UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE

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The Influence of Pop Culture on Feminism and Gender Equality

A study of West Africans in Diaspora (Finland)

Faculty of Information Technology

Communication Sciences

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Abstract

This Thesis aims to gain useful insight on the Influence of Pop culture on feminism and gender equality studying West Africans living in Finland for over a given period of time.

Using dance as an aspect of popular culture in this thesis, the theoretical framework is derived using theories that connects elements of feminism as a by-product of popular culture.

With a qualitative multi method approach, using in-debt interviews and dance ethnography, this research analyses the thoughts, feelings and expressions of the participants and tries to draw reasonable conclusion by using certain sub categories as a result of a wide range of different ideologies, perspectives and experiences.

Key Words: Pop Culture, Feminism, Gender Equality and Diaspora

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is about the influence of Pop culture on feminism and gender equality in West Africans Living in Diaspora. Concentrating mostly on West Africans living in Finland because of easy access to materials and analysis as at the point in time this research was conducted.

Despite the rise of certain feminist' groups and media awareness about gender equality and feminism, there is an obvious back slack in the rise of opportunities and representation for women in Africa. My research however focuses on West Africa, and most especially Nigeria being the most populous African country.

Topics concerning gender equality and subordination are still present issues that are debateable in many African countries as majority of African women are still being suppressed and not given equal opportunities with the opposite sex. Issues like genital mutilation, or early marriage and child bearing, leading to lack of female education, may mean lesser employment opportunities for women in certain economic spheres. Women could also be seen as liabilities and unproductive in work or employment spaces because of child bearing and long maternity leaves. In most of the African society today, women are not only seen as the weaker sex, but almost bear most of the burdens of the grave injustice of gender in the African society. Perceptions like classification of women as the "weaker sex" put a lot of women under the subordination category, therefore, limiting opportunities for women to earn a good means of living, self-sufficiency and independence.

The education and orientation system over the years also have a significant role to play in societal Gender attributed roles. Girls and young Women are thought to be limited in goals and achievement in order to be attractive to a man and seen and suitable for marriage. , "*We teach girls to shrink themselves, to make themselves smaller. We say to girls 'You can have ambition, but not too much'*." (Adichie, 2014). Much emphasis is laid on how women should behave in an impressive and attractive behaviour to men, the opposite sex, but the reverse is not the case. A girl is raised and brought up with the notion that marriage and being a good wife is the key to success in life such that when a young woman is her early thirties is not married, she is seen as a 'failure' and for a man, he is seen as not being able to make the right pick yet.

Modern popular culture transmitted by the mass media also has had a lot of influence on gender roles and perceptions. There are far too many magazines, books, television

programmes that exaggerate these roles, teaching women and young girls how to be more "ladylike", how to be and not be to please men, but there are by far fewer guides on how a man should be. Also, certain pop icons are influencing feminism in different ways. These icons seem to portray and set the new trend of what feminism should be. We hear songs for example from popular pop icon Beyoncé's "*who run the world? Girls*" amongst many others. Beyoncé, when she stood in front of a symbolic sign that read "Feminist" during the 2014 MTV video music awards, made her gain a lot of applause and recognition from many around the world including feminist scholars.

How are they perceived by audiences and female counterparts especially in West Africa? McRobbie, in 2008 argues that some examples of popular culture especially in the western world use feminist rhetoric to "undo" feminist gains and focuses on cultural norms that contradicts the goals of feminism as a social and human rights movement, by analysing post feminism in a social and cultural environment. McRobbie analyses many different ways in which popular culture has been used to 'dismantle' and undo the initial achievements of feminism or feminist gains, and refers to it as feminism undone. But how true or to what extent can this be ascertained? This might as well lead to a debate that has no end. One thing for sure is that feminism is eminent, glaring and very much alive in modern day popular culture. There are dozens of television series, shows and movies that portray female characters as smart, diverse and powerful. For example, Scandal, 30 Rock, Frozen and many others.

Linking this to West Africans in diaspora, my interest seeks to ascertain media influences or cultural values here in Europe has somehow changed their thoughts, perceptions or mind set about feminism and gender Equality. This is because, dating back to the pre- colonial times in West Africa, gender roles were said to be balanced and women played more active roles in the society. The British colonization was said to have somewhat affected gender roles which seems to favour men more than women. This research hereby seeks to analyse if by any chance, travelling and living in Europe have somehow affected thoughts and feelings about Feminism , and if there is any chance that their new perceptions on the cultural differences will influence the situation back home. It is therefore pertinent to understand how feminism came to be, how it has been, where it is going, and how it is perceived by different people.

1.2 Research Questions and Objectives

As the aim of this research is to analyse the influence of Pop culture on feminism and gender equality, using West Africans who have lived in Europe (Finland) for a given period of time as a study, certain questions have been outlined to be focused on to keep and prevent this research from straying within the topic.

1. How the people living in diaspora see the impact of the western media and pop culture on the understanding of feminism and gender equality in West Africa?
2. How do they see these changes to be presented or embodied in different performances or performative acts like dancing?

This research analyses the interplay of recent and previous studies in relation to this research. This interplay, might somewhat lead to a debate as it not only examines the effect of western pop culture on West Africa in itself and West Africans living in diaspora, It also compares the cultural shift of a West African living in diaspora and to ascertain if they had different views before their migration.

This research also aims to ascertain and analyse certain impressions and understandings of feminism and feminists' movement among West Africans now living in diaspora as a result of different misunderstandings conceptions about the feminist movement and waves of feminism.

This research also aims to focus on how several elements of mass media pop culture icons around the world that have influenced feminism especially in West Africa and also, analyse specifically, a performative act, Sabar dance, which is a predominant act of popular culture in some parts of West Africa and how it influences gender roles and feminism, taking a critical look at feminism, and gender equality in each case.

1.3 History and Waves of Feminism

Just as culture has developed and changed over the years, so has feminism and feminist

theory. The major changes that have occurred are referred to as waves and this is very important in understanding the present wave of feminism and what it involves. Feminism is defined by Trier-Bienek in 2015, as happening in "waves." As she puts it, just like a literal wave in an ocean, as one wave moves out another comes in, but all, still retaining much of the structure of the original wave. (Trier-Bienek, 2015). Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, in her Ted talk in 2008, however stated that there has always been feminism since the time of her great grandmother even though at that time there might have been no name for it. By protesting, fighting and refusing to be married away at a young age and running away from home, she describes her great grandmother a feminist. This is to say, that feminism in its real sense has come a long way. Feminism has also been a tool of distant intellectual discourse and political action and engagement to the majority of women scholars and activists in Sub-Saharan Africa (Adamu, 2006). In Nigeria for example, women have struggled against acts of discrimination and violence as far back as the 19th century. Women played significant roles in anti-colonial struggles, National Independence struggles, Participated and formed various movements that helped in the intervention and representation of women in the political landscape especially at the grass root level. Many of such struggles and movements at that time were also not labelled any particular name. But these were women that recognized that there was a problem with the gender norms of the society and made efforts to fix it. As feminism began to evolve, it had many negative feelings and some people felt uncomfortable at the mere mention of the word. At the early stages of the awareness of the concept of feminism, it majorly attracted negative impressions, and usually, women involved were often addressed or associated and stigmatised as being bitter or, 'men haters'. They were also seen as frustrated single or divorced women with "nothing better to do but cause trouble" (Abdul, et al., 2011).

The first wave of feminism which occurred mainly during the nineteenth and early twentieth century dealt mainly the issue of suffrage, inequalities and women's rights in property, marriage and political power. This wave of feminism majorly started in the United States and the United Kingdom (Adeleye-Fayemi, 2010). At this time, feminism also gained attention in West Africa and especially in Nigeria and this emerged out of demands to improve opportunities for women and eliminate factors depriving women from enjoying their full human rights. (Abdul, et al., 2011). This period can be evidently traced to the pre- colonial and colonial period in West African countries. The colonial period was said to be an export

oriented economy as the British Colonial administrators undermined the activities of women. It opened the Nigerian and other West African boarders to the importation of machines being imported from Europe and Asia, which undermined the creativity and craft industry previously dominated by women. New patriarchal concept was introduced which restricted women to occupations that yielded lower finances and access to loans.

"*Historically, women have faced a wide spectrum of experiences in navigating through several hindrances that have confronted them. The culture of patriarchy, male chauvinism and anarchy has undermined the rights of women and the outcome of this is the exploitation and marginalisation of women in the affairs of development both at the private and public spheres*". (Abdul, et al., 2011).

While for most of this period in Africa, women were fighting for the right for public participation, political representation and suffrage, earlier form the early nineteenth century in the western world, there were said to be grumblings of freedom of the enslaved. One of the most noted Women according to Trier-Bieniek, in 2015 was an African-American abolitionist, Sojourner Truth. She was said to be the first woman of colour and a former slave to go to court and win a case over reclaiming a child she owned. This period of feminism also brought about the evolution of some feminist theories which includes an analysis of sexism, new standards for social interaction and strategies for combating and challenging patriarchy. (Hooks, 2002).

Second wave feminism was a period that begun mostly in the early 1960s and ran through the late 80s and even now, still co-exist with the third wave and maybe fourth wave feminism. The movement highly linked the cultural and political inequalities of women and encouraged the understanding of the phrase and mantra "Personal is political". This encouraged women to understand aspects of their personal lives as deeply politicized and highly reflective of a sexist structure of power. The wave also focused on better career opportunities for women, reproductive rights, violence against women and equality of wages and salaries for both men and women. This movement was also significantly marked by the Miss America beauty pageant protest in the 60s to show how women in pageant competitions were paraded like cattle. This highlighted the underlying assumption that *"the way women look is more important than what they do, what they think, or even whether they think at all"*. (Freeman,

1975). According to Freeman, Women were more or less victims of a patriarchal, commercialized, oppressive beauty culture. (Freeman, 1975).

Two popular literatures which characterised the second of feminism were the works of Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* and Simone de Beauvoir's *book The Second Sex*. The work of both women Friedan and de Beauvoir, combined were said to have created a noticeable impact in creating a sense of urgency for feminists to develop a possible second generation of women who had the zeal and were willing to continue work and expand the work of previous generations of women (Trier-Bienek, 2015).

The second wave of feminism was centred on many areas like the portrayal of woman as objects through the beauty pageant protest, and other areas like women's rights, violence, prostitution and pornography, birth control and access to contraception and the growing need for representation in political office and work force. (Trier-Bienek, 2015).

