerian woman learns and adopts strategies that would aid her survival and help her live a good life in the male-dominated society of Nigeria.

African Feminism and its branches point to the fact that African women's experiences are indeed different from those of western women. From the branches explained, one can observe and understand how they relate to African women in Africa and how they delineate their relationship with males, the patriarchal system, and other women. Having

⁷⁷Nkealah, Naomi (2016). "(West) African Feminisms and Their Challenges". *Journal of Literary Studies*, 32 (2): 61–74. DOI: [10.1080/02564718.2016.1198156](https://doi.org/10.1080/02564718.2016.1198156)

⁷⁸Nnaemeka, Obiomā. (2004). Nego Feminism: Theorizing, Practicing, and Pruning Africa's Way. *Signs*, 29(2), 357–385. <https://doi.org/10.1086/378553>

⁷⁹Nkealah, Naomi (2016) (West) African Feminisms and Their Challenges, *Journal of Literary Studies*, 32:2, 61-74, DOI: [10.1080/02564718.2016.1198156](https://doi.org/10.1080/02564718.2016.1198156)

discussed the concept of African Feminism, it is imperative to outline the concept of national security.

The Concept of National Security

National security is the safety and protection of a sovereign nation, including the citizens of the nation, its economy, and its institutions. Political, economic, military power and diplomacy are some of the measures a government relies on to achieve national security. Romm⁸⁰ (1993) indicates that the concept of national security is ambiguous since it has evolved from simpler definitions that had emphasized freedom from military threat and political coercion. Paleri⁸¹ (2008) defines national security as "...the measurable state of the capability of a nation to overcome the multi-dimensional threats to the apparent well-being of its people and its survival as a nation-state at any given time, by balancing all instruments of state policy through governance... and is extendable to global security by variables external to it." Paleri further notes that national security involves being able to protect and preserve one's nation's physical and territorial integrity, maintain, on reasonable terms, her economic relations with other countries, and consequently preserve her nature, institution and governance from incursions by foreigners, even as she controls her borders. Having explained what national security is not, Holmes⁸² (2015) defines national security as "... the safe keeping of the nation as a whole. Its highest order of business is the protection of the nation and its people from attack and other external dangers by maintaining armed forces and guarding state secrets." Grizold⁸³ (1994) explains that security is a "conscious human endeavor to establish the state through social activity organized into an adequate system." Dimitrijevic⁸⁴ (1973) enumerates five characteristics of national security as follows: "ensuring the existence of the state as a political community, existence of the nation (which is not identical with the existence of a particular state) and the physical survival of its population; protecting territorial integrity as the basic right of the state; maintaining political independence as an attribute

⁸⁰ Romm, Joseph. J. (1993). *Defining National Security: the Nonmilitary Aspects. Pew Project on America's Task in a Changed World (Pew Project Series). Council on Foreign Relations.* p. 122. ISBN 978-0-87609-135-7

⁸¹ Paleri, Prabhakaran. (2008). *National Security: Imperatives and Challenges.* Tata McGraw-Hill, New Delhi.

⁸² Holmes Kim R. (2015). *What Is National Security? The Heritage Foundation,* Pp 17-26. Retrieved from https://www.heritage.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/2015_IndexOfUSMilitaryStrength_What%20Is%20National%20Security.pdf

⁸³ Grizold, Anton. (1994). *The Concept of National Security in the Contemporary World. International Journal on World Peace, 11(3), 37–53.* <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20751984>

⁸⁴ Dimitrijevic, Vojin. (1973). *The Concept of Security in International Relations.* Beograd: Savremena Administracija.

of internationally recognized national status of the state; ensuring the quality of life; and embedding of the vital interest of the state in the national security policy.”

There are several dimensions of national security. They include; physical security, infrastructure security, computer security, political security, economic security, food security, health security, ecological or environmental security, and security of energy and natural resources.

Physical Security

National security entails managing physical threats using military force. A nation should have the capacity to mobilize its army to secure its borders to defend the nation against physical threats such as military aggression and attacks by non-state actors. Countries such as Sweden and South Africa configure their military forces for territorial defense. While others such as France, Russia,⁸⁵ the UK⁸⁶ and the US among others invest in high-cost expeditionary abilities that permit their forces to project power and sustain military operations abroad.

Infrastructure Security

This security is provided to protect, especially, critical infrastructure such as rail transport, highways, hospitals, airports, bridges, seaports, oil refineries, and water systems, among others. Terrorism, sabotage, information warfare and natural disasters are some of the threats to the infrastructure of a nation.

Computer Security

Also known as cybersecurity or IT security, entails the security of devices such as computers, computer networks, and Smartphone. In other words, this dimension of security is concerned with the protection of software, hardware, people, and data. It is a well-known fact that there is increasing reliance on computers in present-day society and that when a system is easily hacked into and accessed, it could lead to the destruction of critical civil and military infrastructures. The destruction of these critical structures can cause a malfunction of the state.

⁸⁵ Oliker, Olga (2016). Unpacking Russia's New National Security. Retrieved on 18/06/22 from <https://www.csis.org/analysis/unpacking-russias-new-national-security-strategy>

⁸⁶ HM Government. (2015). *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015*. Retrieved on 16/6/2022 from

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/478933/52309_Cm_9161_NSS_SD_Review_web_only.pdf

Political Security

While it is a fact that national security depends on political security, Rogers⁸⁷ (2010) argues that the equitability of the international order is also important. Therefore, political security depends on the rule of international law, the effectiveness of political institutions, diplomacy, and negotiation between nations and other actors in the field of security. Political security also depends on the effective political inclusion of disaffected groups and the security of the citizens (Rogers 2010).

Economic Security

The ability of a nation to maintain and develop the national economy is identified as economic security. Other dimensions of national security cannot be managed without economic security. Countries with sound or effective economic security do possess effective security setups. Developing countries are not economically advanced due to the high rate of unemployment and underpaid work. Countries such as the USA, China, and the UK among others have effective economic security and so they can access resources and markets in other nations, and of course, protect their markets at home.

Food Security

The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI),⁸⁸ explains that food security means that every person at all times has physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life. The IFPRI states that in the future, food security would be affected by climate change, increased population, an increment in the prices of food items, and environmental challenges. Therefore, nations must adopt strategies and policies that would deal with issues such as water allocation, land use patterns, promotion of sustainable agricultural technologies, food trade, and food processing among others.

Health Security

The World Health Organization⁸⁹ (WHO) defines global health security "...as the required activities that are both proactive and reactive, in order to minimize the danger

⁸⁷ Rogers, P. (2010). *Losing Control: Global Security in the Twenty-first Century*. 3rd ed. Pluto Press.

⁸⁸ International Food Policy Research Institute. *Food Security*. International Food Policy Research Institute. Retrieved on 16/06/2022 from <https://www.ifpri.org/topic/food-security>

⁸⁹ World Health Organization. *Health Security*. Retrieved on 16/6/2022 from

<https://www.who.int/health-> This study merges two postmodern theories to form the basis of analysis and interpretation of the selected Educational theatre productions. These theories are Canice Nwosu's *Ichoka* Mythic-

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and impact of acute public health events that endanger people's health across geographical regions and international boundaries." Health security includes activities and measures that mitigate public health incidents and ensure the health of citizens. Rushton and Youde⁹⁰ (2014) posit that health security is an emerging model in the field of international relations and security studies. Health security is the responsibility of a nation towards the citizens to protect the health and well-being of the populace.

Ecological or environmental security

Ecological or environmental security involves the integrity of the ecosystem and the biosphere and their ability to sustain a variety of life forms, including human life. Humans have over time damaged the ecosystems and therefore, this has attracted the attention of experts on ecological security. The degradation of the ecosystems such as topsoil erosion, deforestation, biodiversity loss, and climate change has a negative impact on economic security which can, in turn, lead to mass migration and cause pressure on assets somewhere else. If ecological security is not effectively managed, it would have an impact on agriculture. This would affect the economy of a nation which in turn affects national security. Romm⁹¹ (1993) categorizes the impacts of ecological changes on national security as; transnational environmental problems (climate change as a result of global warming, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity); local environmental pressure (resource scarcity causing local conflicts); and environmentally threatening outcomes of war (such as the destruction of agriculture in Carthage by the Romans).