The third wave feminism began in the early 1990s arising as a result of inadequacies perceived in the first and second wave feminism. This is referred to as the *Lipstick feminism* or the girly, *cyber girl* feminism as McNaughton puts it 1997. (Mcnaughton, 1997). Third wave Feminism also sought to challenge, or avoid what seems to be the hegemonic thought and actions of middle class European and American feminists. (Adeleye-Fayemi, 2010). This wave of feminism brought about the discussion of sexes and debates between feminists as different views arose to whether there are important difference in sexes, as characterised by gender or not. There were also backlashes and critics of Betty Friedan's "*The Feminine Mystique",* as her theory was criticized on focusing more a selected group of middle aged, college educated, married white women and left out the black community and women of colour who had no choice but to work. Women of colour were reported to have felt like they were marginalised or sidelined by the waves of feminism.

The Idea of *"the Black feminism thought"*, a book by Hill Collins, was another activism that was birthed in the third wave of feminism even though it was highly inspired and influenced by the second wave of feminism. This thought was born out the oppression and aimed to find ways to survive in economic injustice. This activism addressed the need to place the voices, struggles and experiences of women of colour at the fore front of the feminist theory. (Trier-Bienek, 2015). The thought argued and catapulted questions of contradictions between dominant ideologies and their devalued status. For example, the critical social theory, industrial practises and struggles pertaining particularly for African- American women,

Hill Collins, (Hill Collins, 1990) argues that, particularly for African-American women, critical social theory is about bodies of knowledge and industrial practices that particularly concentrates on the questions and struggles pertaining to black women. As Trier-Bieniek, 2015 puts it, "*Hill Collins connected these scenarios to being "the outsider looking in", defining Black Feminist Thought as a metaphorical margin, a place where Black women could see the world they are supposed to exist in but could not quite participate".* (Trier-Bienek, 2015)*.*

The impact of pop culture was however evident in third wave feminism as it was used as a tool of activism in protests in the early to mid-1990s through most of the music in circulation. The '*riot Grrrl*' movement for example was one of the major movements which started in the Washington D.C. area in the early 1990s. The movement accelerated a way for many young women to take part and become very much involved in the male-dominated punk rock scene. (Trier-Bienek, 2015).

Fourth wave feminism which was a movement said to have started in 2012, sought again to fulfil inadequacies of the previous waves of feminism but this movement in particular is targeted and defined by the use of social media and technology according to Kira Cochrane, a former British publicist and Journalist with Sunday times, the Guardian Newspaper. There is scanty literature that emphasizes on fourth wave feminism, however, the wave is believed to be focused on issues like Violence against women and sexual harassment using mainly social media and the evolution of social media hashtags and "mentions" as a weapon of activism.

1.4 Post Feminism and Pop culture

This notion according to Gill, in 2007 is a term for feminism that in a way, stands between the second wave of feminism and the present struggle for an agreement to what 'post feminism' should really stand for and after about two decades, still no concrete agreement as to what is really stands for. (Gill, 2007). These debates however, mostly including the history and excursions of feminism as well as gender consciousness of young women and transformations in media culture. Gill further suggests that one of post feminisms' characteristics includes an increase of contemporary media and cultural products and argues that it should be conceived more of as "sensibility". This notion sexualizes and imposes "subjectivity" on feminity as a bodily property with a contradictory discourse of feminists' past struggles as it entangles both feminist and anti-feminist themes.

McRobbie, in 2008, also presented the conceptual frames and describes the process by which feminist gains of the 1970s and 1980s have been fully undermined. She proposes that feminism has been undone through a wide range of popular culture and machinations which at the same time appearing to be well-intended in response to feminism. This undoing has also been 'compounded unexpectedly' as she puts it by some sociologist including Giddens and Beck. These sociologist from my research and findings have written scholarly articles that addresses the issue of gender and social change. She also proposes that feminism has been cast into the shadows and is now seen as a thing of the past and argues that post-feminism certainly tries to invoke feminism to reflect it as a means that was used in trying to attain equality of sexes. In McRobbie's 2008 *Aftermath of Feminism*, The UK Independent newspaper column of Bridget Jones Diary is an example where a generational logic of post-feminism was distinctly portrayed. The film celebrates femininity as something that is lost and can be retrieved. Post feminism in this context seems to mean gently rebuking the female past while also at the same time retrieving it with other tolerable aspects of life like the right to sexual freedom, right to drink alcohol or smoke, have a good time and be economically and socially independent. Feminism has gradually been pushed across detectable popular culture and also being retrieved at the same time and is being entangled in popular and political culture, finding it difficult to disentangle itself. Post-feminism can also be described as a double entanglement as a result of some certain views and comments in Judith Butler's book (Gender Trouble, 1990) which comprises the co-existence of neo-conservative values in relation to gender, sexuality and family life. McRobbie, also strongly believes that it is therefore necessary for feminism to be dismantled as a result of this double entanglement with popular and political culture. Also, the extent to which the 'housewife' or 'ordinary woman' was heavily utilized facilitated a certain mode of feminist inquiry and various intersections in the media and cultural studies. Feminist values fond expression in the 1990 and several movements addressing certain issues like domestic violence, equal pay and work place harassment got wider dissemination through various forms of mass media like newspapers and magazines which gave rise to optimism and gave rise to an idea of feminist success.

McRobbie points out that magazines are constantly reinventing themselves in order to maintain circulation and numbers. Instead of supporting feminist goals, they follow popular trends so that when feminism falls out of fashion and becomes outdated, the magazines fall

in line. She explains that there is a co-existence of anti-feminist and feminist agendas within popular culture, and analyses their messages through certain media contents like The Bridget Jones's diary, fatal attraction, and the makeover reality shows. This considers post-feminism as a 'sensibility' that promotes contents of the media like films, television shows, adverts, magazines contents and many other sources of media content hence suggesting that media is a key source of defining gender roles and in this case, the media has portrayed feminism as a historical movement that might be out of date.

"Post feminism has never been defined. It remains the product of assumption.' It is a characteristic post feminism shares with its semantic relative, postmodernism, which has been similarly described as 'an amorphous thing'. - Vicki Coppock, Deena Haydon and Ingrid Richter (The Illusions of 'Post-feminism' (1995). (Gamble, 2006).

1.5 Popular Culture, Dance and Diaspora

As this research is focused towards pop culture and how it influences feminism and gender equality within West Africans living in diaspora, it is therefore pertinent to defragment Pop culture in itself and examine the particular dimension of pop culture of interest which is dance. Since Pop culture is generally understood as a set of practises and belief systems that are dominant within a society or as Tim Delaney, 2007 puts it, "*The Vernacular of People's culture that dominates the society as a given point in time*", which includes dimensions of culture, social interactions, and activities which is usually influenced by the mass media, and the feelings produced as a result of interactions with these objects. Dance therefore, is also a fragment of mainstream popular culture as it takes places in different social context, and it an activity of traditional popular appeal. (Thomas, 1995). It also involves social interactions within people of a given society and has different dimensions pertaining to particular cultures.

 As Thomas further illustrates, dancing in general terms, takes a wide range of different forms and also occurs in varieties of social contexts which surrounds the entirety of the high art/popular culture. Again, she reiterates that dance can be found in different forms and shapes of products of "popular (mass) culture like musical theatre, films, television and pop

videos and have been 'dubbed' traditionally as 'Light entertainment' (Dyer 1992)(Thomas, 1995). Which means that even though dance is a form of light entertainment and culture, it is also a product of popular culture and entertainment as they are heavily influenced by cultural norms and also a channel through which cultural forms and tradition is displayed.

"While the favoured dance styles and genres exhibited in this diverse cultural arena have their roots in popular culture, drawing often on black cultural forms, they have also been influenced by and fed back into 'art' dance and popular dance forms." (Thomas, 1995).

Dance can also be seen as a scene of identification especially when moving outside one's culture. As described by Nigerian writer, Chinua Achebe, 'The Education of a British Protected child' He tries to maintain a level ground when trying to infuse colonial dance steps. Skinner and Kringebach in 2012, described it as a ground between colonialism and post-colonialism. Chinua Achebe in 2010 also describes dance in almost the same sense and as he puts it,

"Nigerian nationality was for me and my generation an acquired taste – like cheese. Or better still, like ballroom dancing. Not dancing per se, for that came naturally; but this titillating version of slow-slow-quick-quick-slow performed in close body contact with a female against a strange, elusive beat. I found, however, that once I had overcome my initial awkwardness I could do it pretty well". — (Achebe, 2010)*.*

As Skinner subsequently notes, he is attracted to the refined acquired and cultured colonial quickstep, which involved titillating version of 'slow-quick' movements with close body contact with a female which is an 'European import' even though dancing for him originally came naturally. Skinner reiterates further by using Argentinean dance scholar, Marta Savigliano as an example. Savigliano , who wrote about her identity and the Tango dance, described dance as the 'locus' of her Identification since migrating from her homeland culture. (Savigliano 1995:12) (Skinner & and Kringebach, 2012). She describes it as a place to find that space, to decolonize herself as a woman most especially, in a male dominated post-colonial South America. "*Tango is my strategic language, a way of talking about, understanding, and exercising decolonization*". (Savigliano 1995: 16) (Skinner & and Kringebach, 2012).

Johnson, 2012 in her dissertation also highlighted the trials and travails of Nigerian Musician Fela Anikulapo Kuti (1938-1997). She traces his travails through an emotional last night performance of Fela in New York City, staged like his place of worship and musical club, popularly known as the Shrine. He tells the story through his musicals and dance, of how his family was assaulted including his wives and the events leading to his mother's (Funmilayo

Anikulapo Kuti) death. (One of the pioneer post- colonial feminist in Nigeria). The performance also tells the diasporic story of movements of his parents to London and his migration to study in the United States and his journey back home, fatigued but hopeful and unwillingness to abandon his 'beloved Nigeria'. The performance which consisted of a lot of dance and choreography in general was said to have stirred a deep consciousness of belonging among diasporans especially through the source of attention to the Yoruba practice and ritual (Johnson, 2012). Johnson, argues that there are various kinds of movements that the Fela's show constituted including the point that diaspora is practised and preformed and that folks make use of diaspora to consume their individual identities. This makes diaspora work on various levels, one of which specifically is on a level of performance (Choreographic diaspora) where dance features inarguably as a major composition of the African diaspora. What this entails, is that Dance as one of the symbols as well as an element of pop culture, especially among West African cultures in diaspora and not only unites, but is an avenue for performance of identities.

Therefore, dance in this sense can be said to be seen as a point of reference to cultural identities especially within 'black diaspora' communities and a necessary cultural prop which is often times used as a form of communication and team bonding instrument between diasporans.

Linking dance to popular culture and how it affects feminism or the feminists' movements, Thomas in 1995 points out that dance is also an activity that is bound up with processes of gender roles and identification, particularly in relation to girls and young women (Frith 1978, McRobbie 1984, Mungham 1976) (Thomas, 1995). Thomas goes on to suggest that there have been some 'Negative puritanical sexual connotations' associated with popular female dance performers who have been central protagonist especially in the classical ballet stage making dance itself, 'worthy of exploration' in terms relating to race and gender representations and most especially in the case of this research, within West Africans living in Finland (Diaspora).

Dance in this research is the element through which the West African diaspora will be examined and analysed through giving attention to choreography and body movements where national histories abide and also to the way the body embodies the West African diaspora. This also considers the ways the West African diaspora is symbolically engaged to their true nationalities and homeland which consists of majority of the vast diaspora (West Africans) not yet in diaspora.

Even though this research might not go deep into the anthropology of dance as to what dance should really be like to qualify as dance, or whether specific movements have to be recognized as dance in specific contexts in culture and cultural studies, This study however analyses the considered universal definition of dance which is said to be bounded rhythmical body movements that are "performed during some kind of altered state of consciousness". (Wulff 2001:3209) (Skinner & and Kringebach, 2012).

2.1 Definition and discussion of Key words and Concepts (Literature Review) and Theoretical Framework

Key words: Feminism, Feminism and Gender, Popular culture.

2.2 Feminism

The idea of feminism was said to be originally defined by Charles Fourier, a French Philosopher in 1837 who defined Feminism as a broadest of ideologies and movements that focuses on defining and achieving social, economic and political equality for women. Although there have been many contentions and debates about the true representation of feminism, western feminism however occurred in three different waves in history which I have explained earlier in this paper, but still did not do justice as regarding what feminism is in this present day. It is however pertinent to fully understand what feminism is and its central core positions especially as related to this paper. This might be quite difficult task to detangle the many different stands of feminism because some views are not only "divergent but sometimes forcefully opposed". (Freedman, 2001).

Having however earlier defining feminism by Charles Fourier, there have been debates over where and when it was first used and this chapter tries to pick out the common characteristics of other authors' theories and concepts of feminism and try to provide a common ground upon which this thesis is built. Feminism as a term could be relatively modern but then 'feminist' as Freedman puts it was first used in 1871 in French Medicine to describe male patients that had a 'cessation' in their reproductive organ development and growth and thus were seen as 'feminized' or "suffering from 'feminization' of their bodies". (Fraisse 1995) (Freedman, 2001).

Alexandre Dumas Fils, also a French writer and an anti-feminist, picked up the term and used it to describe it as women who behaved in a rather masculine way. So medically, it was a term used to address the feminization of men, while politically, it was used in describing the virility of women. (Fraisse, 1995:316) (Freedman, 2001). This seems interesting as the word 'feminist' was not used by women to describe themselves and their actions but instead, a word to describe a certain phenomenon in male bodies.

Feminism has been widely explored and studied as so many sources have concluded that there were three major waves in feminism. However, some authors have gone the extra mile

and shed some more light on more background information, characterising feminism as having three waves but more so, three "theories" focusing on feminism. "Liberal or Mainstream feminism, is known for its concrete and pragmatic change focus; Radical feminism includes the ideas of reshaping society and its structures to suit women; and Cultural or "difference" feminism which emphasizes the celebration of being a woman". Other fragments in one single theory of feminism have emerged from complications with race and class divisions (https://academic.eb.com/, 2010).

According to a Canadian encyclopaedia (Eichler & Lavigne, n.d.) (Converse, 2010) It describes feminism as a social justice movement, characterized by the groups that were formed for the aim and purpose to address certain issues. "This New Women's Movement" began towards the late 1960's and during the 1970's the movement then began to include a few radical groups to include more women from varying classes and races / ethnicities. Major goals were "creating a just society for women means the elimination of sexism in all areas, particularly in the legal system, in the organization of social production, in the perception and treatment of women's bodies, and in the arts, sciences, religion, education and the mass media" (Eichler & Lavigne, n.d.) (Converse, 2010).

Going back in history, it is quite difficult to avoid defining or reviewing feminism based on the different waves of feminism as various definitions, terms , ideas or concepts, were birth as a result of the present wave of feminism that occurred at that particular time.

The European women's history in particular contributes important insights to understanding and defining feminism as well the Americas' political social and economic contexts which are very much embedded in the early debates of feminism.

According to Offen in 2012, in the early 1970s, American historians began to investigate the history of European women and their women's movement and it was understood that feminism put simply was a "theory and/or movement concerned with advancing the position of women through such means as achievement of political, legal, or economic rights equal to those granted men". And a feminist was, of course, defined as a person who espoused feminism. The same perspective is seen to be conveyed even through most popular histories of the American women's movement published before 1970 and at that time, feminism began with the focus on votes for women at Seneca Falls in 1848. Other key notions were equal rights granted men, the attainment of legal control and property ownership, ability and qualification to work in 'male dominated' professions and institutional hierarchies.

The English dictionary not being enough to fully define feminism, especially in the early European history, especially because the explanatory power was inadequate for the accumulating evidence about the struggles, goals and activities of women advocates during the early nineteenth century and before, it also sought the goals of both male and female privileges and power even though the way in which Europeans expressed their claims seemed to differ considerably from that of the Anglo- Americans. (Offen, 2012). It was said the Europeans focus was much more on the elaborations of sexual difference and womanliness rather than similarities and complementarities and this sought wide ranging critiques of the society and its institutions in a 'male-dominated society'. However, in 1975, an American historian of germ feminism called Amy Hackett, defined the problem when she stated that the American bias lies evidently in enormous assumptions the essence of feminism is the 'equality of rights'. She however proposed that the 'equality' or concepts of equality should be excluded from any broad definition of feminism because as at that time, claims and struggles of individual equality were not particularly pertinent to leaders of the early twentieth century in German women's movements even though some women still at that time, considered themselves and were regarded as feminists.

Hodgson-Wright in 2006, defined feminism 'as any attempt to contend with patriarchy in its many manifestations' especially between the mid sixteenth and eighteenth century. (1550-1700). She went on to use Chris Weedon's definition of patriarchy in the 1987 *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* which states thus:

"'Patriarchal' refers to power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men. These power relations take on many forms, from the sexual division of labour and the social organisation of procreation to the internalised norms of femininity by which we live. Patriarchal power rests on social meaning given to biological sexual difference". (Weedon, 1987)*.*

The said period however saw little or no improvement in the situation of women. Women still did not have the right to vote and as a of then, vast population of male and female had no right to vote but it was more evident that the men were more empowered than the women as women were still barred from higher education and other subsequent benefits. At the time, an Aristocratic lady might have enjoyed more than an Apprentice male, but still had less

privileges from a male in the same socio- economic rank. A male apprentice however, enjoyed and benefitted more that a woman in the same socio economic rank. Marriage was one of the way out, but not entirely as even though through this means, a woman could secure her future, she still had no legal independence without her spouse. Usually, all property belonging to the woman became the husband's at the instant of marriage. Child bearing was the major part of the woman's role in the family to provide heirs for inheritance and titles. Women or mothers had no right over their children especially also in the matters of upbringing, education and disposal in marriage. (Hodgson-Wright, 2006) (Gamble, 2006).

As Freedman in 2001 puts it, the term feminism is thus what has emerged over a period of time as a result of women questioning their inferior status and demanding an advancement and upgrade in their socio economic positions. The term 'feminism' even after it was coined was still not adopted as a term of identification as many women's right organisations and activation groups in the early 1960s and 1970s did not necessarily call themselves feminists as the term at that time had restrictions regarding its use in relation to specific groups and concerns. (Delmar, 1986) (Freedman, 2001).

Offen, also acknowledges that the term 'feminism' was not in sue before the nineteenth century stating that the late Joan Kelly had openly stated that it was proceeded to deploy and comprise a wide range of pro-woman advocacy.

Furthermore, it is arguable that all feminism as a whole, calls for changes in the social, economic, political or cultural order, to reduce and eventually overcome this discrimination against women in the society. Beyond these general contentions, however, it is difficult to come up with any other 'common ground' between the different strands of feminism, and it cannot assumed that agreement or feminist unity determines the extreme fragmentation of contemporary modern feminism. Indeed, such an assumption of underlying unity or understanding of different feminisms may have the unexpected effect. (Delmar, 1986) (Freedman, 2001).

On the other side of the globe, considering this study also focuses on West Africans, the awareness of feminism was first paved by certain African female writes and scholars. These writings started emerging in the 1970s that set out to dispel certain misrepresentations of the African womanhood. (Coetzee, 2017). Literates like Flora Nwapa's Novel *Efuru* (1960) and *Idu* (1970), Writers like Buchi Emecheta (Joys of Motherhood, 1979), were examples of literatures

that set the tone for African feminists to begin exploring gender issues. The term 'feminist' again was reluctant to be claimed as it set the western woman and culture as its centre and set aside the specific and unique problems of the African woman. (Arndt, 2000:711) (Coetzee, 2017). Cultural imperialism and racism was also an argument against western feminists as they were said to have actively taken part in the oppression of third world women and thus presenting western feminist theories as universal phenomenon, disguising western concerns and biases. (Third world Women and the politics of feminism 1986) (Coetzee, 2017).

According to Coetzee's dissertation in 2017, Yoruba scholar from Nigeria, Molara Ogundipe-Leslie argues that in most African cultures, there have been individual activism among women dating back and beyond pre-colonial times but they probably never termed their struggles and activisms feminist. (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994:207-243) (Coetzee, 2017). This however means that the practices of women's resistance were not a western invention despite the rejection of the term 'feminism'. "*Feminism has been practised by African women for a long time as part of our heritage, it is not new I really refuse to be told I am learning feminism from abroad*". (Ata Aidoo in Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997:10) (Coetzee, 2017). Other African feminist philosophers and writers have similarly taken this stand that many women's activisms around the world have occurred without contact with western feminists hence existing in Africa 'as far back as we can go'. (Dutoit, 2009:421) (Coetzee, 2017). Even though not properly acknowledged, (Mama, 200:60) (Coetzee, 2017) gives an example of the Aba women's riot in in 1920s, making it more evident that the struggle did not come from Europe as usually assumed.