Security of Energy and Natural Resources

Security of Energy and Natural Resources refers to the availability of adequate natural resources that aids a nation to develop its industry and economy. Farah⁹² (2015) notes that security, energy, natural resources, and their sustainability are acknowledged in the strategies for national security and have been included in the United Nations (UN)

Folkism, an African postmodern performance oriented theory, and Patrice Pavis' theory of *mise en scène* for the analysis of performance. [topics/health-security#tab=tab_1](#)

⁹⁰ Rushton, Simon and Youde, Jeremy (2014). *Routledge Handbook of Global Health Security*. London: Routledge.

⁹¹ Romm, Joseph J. (1993). *Defining National Security: the Nonmilitary Aspects*. Council on Foreign Relations Press

⁹² Farah, Paolo Davide (2015). Sustainable energy investments and national security: arbitration and negotiation issues, *The Journal of World Energy Law & Business*, Volume 8, Issue 6, Pp 497–500, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jwelb/jwv036>

Sustainable Development Goals. To combat power outages, the United States has installed a solar photovoltaic microgrid on their bases (Prehoda⁹³ *al.* 2017).

Abraham Maslow's Theory of Motivation

Abraham Maslow's theory of needs is utilized to study and understand how human beings essentially participate in behavioral motivation. Maslow describes the stages or patterns of motivation humans go through as; psychological, safety, belonging and love, social esteem, and self-actualization needs. Maslow states that when one has met the need of a particular stage, then one is motivated to meet the need at the next stage. Psychological needs are basic and they include, air, water, food, sexual intercourse, sleep, clothes and shelter. Maslow (1943) argues that when this psychological need is met, then one is motivated to satisfy the next need which is the safety need. The safety need includes health, personal security, emotional security, and financial security. As soon as this need is met, the need for the next stages which is belonging and love takes precedence and dominates the behavior of the individual. The component of the belonging and love stage are: family, friendship, intimacy, trust, acceptance and giving and receiving affection. The next stage is the social esteem need. Its components are; status, recognition, fame, prestige and attention. The last stage which is at the peak of the hierarchy of needs is the self-actualization need. Its components are; partner acquisition, parenting, utilizing and developing talents and abilities and pursuing goals.

Having discussed the ideology and concept of African Feminism, National Security, and Abraham Maslow's Law of Motivation, the questions that readily comes to mind is; how important, effective and relevant is the woman's roles in National security? Are women capable of providing security for the state although they are referred to as the weaker sex? This study intends to examine and understudy these posers from the perspective of the discourse. Therefore, the study will examine some women and their roles as kings and leaders, and their methods in information gathering for their benefit and that of the state in the long run. Discussed below are a few of such women in Africa, beginning from antiquity, the pre-colonial and the colonial or post-colonial eras.

Women in Egypt

There are several women in ancient Egypt's history who, through their efforts at gathering information utilized what they possessed and understanding where they stood, emerged as leaders and placed Egypt on a pedestal of success. These women included;

⁹³ Prehoda, E. W., Schelly, C., & Pearce, J. M. (2017). U.S. Strategic Solar Photovoltaic-powered Microgrid Deployment for Enhanced National Security. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, 78, 167–175. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.RSER.2017.04.094>

S/N	Name	Reign	Era
1	MerNeth;	Reign ca. 2970 BC	1st Dynasty
2	Sobekneferu	Reign 1806–1802 B.C	12th Dynasty
3	Neferneferuaten Nefertiti	Reign 1353-1336 B.C	18th Dynasty
4	Hatshepsut	Reign c. 1478 -1458 B.C	18th Dynasty
5	Cleopatra VII Philopator	Reign 51-30 B.C.	Hellenistic era/Ptolemaic Queen of Egypt