There has been resentments and discomfort in using the term feminism which has led some African Scholars to develop an African Alternative of the term feminism that will fully address and take seriously the contexts and specific needs of the African woman. Coetzee further argues that Nigerian female scholars were most dominant in this regard as Molara Ogundipe, a foremost Nigerian feminist, poet and activist stated that African woman needs not only to be conscious of the fact that she is African, but also conscious she is from a third world country and a third world person. Buchi Emecheta also insinuates this in 1974 in her book called the 'Second class citizen'. She illustrates the African woman as second class citizen because, even in her country, she is seen almost like a property or a commodity and when abroad, the seen as even less because of her skin colour. Molara also presented an acronym for social transformation including women in Africa known as 'Stiwanism' an alternative to the imported western feminism which seriously emphasizes on social and economic equality with

men in Africa. (Coetzee, 2017).

Another term known as 'Modernism' was developed by another Nigerian Scholar, Catherine Acholonu in the early 1990s. Her Ideology was to embrace motherhood, nature and nurture as an alternative to the western feminism. Other terms like 'Nego-feminism' and 'African womanism' also emerged by two other scholars both being Nigerian writers. The former, nego-feminism was grounded by the negotiation and the idea of the 'no – ego' put together by Obiamaka Nnaemeka, while the latter was a notion of 'Africanness' in womanism another alternative to western feminism and black womanism. (Arndt 2000:712) (Coetzee, 2017). Nigerian Novelist Buchi Emecheta, made very clear the meaning and purpose of womanism in her famous quote which states:

"I will not be called feminist […], because it is European. It is as simple as that. I just resent that… I don't like being defined by them…. It is just that it comes from outside and I don't like people dictating to me. I do believe in the African type of feminism. They call it womanism, because, you see, you Europeans don't worry about water, you don't worry about schooling, you are so well off. Now, I buy land, and I say, 'Okay, I can't build on it, I have no money, so I give it to some women to start planting.' That is my brand of feminism" (Emecheta 1997:7) (Coetzee, 2017).

Obviously from the above statement, Buchi Emecheta avoids the label feminism but somehow embraces the politics by resisting the epistemological power of western feminists to define all women's lives when the lives of women in Africa is glaringly different. This also highlights the neglect which African feminists feel that western feminism did not address issues needed to be addressed. For example, the gender oppression mixed with other cultural, social, political and economic forms of oppression. Racism, neo-colonialism, capitalism, dictatorial and corrupt political leadership as well as religious fundamentalism that are not taken account in western feminism.

Other issues like child marriage, widow taboos, genital mutilation, inheritance rights and coping with practises like polygamy according to Nigerian Scientist, Olabisi Aina are not also taken in to consideration in western feminism thereby making western feminism seem inappropriate and irrelevant in the African context. The concept of womanism becomes also clearer and seemingly more relevant as it embraces all the issues and flaws of western feminism and also embracing issues like motherhood and child bearing.

Presently, as Coetzee portrays, the term feminism seem to have lost its tastes among many

African feminist. Adding to this, a certain female presidential candidate in Nigeria in 2018 (Eunice Atuejide) boldly stated during a radio interview, that she is no feminist. Despite being a mother of five and openly advocating for women's right and opportunities. African feminist that use the term feminism, seem to however, shape its meaning and use it specifically in the African contexts. (Coetzee, 2017).

Not many African feminists' voices have been integrated in the western or global debates apart form a few exceptions like Nigerian writer, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, whose words were quoted by Beyoncé, (an African American pop Artist) in her 'Flawless' 2013 hit single. Adichie's book, *Americanah* (2013) was also said to be given to every sixteen year old child in Sweden in 2015 by the Swedish women's lobby in order to create more awareness and discussions about feminism and gender equality. (Coetzee, 2017).

Coetzee also adds that western feminists have also reconstructed their preceding uncompounded theories and have formulated more advanced theories that take into consideration, the importance of race, culture, class, context and history in constructing gender relations.

2.3 Feminism and Gender

As feminism has filtered into more and more into mainstream and cotemporary present day consciousness, questions relating to gender oppositions and relations have also been raised. Whether men can theorise feminism and the feminist situation is a question one of the questions of deconstructive strategy projects in order to destabilize the binary model. As Freedman in 2001 points outs it, 'If women are claiming equality with men, then with which men should they be claiming equality?' On what basis should women access their differences with men? Should it be based on biological differences or differences as a result of socio economic influences? What issues and grounds should be the basis of equality be grounded on? Opportunities and outcome? Questions like these have led several feminists to argue time and over again over the existence of biological and social differences. What really differentiates a woman apart from and external appearances and on what basis to guarantee that it is the 'women' in question that specifically benefit from the strategies for ending the subordination system and position of the society.

Three popular US academics in the 1990s, Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky and Donna Haraway referred to as 'cult figures' by Sophia Phoca in (Gamble, 2006) were said to have proposed

exciting and provocative theories that rethink gender and sexual subjectivity. Butler in 1990, introduces the idea and notion that all gender and sexual identities are performed. She undermines the distinction between sex and gender as sex being a natural given category while gender being a culturally and socially acquired category. She emphasizes that there is no universal basis for identifying feminism based strictly on reproductive genitals or sexual parts and that the attempt to make a stable category of women cannot be exhaustive. In this sense, gender is not represented as 'real' but instead is politically regulated.

So in accepting the idea, dualism in feminity and masculinity might no longer be the reigning discourse in the construction of gender. The question might therefore be posed as; so what is the difference between feminity and masculinity? According to Sophia Phoca again in (Gamble, 2006), Laura Muley's seminal essay in 1975 (Visual pleasure and narrative Cinema), was one of the most influential papers on sexual difference, using a psychoanalytic point of view. This was because, she employed French writer, Jacques Lacan's method of psychoanalysis (Lacanian) to analyse how masculinity is empowered through the act of looking, and feminity on the other hand, that act of being looked at. This analysis had it downsides as it did not really emphasize the stance or position of the female audience in visual pleasure. (Gamble, 2006).

Trier-Bieniek and Leavy in 2014 *(Gender and Pop culture)* addressed the gender issue as often being mistaken as a 'synonym'. That sex is inborn and biologically what prompts us to be assigned male or female, while gender is socially constructed and consisted of ideas and perceptions about masculinity and feminity. These ideas have culturally specific meanings given to an individual as a result off their biological sexual assignment. In other words, one is expected to act masculine if their biological sex is male and act feminine if the sex is female. And all the enactments of gender being defined by the society in particular period of historic time. (Trier-Bieniek & Leavy, 2014). For example, a certain fashion trend in the US in the early 90s depicted men wearing baggy lose fitted pants and women wearing tight pants. Another fashion era reversed the fashion trend and made women wear the lose baggy pants which at some point, arose gender confused questions as to why a man would be wearing girl clothes or dressed a woman. These ideas have been constantly debated using postmodernist and poststructuralist critiques to dissect these binary divisions.

Freedman in 2001, argues that a third way that goes between the equality and differences in gender should perhaps be considered as attractive as it might be a means to rid feminism of

these conflicts. However, other feminists have maintained that there is no escaping of the division between equality and difference. Feminists are also divided on the opinion of whether women's claims for maternity rights should be special rights granted to women based on biological capacity to have children or should be treated as general illness that can also happen to a man to excuse him form work for a period of time. (Bacchu 1991; Bock and Thane, 1991) (Freedman, 2001).

Historically, a natural difference between men and women have been assumed and it was assumed that women have always been secondary and inferior to men because of the God given natural differences. This secondary status was explained through a notion that women are seen as being closer to nature and their psyche, making them best suitable for home roles instead of being able to take on powerful public positions, while men on the other hand are perceived to be closer to culture, more suited for handling public roles and difficult tasks (Freedman, 2001).

Another question is, should women deny their sexual difference and begin to claim same rights as men? Or should the argument be that women are equal but different? And should their specific feminine qualities also be as valuable and regarded same as masculine attributes? These questions have remained core to feminism becoming even more complex over time and as a result of ultra-modern scientific and social developments. For example, development of reproductive technologies that untie women away from their biological reproductive functions, may seem as a way of possibilities for achieving 'equality'.

The debate over equality and difference has been bedded in various terms throughout the history of active feminism. The need to act as or identify as a particular gender is the basic tension that's still persists. The difficulty for present day feminists, as feminists still identify women as a specific social group of people who share a collective identity. An identity however, that is different from that of men. That 'difference' is the reason which might have placed women in the subordination position over time.

Simone De Beauvoir in *Le Deuxieme sexe* (The second sex) (1949), encapsulates the argument of women's biological distinction where she posits that 'one is not born a woman: but becomes one'. She argues that the psychological and behavioural aspects of 'sex' are as a result of patriarchal and cultures. Women's inferior positions did not come naturally or biologically but was created by the society and in order to be freed from inferiority, she acknowledges to biological distinction in men and women. (Freedman, 2001).

Dating back to history in the early times, the scriptures according to classical philosophy in the early church as stated by Gamble in 2006 pronounced women as inferior to men as an interpretation of the creation of Eve in the bible being 'lesser' or inferior to Adam. In this case, a biblical reference to the book of Genesis on the Old Testament and also St Paul's Epistles in the New Testament where women should be seen as obedient, chaste and silent. As God created Eve to be a support system for Adam, to help him and be his companion. Eve is regarded 'last and the best' but however, takes the blame for humankind by being weak and easily vulnerable. Reason for being firstly approached by Satan. Eve is portrayed as ambitious and had the desire to be like God, hence the motivation for persuading Adam to eat the apple. Their sins were seen as parallel as God served them each with punishments. If Adam was truly stronger, he should have been able to prevent their sinful action. God, in Genesis chapter 3, therefore punished Eve with the pain of child bearing but tempers the punishment with 'mercy' in that she would be the mother of the human race and eventually one of her descendants would be the mother of Christ. By Christ, being from the seed of a woman and Christ being the Church, it ca be said that the mother of the church is a woman. (Quoting a verse from the book of Revelations 12), "He saw a woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet, upon her head a crown of twelve stars".

Apart for the character of the Virgin Mary Mother of God, other women writers also make use of preceding characters in the bible like Sarah, Esther, Rebecca, as well as other New Testament characters like Elizabeth and Mary Magdalene. Ancient European history has also cited strong virtuous women like Joan of Arc and Queen Elizabeth I, who for example was said to have provided a notional example for many feminist authors. (Hodgson-Wright, 2006).

In controversy and debate with early women writers, some men writers also drew attention to the teachings and writings of St Paul the apostle referring to verses in Ephesians and Corinthians in the bible where he stated that women should be silent in Churches and obedient to the said law. Another verse stating that women should obey their husband's as the husband is the head of the wife. (1 Corinthians 14:34) (Ephesians 5:22-4).

To counterbalance these biblical illustrations, women writers used the power of child bearing as a tool for legal power, as playing the first nurturing role, instructor and initial educator for their children. (Hodgson-Wright, 2006).

Some African scholars began to question the explanatory power of gender in African societies. Oyeronke Oyewumi in (The invention of Women, 1997) urged this debate on grounds of

specific desire to produce specific concept based on African cultures and tradition. Are these gender differences, conflicts and patriarchy applicable in non-western cultures? It will not be extensively conclusive if assumed that social relations in all societies are based on biological or sexual differences. Oyewumi in 1997 clearly destructs the idea that gender is a fundamental social category especially in the Yoruba culture of western Africa. She states that gender organisation being implemented today is as a result of the imposition of 'gender saturated colonial epistemology'. She also argued that British colonisation among the Yorubas especially, was extremely influential and instrumental in the establishment of existing gender systems.

Examining the Yoruba language, Oyewumi describes it as mostly gender neutral. For example, Terms like brother or sister, meaning 'Aburo' or son or daughter, meaning 'omo'. Also, Yoruba given names are not gender specific. Instead, seniority and age is very significant and no matter the sex of a given family member, that member deserves the right to be addressed appropriately according to their age in the family. These greatly contrast western forms for gender specifications which is also not assimilated in the English language as well.

Oyewumi further argues that if women as theorised by many western feminist theories in terms of being lesser and weaker, does not apply in the Yoruba culture as Yoruba women are not perceived to be lesser, disadvantaged or defined by men. (Oyewumi, 1997) (Coetzee, 2017). Women figures till this day are highly regarded as goddesses, queens and deities. For example, the Osun-Orisha river goddess popularly known for love, beauty and intimacy, Oya (Queen and god) Associated with sun and moon (Wife of god (Sango) or the Mawu, associated with sun and moon, amongst many other popular female heroes, goddesses and deities.

As Yoruba historian Anthony Asiwaju states, 'there is perhaps no other single African people who have commanded so much attention as the Yoruba (Asiwaju 1983) (Coetzee, 2017). Making the Yoruba example suitable as a leading example of the African influence due to not only their cultural adaptability and modernization processes, but also being one of the three major tribes in Africa's biggest economy.

2.4 Popular Culture

Popular culture can be seen as the images, narratives and ideas that circulate with mainstream culture (Trier-Bieniek & Leavy, 2014). These images, narratives and ideas are popular because they are known by the masses in a given society, exposing them to the same dominant aspect of popular culture. The history of popular culture traces back to eight historical moments that

include folk culture, high culture, postmodern culture, mass culture, hegemony, global culture and cultural identities (Scholar John Storey, 2003) (Trier-Bieniek & Leavy, 2014). Popular culture includes both practises and products ranging to different rituals by which it is produced and consumed.

Amongst the products of popular culture includes 'texts' which in a broad sense includes a wide range of stories, objects, mediated images and content. There is however, little distinction between media culture and popular culture. Trier-Bieniek and Leavy in 2014, further explain that media culture is one of the major agents of socialization force that we are mostly exposed to through which we learn the various values and norms of our society. It differs greatly from family or religion or any other socializing institution because of its wide and deep grasp of the cultural landscape. It becomes more like 'second skin' that is taken for granted because we are mostly exposed to these context during leisure or relaxation time. The contents of media culture gradually sneaks into our daily subconscious without us even realising how much or to what extent these contents have impacted on our lives.

Parker in 2011 describes popular culture to be like pornography in so many ways. Adding that it may not be easy to define but when we see it, we know it. He uses Tony Bennett who wrote an influential article saying; "The Concept of popular culture is virtually useless, a melting pot of confused and contradictory meanings capable of misdirecting inquiry of any number of theoretical blind alleys". This means that scholars of cultural studies and popular culture have indeed taken an intractable arrogance in not exactly defining what popular culture even in books and or journals that clearly proposes theories in popular culture. Parker, however, as he claims, approached the definition with a historian and classicist approach, with an 'eye to antiquity', to a hopefully fruitful result. He attempts the definition of popular culture by tracing the history through ancient Greek and Rome. According to him, the term 'popular culture' was first coined by herder. (Johann Gottfried Herder, 1784) (Parker, 2011). A German Philosopher, theologian, poet and literary critic. In Parker's classicist approach, he defines popular culture as culture that only emerged as a result of the industrialization and urbanization of the British economy as Britain, being the first country to be urbanized in Europe. "Before the industrialization and urbanization, Britain had two cultures". A common culture and a separate elite culture. The common culture in the British economy was shared by mostly all the classes while the separate elite culture was produced and consumed by the dominant classes in the society. Parker points that positioning popular culture way back before the industrial might undermine a great deal of discussion about popular culture. Yet,

acknowledging the middle ages and industrial revolution era's influence on the existing, or what was otherwise eventually known to be popular culture.

Parker further analyses, John Storey's (2006) definition of popular culture as quantitative. As John Storey states that "popular culture is simply culture which is widely favoured or well liked by many people".

In Storey's attempt to first defining popular culture, he addresses the need to first define the terms, culture, ideology and popular. After several definitions and analysis of each, comes up with the definition of the stated definition by Parker. Storey further states that meeting the approval and recognition by certain group of people. Culture here, referring to activities that involve lifestyle ranging from concerts, sporting events, festivals and so on. Storey further reiterates that what is clear in any definition of popular culture has to include a 'quantitative dimension'. The 'popular' in popular culture has to be really popular even though the popularity is not enough to entirely define it.

The idea of popular culture seems to be really highly debated among scholars of cultural studies as there have been really no agreed definition for the concept of popular culture. Some scholars have debated that it is an empty concept of ideas that involves people or popularity at different times for different purposes. Popular culture has also been deployed as a discriminating tool with incredibly inevitable impact on its consumption. Trier-Bienek in 2015 Points Adorno and Max Horkheimer's view of popular culture working to support the interest of those in power, which might be linked to the feminist movement as feminism is the political and economic struggle for the equality of sexes. In this case, popular culture is on both sides of the coin by supporting the feminist movement, and at the same time, neglecting it. (Trier-Bienek, 2015).

The stories, images and ideas that are circulated about in gender in popular culture are in three main dimensions (Trier-Bieniek & Leavy, 2014). These are the production, (who produces the texts in popular and media culture), the representation, (representations of gender and meanings given to gender) and the consumption, (The general impression and influence of western popular culture on feminism and gender –Which could lead to answering the first question and objectives of this research) that is, the relationship between gender and the consumption of popular culture texts especially through performative arts like dancing. This research however, mainly focuses on the second and third dimensions which are the representations (Of feminity and Masculinity) of popular

culture texts and the consumptions or perceptions within specific genres of pop culture, even though highly influenced by the production.

Trier-Bieniek and Leavy in 2014 presented an analysis that the production of popular culture contents are mostly produced by men, hence greatly influencing the representation of feminity in popular culture. Sexism representations in popular culture are as a result of sexism in the production of popular culture (Trier-Bieniek & Leavy, 2014). Outlining five major representations of feminity and masculinity in particular genres of popular culture, Trier-Bieniek and Leavy, come up with the following points;

- Male characters were more likely to be portrayed at their jobs or work places than the female characters in ratios of 41% to 28%

- Male Characters in the media were more likely to talk about work or work related issues than women in ratios 52% to 40%

- Female characters were more likely to talk about relationships or relationship issues than the men in ratios 63% to 49%

- Men made up the most number of protagonist in films than women, in ratios 84% male and only 16% women

- And generally, male characters dominated and outnumbered that of the female characters in family films in ratio three to one.

(http://www.missrepresentation.org/about-us/resources/gender -resources).

The above statistics shows that who produces popular culture impacts the representations especially depicting on gender roles and gender identities which influence binary constructions of gender in the society. Television programs and media advertising offer alternative representations for gender and family or even expand representations of feminity. In offering alternate representations for example, (Trier-Bieniek & Leavy, 2014) uses the instance of Dove's advertisement to portray 'ideal beauty' or the instance of the Television soap opera 'Modern Family' portraying how an 'ideal' family should look like. Another example is the HBO series, Girls, which young girls are watching and copying or trying to portray. Not everyone will necessarily internalise the messages of popular culture in the same way but there is no telling the extents of which these messages shape our thoughts and mentality. But these messages definitely create a wide spread of effects by the ways in which they are represented. The examples of these effects could be decreased self-esteem, objectification of women's bodies, mental health issues leading to violence and

'role conflicts' or 'role strain'. The struggles to do it all as the media and popular culture has represented. The new generations of young women in the society are finding their feminisms in the representations of pop culture of today whereby the future of feminism and feminist theories might be mirrored in fame and celebrity. (Trier-Bieniek & Leavy, 2014).

How are these media images represented and consumed in Africa? And how does it influence feminism and gender equality? Nigeria in this case, is a home to the biggest movie industry in Africa now known as Nollywood. The products of Nollywood is blended with western influences with the Nigerian or African contexts. (Falola and Heaton, 2008:6) (Coetzee, 2017) Other forms of traditional entertainment have also existed form way back before the colonial times including the telling of stories (Tales by Moonlight), indigenous musicals like juju, Fuji and palm wine music, theatrical performances like traditional dances and other technological forms of entertainment. As Falola stated, the media is massively flooded with contents from the western contexts, these also include music hip pop and R&B, movies, and even foreign musicians and artists also feature in contents of magazines and newspapers. The lifestyle and popular culture contexts has greatly influenced fashion, food, and gender roles but not in its entirety. For example, Nigerian still bans and forbids homosexuality and the punishment for this, when prosecuted by the law, is fourteen years in prison. As a result of western awareness and the LGBTQ rights campaigns that have taken place is many western countries, popular non gender conforming individuals have fled the country, seeking and obtaining refugee rights in the western world. Also, many young Nigerian girls and women now aspire to be like the women they see or watch on television or social media. Apart from impacts like aspiration for education and personal development, many women also now aspire to be feminists. In as much as Pop culture's growing popularity in African societies, Nigeria has the capacity to still retain a strong foundation in indigenous traditions while incorporating westerns ideas. (Falola and Heaton, 2008) (Coetzee, 2017). However, not much research has been concluded on the impacts of western popular culture on Africans in diaspora.

2.5 Theoretical Frame Work

This chapter discusses the choices in regards to theories that describe and influence the phenomena of feminism and gender equality and the influences of pop culture especially as relating to dance and Africans living in diaspora. This theories will hopefully be the framework of which questions pertaining to this research will be answered one of which is how gender roles are perceived and embodied among West Africans presently living in Finland and if for some reason there are western influences relating to pop culture that have influenced their views, roles, actions and perceptions on Feminism and gender equality. – precisely the overall aim of this research and also discussed and outlined will be key theoretical terms upon which this research is grounded.