1. MerNeith

She was a queen in Egypt and she reigned in about 2970 BC, during the 1st Dynasty. Information about her comes from archaeological findings. Her tomb is similar to those of kings. Present in her tomb are; an underground chamber, graves for servants, a solar boat and sacrificial offerings. Dodson and Hilton⁹⁴ (2004 p. 140), and Tyldesley⁹⁵ (2006) mention that Merneith is associated with the kings Djer, Djet, and Den, as this is observed in a variety of seal impressions and inscribed on bowls. She is likely the mother of Den and the wife of Djet. Merneith is believed to have become ruler at the death of her husband Djet. Her son Den is presumed to be too young to be king. She assumed the title of king and ruled in the stead of her son until a time when he was old enough to rule. And when Den began to rule, she had the title “King's Mother, Merneith”. This was discovered on a clay seal in the tomb of her son Den (Wilkinson,⁹⁶ 2001). The theory of African Womanism, Maslow's law of motivation, and the concept of nationalism are evident in the life of this female king. Merneith is seen here as protecting the kingship and throne of Egypt when she ruled in the stead of her son, who was too young to become king at the death of her husband. She was motivated to take control of events in Egypt. If she had been a lazy, unwilling, and queen who lacked tact, conflicts that usually characterize ascendancy by usurpers and power mongers would have consumed Egypt during this period. Motherism, the strain of African feminism was exhibited by her. She was able to provide political and economic security of Egypt at this time.

⁹⁴ Dodson, Aidan & Hilton, Dyan: (2004), *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt*. Thames & Hudson

⁹⁵ Tyldesley, Joyce. (2006). *Chronicle of the Queens of Egypt: From Early Dynastic Times to the Death of Cleopatra (The Chronicles Series)*. Thames & Hudson; Illustrated edition.

⁹⁶ Wilkinson, Toby. (2001). *Early Dynastic Egypt* 1st Edition. Routledge.

2. Sobekneferu

Cooney⁹⁷ (2018) notes that she was one of the female kings of ancient Egypt. She reigned 1806–1802 B.C. in the 12th Dynasty. Sobekneferu was the last ruler of the 12th dynasty following the death of her brother Amenemhat IV. She was one of the few rulers to adopt the full royal titular. The royal titular is the standard convention of naming by Pharaohs of ancient Egypt. This titular symbolizes worldly power and holy might. It was at the end of her reign, i.e. after her death that Egypt entered the second intermediate period. Sobekneferu kept the kingdom together as one until it degenerated into a tumultuous period⁹⁸ known as the second intermediate period. Sobekneferu cared about national security, she effectively secured Egypt. But at her demise, Egypt entered the second intermediate period.

3. Neferneferuaten Nefertiti

Nefertiti of the 12th Dynasty (1370-1330 B.C.) reigned alongside her husband Akhenaten. They were the power couple of the ancient world of Egypt. They began a monotheistic religion as against the former polytheistic religion, in the veneration of only one god, the god Aten. Freed *et al.*⁹⁹ (1999) note that under their rule, Egypt witnessed immense wealth and posterity ever seen in the history of ancient Egypt. Grajetki¹⁰⁰ (2005) mentions the several titles Nefertiti had. They include: Hereditary Princess, Great of Praises, Lady of Grace, Sweet of Love, Lady of The Two Lands, Main King's Wife, his beloved, Great King's Wife, his beloved, Lady of All Women, and Mistress of Upper & Lower Egypt. Akhenaten erected several temples at Karnak. He dedicated one of the structures; the "Mansion of the Benben" to Nefertiti. In some scenes found on the talatat, Nefertiti appears as often as her husband. Redford¹⁰¹ (1987) states that she appears behind her husband and is seen as supporting her husband. She is also represented in scenes that showed her smiting her enemies, and also enemies captured decorating her throne. This act is the prerogative of the king; here she is portrayed carrying out the act. She was indeed a powerful king as she co-ruled with her husband. Nefertiti was promoted from the position of the great royal wife to that of co-ruler by her husband, Akhenaten

⁹⁷ Cooney, Kara. (2018). *When Women Ruled the World: Six Queens of Egypt*. National Geographic; Illustrated edition.

⁹⁸ Simpson, William Kelly (2001). "Twelfth Dynasty". In Redford, Donald B. (ed.). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt, Volume 3*. pp. 453–457. Oxford University Press.

⁹⁹ Freed, Rita E, Markowitz, Yvonne J, D'Auria, Sue H. (1999). *Pharaohs of the Sun : Akhenaten, Nefertiti, Tutankhamen*. Thames & Hudson; 1st ed. Edition.

¹⁰⁰ Grajetzki, Wolfram. (2005). *Ancient Egyptian Queens: A Hieroglyphic Dictionary*. Golden House Publications.

¹⁰¹ Redford, Donald B. (1987). *Akhenaten, the Heretic King*. Princeton University Press

before his death. Nefertiti and the royal family are portrayed in scenes at the palaces and tombs of the nobles. The tombs of Huya and Meryre II present scenes that portrayed Akhenaten and Nefertiti receiving tribute from foreigners. The Kharu people from the north and the Kush from the south brought gold and precious items as gifts to Akhenaten and Nefertiti. Nefertiti displayed nego-Feminism. She was indeed a supporter of her husband the king. She must have negotiated her position with her husband the king. In so doing, she did have the ears of the King. It is highly probable that Akhenaten took her advice in the running of the affairs of the state. Egypt was indeed very wealthy when she reigned alongside her husband. Having met all the other needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, she met the self-actualization need and thus became co-regent with her husband. Under the regency of both Nefertiti and Akhenaten, Egypt achieved economic, political, food and every other kind of national security that occurred during this period.

4. Hatshepsut

Dodson and Hilton¹⁰² (2004 p 13) state that as co-regent, she reigned from c. 1479 to 1458 BC. Egyptologists Fletcher¹⁰³ (2013) and William, H. Stiebing Jr.¹⁰⁴ (2008) note that she assumed the position of Pharaoh. She became queen of Egypt when she married her half-brother Thutmose II. She became king when her infant stepson Thutmose III died. It is believed that she gained power through the support of the male elites in Egypt since her reign was probably viewed as one that upheld patriarchy rather than challenged it. She held several positions. She was also an innovator. She co-ruled with her stepson (this was new, as only mothers could co-rule with their sons), she was a high priestess, and a placeholder for her father Thutmose I in Thebes, while he was at war. Because she was successful in these positions, the elites were confident that she could manage Egypt's wealth and trade. Cooney¹⁰⁵ (2018) states Hatshepsut was the only female that had ascended the throne of the pharaoh during the period of expansion and prosperity in Egypt. Evidenced here is indeed nego-feminism. First and foremost, she co-ruled with her stepson. This was unheard of. The male elite supported her intentions to ascend the throne because they were confident that she would not trounce patriarchy and that she could manage Egypt's wealth and trade. She also played the role of a mother especially

¹⁰²Dodson, Aidan & Hilton, Dyan: (2004), *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt*. Thames & Hudson.

¹⁰³Fletcher, Joann. (2013). *The Search for Nefertiti*. Hodder & Stoughton.

¹⁰⁴William, H. Stiebing Jr. (2008). *Ancient Near Eastern History and Culture* (2nd Edition) 2nd Edition, Pearson Higher Education.

¹⁰⁵Cooney, Kara. (2018). *When Women Ruled the World: Six Queens of Egypt*. National Geographic; Illustrated edition.

when she co-ruled with her step-son. She was able to work her way around the male elites which could have been a hindrance to her reign. She did secure Egypt for during her reign, Egypt grew in power and wealth. She was motivated to become king, having met all other needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

5. Cleopatra VII Philopator

She reigned between 51 and 30 B.C. Cleopatra VII Philopator, was the last pharaoh in Ptolemaic Egypt. Initially she ruled Egypt jointly with her father Ptolemy XII Auletes and then later with her brothers Ptolemy XIII and Ptolemy XIV. Although she was married to Ptolemy XIII at the age of eighteen by their father's will, Cleopatra made it clear that she would not share power with him and dropped his name from official documents. She also kept his face off the currency; reserving that honor for herself alone. She could speak six different languages including Aramaic, Egyptian, Ethiopic, Greek, Hebrew and Latin. At Circa 48 B.C., Cleopatra fell from power and fled to Syria. While in exile, she assembled a mercenary army and rebelled. She quickly allied herself with Julius Caesar, capitalizing on his anger at Ptolemy XIII for killing Pompey, a Roman consul and the widower of his daughter Julia. With Caesar's help, Cleopatra reclaims her throne alongside her youngest brother Ptolemy XIV. After Julius Caesar died, she fell in love with Mark Anthony, who gave her several cities defeated by the Roman Empire. Cleopatra displayed negoti-feminism before and during her reign as Pharaoh. She had a child for Julius Caesar and then Mark Anthony. She worked for the greater Egypt. Egypt was the last of the Hellenistic kingdoms to fall to Rome.