Theoretical framework is useful to connect the different parts and terminologies used to form the research question and provide a lens to view and understand this research. (Anafara & and Mertz, 2006). This will also help in better understanding of certain aspects of the phenomenon of gender equality, feminism and popular culture.

2.5.1 Theory of Performance / Performativity

As part of the paper seeks to examine the roles of gender and nationality which partly relates to identity, the theory of performance therefore is a pertinent analytical tool in this research on many levels. Levels that includes using dance as an element of pop culture entertainment in the form of context, style and form whether performed in the studio or stage and dance (West African dance) as a space where people perform social and gender categories. These concepts definitely extends useful frameworks with which connects the influence of pop culture on feminism and gender equality and most especially when dance is the target focus of analysis with pop cultural and diasporic practises.

Although the two words 'performance' and 'performativity' have similar or more or less same kind of pronunciations, it is very important to distinguish these two terms and how they both apply in this research. Performance in this research mostly focuses on bodily and individual acts that have to do with the making of gender and identity. This includes body techniques, gestures and body language and their relationship with space. As Schechner in 2003 puts it,

performances "exist only as actions, interactions and relationships".

Cavanaugh in 2015 defined performativity as the power of language to affect change in the world. By language not simply describing the world but instead as a function for a form of social action. According to Cavanaugh, 2005, the concept of performativity was first described by philosopher John L. Austin as the capacity of speech or language to consummate an action. He posited an evaluated the differences between constative language and performative language. Examples he gave for performative language includes speech acts such as promising, swearing or saying 'I do' during a wedding ceremony. This kind of language, has the power of transforming or changing a situation of something rather than just describing it. Certain conditions must be met in order to make a language performative (Cavanaugh, 2005). Other scholars were said to have taken up basic insights from Austin's theory one of who remarkably that relates it to gender and identity is Judith Butler.

The concept of performativity according to Salih (2006) was introduced by Judith Butler in the first chapter of 'Gender Trouble' when she states that "gender proves to be performative that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be". In this sense, a continuous doing, though no 'being' behind the doing. Stating that there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender. She later clearly distinguishes between the two terms in an interview she gave in 1993 where she argues that gender as performed is different from saying that gender is performative. As she states, "when we say gender is performed, we literally mean that we have taken on a role and acting in some way…But to say gender is performative means that for something to be performative, means that it produces a series of effects. We act, walk, speak and talk in ways that consolidate an impression of being a man or being a woman".

Schechner (2003) in his 'Performance theory', likened performance as a mode or behaviour that may characterise any activity which can occur in any situation rather than a "fenced-off genre". This could involve an individual or group of people in the presence of another individual or group of people. This means the presence of an audience could is somewhat significant. He further acknowledges that any other activity probably without an immediate audience could be framed as a performance for viewing. This includes a wide range of activities with different forms such as documentaries, sports, to drama, singing and dancing. Schechner's definition of performance is therefore narrowed on "certain acknowledged qualities" on a basis of "audience – performance interaction". The catching phase here is 'interaction', which deduces that there is an interaction between the audiences and the

performance, a main ingredient of the social cognitive theory that will be discussed later in this chapter. Schechner however admits not dealing in detail with dance and music even though he acknowledges that they are also performance activities relating to many cultures around the world.

The field of performativity and performance studies extends deep in this research in arguably in the aspect of analysing gender roles and what gender really is. Apart from Judith Butler's interview argument that gender is performative and performed, she had earlier broken down the sex and gender distinction in 'gender trouble' by arguing that all bodies are gendered from the beginning of their existence. - Insinuating that all existence has a social beginning and influence. Butler further argues that no one is really a gender from the start and states that gender is something one does, a "doing" rather than a "being". Butler however admits that this a controversial stance.

"Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being. A political genealogy of gender ontologies, if it is successful, will deconstruct the substantive appearance of gender into its constitutive acts and locate and account for those acts within the compulsory frames set by the various forces that police the social appearance of gender". (Butler, 1990).

At this point, it is clearly suggested that one's gender is 'performatively' constituted and curtailed or more or less pre-determined by the society and most especially the media.

In examining the diversity of the cultural phenomena and performance, Taylor in 2003 argues that the concept of performance is a "vital act of transfer" that transmits the memory, sense of identity and social knowledge through a series of repeated forms of behaviour. She asserts that performance functions as an epistemology which on one level involves practises and events that are theatrical, rehearsed and on the other hand, constitute objects or processes of analysing performance studies. For example, dance events, theatre, political rallies, rituals and funerals. These activities have a beginning and an end and do not run continuously into other forms of daily cultural expressions like gender, sexual identity or ethnicity which are performed and rehearsed daily. Taylor positions performance as an episteme which is a way of self-identification and social transmission of knowledge that reflects culture and or history while being enacted. Taylor further connects the many non-western former colonies and how

they affirm their cultures and identities through acts of performances. In this case, she views performance as an interaction with archives or histories which can be compared to the nature or origin of a particular state before colonization. In trying to balance the present and the past, as a state of interaction, performance comes in to play by embodying elements of social structures and behaviours which could define gender or gender roles in a given culture.

2.5.2 The Social Cognitive Theory

The Social cognitive theory is another functioning and essential framework that plays a significant role in gender roles and development in any given society. This also is a functioning framework in media and audience interaction as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Media and communication systems have symbolic influences on their audience which influences human thought, affect and action. (Bandura, Social Cognitive Theory of Mass Communication, 2001). Bandura adds that these influences operate within two pathways, one of which is the direct pathway that promotes changes by motivating, enabling guiding and informing participants and the other which is the socially mediated pathway that influences media participants through linking to social networks and communities and "continued personalized guidance for desired change".

These media and pop cultural influences sometimes produces new styles of behaviour and the social cognitive theory seeks to analyse these new patterns through a psychological approach and determine social cognitive factors that inter connects these paths. (Bandura, 2001). According to Bandura, the social cognitive theory provides an 'agentic' and 'conceptual' framework to examine the increasing influential role of the mass media and how to understand different psychological mechanisms that influences human thought through symbolic communication.

In addition, Bondebjerg in 2014 also states that documentary film makers are very much aware that making films about reality combines factual evidence, arguments and strong elements of narrative which strongly appeals to imagination and identification which leads to a rhetoric of cognition and emotion. He states further that theories of narratives and memory also play an important role in forming our social and cultural imagination which helps audience make sense of what is encountered in audio visual communication. Using memory

helps connect the audience from history to the present and then the future and by using these strategies, the 'series' (contents) speaks to us in a dense and dramatic way.

In analysing behaviours through the absorption of media content through a psychological approach, Bandura, 2001 states that human psychology in itself has undergone distorting paradigm shifts that make theorist and followers think and act "agentically". As the concept of this theory is founded on an agentic approach, it is important to note that people are not just reactive beings shaped and nurtured by their environmental events or inner forces, but more instinctive, self-regulating, proactive, self-organising and self-reflecting beings. By this approach, people are producers as well as products and also consumers. Self-development, change and adaptation are set in social systems. (Bandura, 2001).

Bandura further illustrates that human nature is vast and has overwhelming potentials which can be fashioned directly and from an observational experience into different forms within the biological frame of a human from a socio-cognitive perspective. This is to say that human beings have a major distinguishing mark, which is naturally endowed in their ability to undergo permanent change (Plasticity), but does not mean that humans have no original nature and come without structure. The ability to undergo these types of changes over time, Bandura, emphasizes that it is already built-in nature of humans which also depends on 'neuro physiological' aspect of a person's life over a period of time. This helps the human to process and retain information that contributes to self-regulation, self-consciousness, forethought as well as communication.

In conclusion, Bondebjerg concludes that we humans are storytelling animals, genetically, biologically and socially, such that narratives from the media, play a fundamental role in our daily experiences, exploration and thinking. We also respond to stories cognitively and emotionally because several contents of films and documentaries have emotional layers which appear through narrative structures and character identification which at the same time is connected with themes that relate to our real everyday life that is embedded in a collective kind of media culture.

"… Media culture helps shape the prevalent view of the world and deepest values: it defines what is considered good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil. Media stories and images provide the symbols, myths, and resources which help constitute a common culture for the majority of individuals in many parts of the world today. Media culture provides the materials to create identities whereby individuals insert themselves into contemporary techno-capitalist

societies and which is producing a new form a global culture". (Kellner, 1995: 1.) (Sumiala-Seppänen, Lundby, & Salokangas, 2006).

2.5.3 The Gaze Theory

The concept of the gaze theory is a notion that arises through the realization of being seen or watched and interpreted by others, and thereby adjusting our presentations, language and demeanour through becoming conscious of the observations, in response to such changes. This is a central concept within the confines of the feminist theory and popular culture which works with our cognitive and psychological process. (Trier-Bienek, 2015). It is basically an idea of seeing and being seen or watching and being watched which work hand in hand as tool of empowerment and disempowerment.

This concept and theory is a framework work for this research as it is a central concept of feminist theory which is also grounded on ideas relating to performance, performativity and gender in popular culture. Trier-Bieniek explains that the gaze takes place in various forms of popular culture through the media, fine art and graphic literature over the last several decades. There is another version of the gaze referred to as the male gaze. This is a situation whereby a heterosexual male or males observe, judge and assess the physical appearance of a woman, making her respond psychologically. (Trier-Bienek, 2015). This paper mainly focuses on the male gaze in gender performance and popular culture as the stereotype and product of the male gaze is interconnected with political, cultural and economic factors relating to gender roles and sexual objectification of women.

As Laura Mulvey, 1975 puts it, the "gaze" is a key element in the construction of modem subjectivity, filtering ways of understanding and ordering the surrounding world. (Mulvey, 1975). The cinema and film industry has significantly played a role in streamlining and enforcing this concept even though the social and sexual factors affects its conventions and structures. The psychoanalytic approach provides the cinema a reconcilable insight mixed with historical and social approach. This is a way of understanding the audience as a Psychoanalytic spectator and social entity.

In applying the male gaze to contents of popular culture like performance art and dance, the origin of the concept arose from two French intellectuals in the mid twentieth century known

as Jean-Paul Sartre and Jacques Lancan. They were both interested in the act and notion of subjectivity. That is, being a subject of another person's awareness or consciousness and the change or response of the consciousness as a result of being observed or watched by others which may facilitate greater consciousness which may be to unsettlement and anxiety. This concept illustrates and examines how we act when we are alone and how we act when we feel others are watching. When we are alone for example, in the comfort and privacy of our homes, we tend to act more freely and relaxed without necessarily being conscious or anxious about anything, but when we are out we tend to act in a way that is expected and present ourselves based on what is expected of who we are, where we are, or the people we are with. The shifts in behaviour from not being watched and the consciousness of being watched and observed are products of the gaze theory. The gaze theory presents a platform for analysing learning and how people maintain power differences within a culture. (Trier-Bienek, 2015).