Having discussed women of ancient Egypt, it is important, we view women in Nigeria prior to the incursion of colonialists and thereafter. These women include; Queen Amina of Zaria, Queen Idia of the Old Benin Empire, Queen Moremi of the Ile-Ife kingdom and king Ahebi Ugbabe the only female king in colonial Africa.

Queen Amina of Zaria

She was a Hausa Muslim woman who was born in about 1533 in the city-state of Zazzau. Her parents were King Nikatau 22nd, ruler of Zazzau and Queen Bakwa Turunkur.¹⁰⁶ She is believed to have died in 1610. She lived in the city of Zazzau, present-day Zaria in Kaduna State. She grew up in her grandfather's court. Her grandfather favoured, taught and instructed her on military and political affairs. At age sixteen, she had several male and female slaves. When her parents died in about 1566, her brother became the king of

¹⁰⁶ Smith, Bonnie G. (2008). *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Women in World History*. Oxford University Press.

Zazzau. Amina, who had been well instructed and had distinguished herself, became the leading warrior of her brother's army. She is celebrated today in Hausa praise songs. She is praised as the daughter of Nikatu who was as capable as a man and led men to war. Her brother died in 1576 and she became queen of Zazzau. After being crowned queen, she waged a 24-year campaign against her neighbours in order to protect and expand the territory of Zazzau. She conquered large swathes of land as far as Kwararafa and Nupe. As queen, Zazzau had more territories added to her. Amina protected her cities by surrounding them with earthen walls, and this became commonplace until the British conquered Zazzau in 1904. Many of those walls survive today and they are called *ganuwar Amina* (Amina's walls). During her rule of 34 years, she forced Katsina, Kano, Nupe and Kwararafa to pay tribute to her. Before her death, Amina had pushed the frontiers of Zazzau to the south of the Niger-Benue confluence. As colonialists took over leadership, the Hausa women's ruling class began to experience a steady diminution in their influence and systematically, were deprived of their autonomy and authority. Queen Amina exhibited Motherism as she cared about Zazzau and the structures of the society. She also protected her city-state and also extended the frontiers of her state. She collected tributes for her state. She was motivated to become queen after she had met all the other needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. She had many men and women in her employ, therefore obtaining information about the security of her city-state and enemy states could not have been problematic.

Queen Idia of the Old Benin Empire

Idia was the mother of Oba Esigie (r.1504–1550c.e.) of the old Benin Empire. She lived between the late 15th and early 16th century in Benin, southwest, Nigeria. She was a vibrant, daunting, tactical, and military warrior at the time. She fought before and during the reign of Oba Esigie her son. At the end of the 15th century B.C., Oba Ozolua, the preceding king died and left the throne for two powerful sons who were Esigie and Arhuanan to dispute over succession. Consequently, this power tussle between the sons caused chaos in the kingdom of Benin and undermined the place of Benin City as the political and cultural centre of the kingdom (Bortolot,¹⁰⁷ 2000). Idia raised an army for Esigie and Esigie defeated his brother through the help of Idia. During the same period, the Igala people attempted to make an inroad into the northern territories of the Benin Empire. However, Queen Idia raised an army and went to war, through the magical, and medicinal help rendered by her, Oba Esigie defeated the Igalas on the battlefield thereby

¹⁰⁷ Bortolot, A.I. (2000). Idia: The First Queen Mother of Benin. In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art

her as his queen. When Moremi returned to *Esimirin* River to fulfill her pledge, she was asked to sacrifice her only son, Oluorogbo. She pleaded with the god, but the god did not heed her pleas. This grieved her greatly. In consoling her the Ife people offered to be her eternal children. They have kept the promise to this day. The Edi Festival is in honour of the sacrifice Moremi made for the Yoruba people. In 2017, Oba Ogunwusi, the Ooni of Ife erected a statue of Moremi in his palace. It is the tallest in Nigeria and the 4th tallest in Africa. Moremi indeed exhibited Motherism a strain of African Feminism here. She also cared about the security of the Yoruba people so she allowed herself to be captured as a slave. She smartly gathered necessary information that would aid the Ife people in defeating their enemy. This method adopted by Moremi could only be achieved by a woman as beautiful and courageous as Queen Moremi of Ile-Ife.