Cognisance of the gaze however has its positive sides as it could also help in a better understanding of our environment and how to act more successfully. Apart from the negative effects of the gaze like creating anxiety and unsettlement, another French Social theorist, Michel Foucault, 1975, according to Trier-Bienek in 2015, discussed the gaze theory as becoming harmful and oppressive, by affecting an individual's mentally, spiritually and emotionally. The instances of modern day technology was sighted as an example as we have even lesser privacy when we stay 'plugged 'onto digital platforms to stay connected with the outside world and for the purpose of entertainment.

The question of gender asymmetry within the visual arts and entertainment industry was also questioned by Mulvey in 1975, who argued that portrayal of women in various forms as objects and an instrument of sexual desire to heterosexual males, was for a purpose of aesthetics and visual pleasure. Mulvey further buttresses her point by highlighting the integration of female body parts during filming and photography for sexual appeal, by so doing making the heterosexual male, predominant over the female. As Trier-Bieniek bluntly puts it, "*Pornography dehumanises women by fragmenting their bodies into fetishized parts, rather than depicting them as whole beings*". (Trier-Bienek, 2015). Thereby making female or women's worth and perspective appear irrelevant and secondary in the entertainment industry as well as the society in general. This creates insecurities for women with not so 'perfect' bodies, as the gaze becomes internalized and highlighted in almost every aspect of a woman's life, and as a result making women viewed, judged and consumed as objects. The

imaginary standards set by the male gaze has become overwhelming and most times unquestioned in many aspects of culture as a woman's worth is tied to her physical appearance and beauty. (Trier-Bienek, 2015).

In relating the gaze theory and concept to dance in popular culture, Trier-Bieniek uses the instance of belly dance and affirms that the male gaze is an undeniable aspect involved with the belly dancing. In relation to this research which analyses the Sabar dance, it can be said that when dancing or during the practise among dancers, the space is seen as free, safe and supportive where, when women dance, they are comfortable in their bodies and find a refuge from so many other aspects of life. The dance space can also be a place for self-expression and an opportunity to gaze among fellow women in their own terms without external or foreign pressure or influence. In conclusion, women who dance routinely encounter the gaze which may make them respond consciously by being more aware and affecting their gendered expectations.

3.1 Research Methodology

My research strategy and approach was centred and focused on West Africans living in diaspora, in Tampere, Finland (region). This research was a combination of mixed methods of strategy combining a survey or interviews and a case study approach to examine the behaviours and contents of performativity among West Africans living in Finland. This research also uses observations of contents from a dance video performed by the Sabar dance group with Origins from Senegal here in Europe and analysing the content of the video to determine gender roles and embodiment or how gender is given meaning in a cultural performance art like dancing.

The research has an empirical angle to it as I gathered information by directly observing from my interviewees, their lived experiences and opinions. According to Saukko 2003, empirical research is structured by an interest in the interplay between lived experience and how recent historical and intellectual development complicate these areas of research. My primary research as stated earlier also focused on observing contents of a dance video produced and conducted here in Finland organised by a West African(s) who have been living in Finland for over 10 years and conducted an interview separate from the video to ascertain various perceptions of gender meaning and embodiment and how it relates to gender equality. Secondary research was based on interpretation of these data collected through semi structured and open ended interviews using questionnaires, analyses and drawing conclusions.

3.2 Qualitative Research

Since my research question centres on how Pop Culture has influenced the perceptions of West Africans living in Finland of Feminism and Gender Equality, a qualitative research was best suitable for my approach.

According to Hogan et al (2011), qualitative methods can by themselves produce compelling knowledge of how and why people behave as they do, whether in organisational, family, personal or other social roles. It is multifaceted and investigates culture, behaviour and norms.

Hogan et al (2011:10) further suggested that qualitative approach does not try to transform verbal symbols into numerical ones. Data remains as they are from the researcher or participant's point of view and tries to get to the heart of what exactly led to decisions or choices that were made and how the choice were originated.

In researching on how Pop Culture has influenced Feminism and Gender Equality, when focusing on West Africans living here in Finland, the experiences and attitudes also needs to be analysed. This was indeed an exciting and explorative experience. It was a very highly rewarding activity because it engaged with the issue of Pop culture, Feminism and Gender Equality and how it matters in different ways. Through Qualitative research, I was able to explore a wide array of dimensions of participants and their relations with the social world through their experiences, understandings and interactions.

My findings was finally analysed based on word for word explanations without editing or converting any element into a generalised picture, average or quantity. Mason in 2002, however states that, while not all qualitative researchers are on a mission to produce 'the general picture' of how things work, the qualitative habit of intimately connecting context with explanation means that qualitative research produces very well-founded generalities.

As Hogan et al (2011:10) puts it, qualitative research is all about researching specific meanings, emotions and practises that emerge through the interactions and interdependencies between people. Qualitative research is concerned with social and personal processes and relations and seeks to examine how various units or sub-units and sub-processes derive their functions due to roles played in broader composite units. (Hogan, Dolan, & Donnelly, 2011).

Despite some spectations by Hogan et al, that qualitative research sometimes takes place in natural settings, where researchers can conduct their research right in the presence or environment of participants or people they are studying, the most common qualitative research do not necessarily occur in 'natural' situations as such. (Fischer, (2005:411) (Hogan, Dolan, & Donnelly, 2011). As he puts it, 'qualitative research is uniquely suited to discerning humans participation in what happens to them'. Suggesting that interviews or focused group participants agree to meet and most probably decide where to meet and what environment is most suitable for them even though in some cases, usually proposed by the researcher.

In researching specific meanings of gender embodiment, emotions and role playing, as it relates to gender equality and pop culture, fluid relations with participants will make this

qualitative inquiry more suitable with an empirical combination. Through a live experiment and observation of a dance performance together with my target interviewees, qualitative and slight empirical survey method make a perfect combination that was able to target and answer basic issues regarding my research questions.

3.3 Method of Data Collection

First step towards data collection was the creation of questionnaires with a set of open ended questions that resulted in a discussion with participants. Two (2) West African females within the age group of 30-45 have been contacted who have been living in Finland for that past ten years. There was not much criteria for interviewees except that they are preferably females, West Africans, being the focus of my study and my heritage, within the age group of 30 - 45 suggests a reasonable amount of experiences relating to work and child bearing age and females being the core focus of feminism.

These females have been selected randomly based on referrals from colleagues and friends. I have no preferences as regards to personal relationship with any of them even though one of the females, I am a bit familiar with as we both attend the same church. Even though I am not exactly familiar with the backgrounds and values of the other female. Qualitative researchers attempts to understand behaviour and institutions by getting to know the persons involved and their values, rituals, beliefs and emotions'. (Hogan, Dolan, & Donnelly, 2011). These I believe was taken into cognisance during the interviews and observation processes. However, having an interest in feminism is one aspect that I have taken into account in the analysis so as to positively affect the reliability and chances of relatively similar results of the research if for example or by chance, similar research is conducted by other researchers. As a research is seen as reliable if other researchers can produce relatively similar results with relatively similar research setting. (Kuoppa, 2018).

3.3.1 Interviewing

Like normal everyday discussions and conversations, Interviews are very similar. Interviews are however more focused on the researcher's need for data. (Patton & Cochran, 2002). Interviews are also more in-depth and conducted in as a means for findings and validity to reflect what the research sets out to answer instead of reflecting personal probably bias views

about the research but makes this research more rigorous to ensure reliability and trustworthiness. (Patton & Cochran, 2002).

Interviewing can also be said to be a valuable method for exploring and examining the construction and negotiation of meanings or values and opinions in a natural setting. (Cohen et al, 2007) (Alshenqeeti, 2014). Alshenqeeti emphasizes that it enables interviewers to speak in their own voice and express their own thoughts, building a holistic snapshot and analysing words for detailed reports and informants. Interviews give room for more interaction and helps the researcher probe for clear answers which could lead to more emerging topics, thereby broadening the scope of understanding a particular phenomenon. According to Kvale (1996: 174) an interview is "a conversation, whose purpose is to gather descriptions of the [life-world] of the interviewee" with respect to interpretation of the meanings of the 'described phenomena'.

For practicality, this research interviewing technique was aimed to be reproductive or reproducible, allowing same topic to guide future users, systematic, such that data or interviewees were not picked to support any pre-existing ideas or notions, credible, such that questions were asked in a reasonable manner to give truthful and reasonable accounts and transparent so that readers can see the exact process of data collection and analysis.

Alshenqeeti further stated that research has shown four types of interviews frequently employed in doing research. The first being structured Interview which is very direct and leads to stiff responses like 'yes' or 'no'. The second type of interview being open ended or unstructured leading the researcher to unfolding other topics and issues. The third which is semi-structured interview which is more like a flexible version of the structured interview and allows achieving of depth and giving the researcher the opportunity to probe and deepen the interviewee's responses. This kind of interview usually allows for a checklist and keeps both the researcher and interviewee within the parameters traced out by the aim of the study. The fourth kind of interview is the focus group interview which mostly involves sampling a specific group of the population for a particular purpose. (Barbour & Schostak (2005) (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

3.3.2 Semi Structured Interview

For the purpose and nature of this research, I opted for this type of interviews as it would allow covering various issues concerning my study and probe deeply as stated earlier in areas

where light is needed to be shed on. A set of questions or topic guide of ten questions was used as it was very important to develop the right question to ask and useful prompts to encourage the interviewee to talk about specific issues if they do not come up. This guide also prevented straying away to other topics and kept both researcher and interviewee in the frame of the topic in question.

The ten questions were initially prepared and designed in advance and were prepared in such a way that they were sufficiently open and enabled the interviewees to discuss more on the question asked such that the subsequent question is not directly planned but improvised carefully to strive to avoid leading the session or imposing meanings and also to create a relaxed and comfortable conversation.

Interviews were face to face and on a one on one basis with the use of a mobile recording device, field notes and an observation schedule to jointly observe contents of a dance video and document semiotics in performativity.

Below, were the few elements incorporated into semi structured interview for this research:

- Already written down questions and topics that are open ended and allow interviewee latitude in constructing answer
- Provision for the overview or purpose of the interview, intended uses of data and confidentiality measures.
- Permission for tape or electronic recording and taking notes of the interview for further analysis
- Interview in a relaxed atmosphere that is free from unnecessary distractions.
- Adequate time allowed for complete exhaustion of interview questions and proper analysis.
- Safe keeping and coding of data for successful transcribing

3.4 Analysing Data

In other to accommodate large amounts of data which might take loads of hours to transcribe, analysis was done through content analysis and coding. Sabar dance analysis was also analysed separately from the data collected during the interviews.