King Ahebi Ugbabe

Achebe¹¹⁰ (2011) delineates the times and life of Ahebi Ugbabe. She was born in Enugu-Ezike, an Igbo community in present Eastern Nigeria in the late 19th century. Her father, by the name Ugbabe Ayibi, was a farmer and a palm wine tapper. Her mother, Anekwu Ameh was also a farmer and a trader in Umuida. She had two brothers. She lived in Unadu among her mother's family. She returned to Umuida later, but she ran away after a brief period. At different points in her life, she was a slave married to a deity. During this period, she ran away to Igalaland in order to avoid this punishment for the crime her father committed. When she ran away, she became a sex worker. As a sex worker, she was able to access the king of Igalaland as well as British colonial officers. She learned to speak several languages such as Igala, Nupe, and Pidgin English. She was successful and gained independence and this helped her redefine sex work in the Igbo society. It became a voluntary service rather than that of servitude. Her relationship with Attah, the ruler of Igala and the British officials helped in facilitating her return to Enugu-Ezike and supported her claim to the office of the headman, a warrant chief and finally a female king. She was also a strong and effective leader of her people, she was a collaborator supported and empowered by colonialist regime in Nigeria. She was made king because the British officials noted that she was intelligent, a lady of influence and power, one with a quiet disposition and one who spoke sensibly.

As a king, she was high-handed in her dealings. She sowed seeds of resentment by conscripting forced labour and imposing a census and a British tax. Igbo culture did not allow for humans to be counted. This was the reason for the Women's war. Ahebi exerted

¹¹⁰ Achebe, Nwando (2011). *The Female King of Colonial Nigeria: Ahebi Ugbabe*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

power and influence as king because she had the backing of colonial officials. She asserted herself as a man as she married many wives who bore her many children, and these children bore her name. These wives were women who escaped from abusive husbands. She soon fell from grace because she violated traditions by being in attendance at a spiritual masquerade ritual with her mask. She was not meant to be a part of that ritual for its admittance was only to men. The men took her to court. Unfortunately for her, the British officials took sides with the male elders. Ahebi died in 1948 and was buried according to customs for burying men. Before her death, she had organized and performed elaborate burial rites for herself. She did it in such a way that society would always remember. These burial rites included gunfire, animal sacrifice, and music of remembrance. Ahebi was motivated to become who she was due to her experiences. However, although she cared more for herself than the community, she did take care of runaway women abused by their husbands. She married them as wives and gave them identity. The fact about her is that she had the ears of the colonial officials and it was easy for her to obtain information that could be of benefit to her.

Conclusion

Women in African societies are known to have played several roles. They have and still function as priestesses, queens, kings, mothers, husbands, and information gatherers among others. In today's world where terrorism and all sorts of insecurity hold sway in society, the government of the day needs to mainstream women into the peace and security apparatus. During the Nigerian Civil War, women were able to pass information to one another about the operation of the Federal troops when they later made an inroad into Eastern Nigeria. When the Federal troops had gained control of Asaba, Asaba women continued to trade with their friends, kit and kin on the other side of the Niger. They could trade successfully because they had information on the day and time they could carry out their transactions. Women have the capacity to gather information due to the fact they can multitask. As a matter of fact, some criminals are known to disguise themselves as women to cause havoc or to evade arrest. Women can decipher these. Chikodiri *et al.*¹¹¹ (2021) state that "women are well-known for tapping into different emotional resources and are relatively ideal for espionage and intelligence gathering, especially in countries confronted by violent extremist groups. They have the capacity to help in gaining local support and gathering useful information for state security forces in sensitive cultural and religious environments where there is insecurity." Women have worked assiduously to take charge of the home in the absence of fathers and raise strong and independent children, who become effective leaders of tomorrow. From ancient to pre and post-colonial African societies, the role of women even in national security cannot be overemphasized. It is high time the government took cognizance of the role of women in information gathering and all aspects of national security.

¹¹¹ Chikodiri Nwangwu, Freedom C. Onuoha, Gerald E. Ezirim & Kelechi C. Iwuamadi (2021) *Women, Intelligence Gathering and Countering Violent Extremism in Nigeria: A Postcolonial Feminist Discourse, Democracy and Security*, 17:3, 278-295, sourced from <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/journalInformation?journalCode=fdas20> DOI: [10.1080/17419166.2021.1920929](https://doi.org/10.1080/17419166.2021.1920929)