According to Elo and Kyngäs in 2007, content analysis which could be derived in an inductive

or deductive way, aims to build a model to describe a phenomenon using a conceptual form. The conceptual form usually involves three phases which are, preparation, organizing and reporting. (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007). Through testing theoretical issues to enhance understanding of the data of this research, a deductive approach was used as the aim and results relied on previous theories that this research is based on. As Elo and Kyngäs, further puts it, the aim is to attain a condensed and broad description which results in concepts and categories that describe the phenomenon. This will help the research flow while building map that also connects major concepts and ideas that make up this paper.

Alshenqeeti stated that two steps of coding have been widely discussed and expected to deliberately reduce the amount of data collected. Two types of coding are thus;

i.   Generating meaning data units
ii.   Classifying and ordering these units.

Analysis process should also include the researcher's interactional experience with interviews making it reflexive. (Creswell, 2009) (Alshenqeeti, 2014). As Alshenqeeti states, "there is no fixed method of analysing interview data in literature yet," but research should be cautiously dealt with in all forms as it eventually reflects the quality, validity and reliability of the entire research.

3.4.1 Ethnographic Work

In researching aspects of culture, cultural perception and gender notions to determine how pop culture affects Feminism and gender Equality, ethnography has to be taken into consideration. Ethnography is concerned with the study of a particular culture and relies in participant observation. (Hogan, Dolan, & Donnelly, 2011). In this case, the researcher immerses deep into the customs and lives of observation sample and takes extensive field notes.

Whitehead (2004:18) states clearly that ethnography primarily involves participant observation. Implying that the researcher or ethnographer not only observes activities but also participates in them. This kind of participation should however take place in a social setting that is familiar and significant to the ethnographer's host and which also provides

contexts and meanings systems of their world. Thus, the setting should be natural and accommodating enough to make the research see answers to questions that might not need to be necessarily asked.

Hogan et al (2011:38) states that ethnography has its origins in anthropology with the original aim of researching and studying foreign cultures. Taking place in a natural setting, immersing the researcher in the stream of events and activities and understanding and describing the scenes from the emic or insider's perspective.

However, the approaches to ethnography has evolved over time to encompass different ranges and perspectives beyond the classical approach. This research falls under the cultural and social anthropology as the objective of this research is interpretive and was focused on finding the 'meanings' in the dance performance by Sabar and also in the minds of the participants (Interviewees) of feminism and gender equality as an immigrant having lived in Finland for over a given period of time. This was done through in-depth, qualitative and exploratory interviews, supplemented with information gathered from field and work notes of observations and experiences and interpretation of these interview data and notes, in order to produce comprehendible findings and results of this research.

Cultural anthropology and social anthropology are however distinguished from one another as cultural anthropology focuses on the meaning contained in peoples' heads, whereas social anthropology, focuses on meanings constructed from social arrangements and speech in action". (Sanjek, 2000) (Hogan, Dolan, & Donnelly, 2011).

3.5 Ethical Issues:

In conducting this research, I have the responsibilities to protect research participants and also my colleagues, as well as the people to whom I will finally present my findings. I considered the ethical concerns with four principles of Tom Beauchamp and Jim Childress in 1983 as addressed by Patton and Cochran in 2002.

The four Ethical principles are as follows;

- Autonomy: Respecting the rights and decisions of the individuals and participants involved.
- Beneficence: Actions and efforts of this research is for good.

- Non- Maleficence: To avoid harm or hurt by any means and

- Justice; particularly equity:

With careful consideration, this research topic could be seen as somewhat sensitive, as the topic and questions of this research work might be a little bit controversial in the face of the participants in terms of the participants' reputation, personal complex or self-awareness either during the process or afterwards. Therefore, two general ethical issues was also considered which are;

i.   Consent: Every participant of this study has freely agreed to participate without any form of coercion or pressure. Participants have been verbally informed about what participation entails.

ii.   Confidentiality: Identities of participants are protected and not disclosed in this research. Information provided will be safeguarded and entrusted.

4.1 Gender Embodiment and Interaction in Dance and Music Videos (An Introduction to Sabar Events)

I have chosen to analyse a dance performance/video because as stated earlier in this research, dance is a product and performative art in culture through which culture is displayed. Thomas in 1995 further reiterated that dance can be found in different forms and shapes of products of "popular (mass) culture like musical theatre, films, television and pop videos and have been 'dubbed' traditionally as 'Light entertainment' (Dyer 1992)(Thomas, 1995:2). Which means that even though dance is a form of light entertainment and culture, it is also a product of culture and entertainment as they are heavily influenced by cultural norms and also a channel through which cultural forms and traditions are displayed. Thereby fostering the basis of Sabar dance as a choice of popular culture analysis.

Apart from being in mainstream popular culture, my interest in this particular dance performance will enable the expansion and understanding of 'knowledge' and learn how to transmit it as well.

Before I delve into major analysis of this performance and to understand the scenes revolving around this performance, I would like to give a brief background of the dance group and the origin of the type of dance involved.

4.1.1 The origins of the Sabar

Several authors like Schouwenaar (2017) and Tang (2008) suggest that Sabar originates from the Wolof griots culture in West Africa. These tribes are said to have spread across some regions in West Africa and mainly settling in Senegal, The Gambia and some parts of Mali. The Wolofs are the dominant ethnic group in modern day Senegal and they constitute about 43.3 percent of the country's population. (July 1999 est.) (Tang, 2008). The language is also spoken by about 80% of the country's population, making it the country's lingua franca. The Wolof is said to be a hybrid ethnic group made up of multiple ethnicities because of their prolonged contacts with neighbouring ethnic groups such, that Wolof, is referred more of as a language and not people according to Senegalese people. (Tang, 2008:7). This "Wolofization" as Tang puts it, has further disguised the multitude and real ethnic origins of many of the Senegalese people. This is because, there are so many people speaking the language and considering

themselves as Wolof, but not necessarily belonging to the ethnicity upon further enquiry.

As Diverse in culture and religion as Senegal is, Music plays an important role in most movements ranging from many religious affiliations and pop cultural activities. An overwhelming majority of the Wolofs are said to be Muslims, even though not necessarily relevant in the study of dance but quite significant in gender roles and embodiment relating to religious norms.

The original origins of Sabar, is from the Wolof griots who are known to woodworkers, leatherworkers, blacksmiths and weavers who fall under the sub groups of the 'neeno' division. The neeno is one of divisions under which the Wolof Social hierarchy was formerly divided. Other levels or divisions are the 'geer', ("uncasted" or nobles) and the Jaam (Slaves). The neenos were regarded as the "casted" (endogamous "casted" groups). (Tang, 2007)

These Griots, also known as the Nguewel (gewel) people are usually the 'animates' of a party and are considered as the best dancers, drummers, singers and cooks. These group of people, originally known for their mastery in crafts, have a major role in their society interdependently. As Schouwenaar in 2017 notes, the 'geers' or 'nobles' known as the kings had its Nguewel to praise him through singing, dancing and drumming and the Nguewels in reverse, needed these activities to make a living. (Schouwenaar, 2017). Even though there are no more kings or casting systems this present day in the Wolof Empire, the Nguewels still steer up celebrations and major events over time. From events of primary praise singing and guiding soldiers into the battlefield in the old times, to present day entertainment and party celebrations bringing about unity between the geers (former kings) and Nguewels and also attracting all kinds of people, which in the olden times would not have been.

The word 'Sabar' is the generic name for the dance, event, and the drum. Sabar celebrates life and most celebrations within the Wolof society resonate on the sounds of the Sabar drums, singing, dancing and bringing about passion and love wherever they find themselves.

4.2 A typical Sabar event

The major aim in this research is to analyse the scene of performance arena around the Sabar dance event as a pop cultural activity and also analyse certain forms of behaviour and how gender roles are shared is performed which might be constructed to emphasize the Sabar tradition with dance rhythms, movement, interaction and communication. Most participants

might not be necessarily present at an event to embody the Sabar tradition but simply there to have fun, mix and socialise with friends, but sub consciously already embody the tradition as their presence and actions can be interpreted as performative setting their social roles visible. (Seye, 2016).

I also be analysed the borderline between the audience and the performances in that environment (Which is considered foreign) and the meanings and ideas that are transmitted through the entire performance with music, dance, beats or body movements.

The Sabar, (the events of Music, dance and drumming) upon first hearing or attendance to a complete foreigner or even a West African native, might be a little complex, overwhelming and difficult to understand. This analysis, I hope, will help to create a simple, short and detailed understanding of what is happening beyond the body language, sights and attractions and how much of it is language based among other multiple layers of complex meanings.

I will be analysing a pre-recorded video from YouTube. Choosing the video to analyse was a very difficult decision and so I have attached two videos here even though majorly analysing the longer one. (Jeri-Jeri Session). I chose these videos because of the presence of a mixture of audiences from different nationals and because the performances were done by Africans (Senegalese) in Diaspora which relates to the major research topic for this paper.

The first appears to have been recorded in Germany during the Mit Africa Festival that captions – Sabar MitAfrica Festival 2013 (Mama Africa, Band, Cultural Association and Cultural and Event Agency for African Worlds of Experience).

The second - Jeri-Jeri Sabar Session Live! (Filmed and edited by Katrakazis Antonis (midtones) JERI-JERI Sabar Session Live at Wax Treatment)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUdykxE1dXw

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yjZaf5lzTGs

"Our body is not in space like things; it inhabits or haunts space. It applies itself to space like a hand to an instrument; and when we wish to move about we do not move the body as we move an object. We transport it without instruments as if by magic, since it is ours and because through it we have direct access to space. For us the body is much more than an instrument

or a means; it is our expression in the world, the visible form of our intentions. Even our most secret affective movements, those most deeply tied to the humoral infrastructure, help to shape our perception of things". —Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 2003.

A typical Sabar event is mostly organised and connected to celebrations ranging from family celebrations, political rallies, and marriage ceremonies, naming ceremonies, anniversaries and many kinds of festivals. Seye states that a Sabar event could also be none specific. Implying that there could be Sabar drums and dance held just for fun and the purpose of dancing and having fun. In the video being analysed, it also seems that even though its title describes it as a Sabar Jeri-Jeri session, it seems to be a very informal gathering of people having fun and enjoying the sights, sounds and the atmosphere of Sabar.

Schouwenaar in her article in 2017 states that within the general term of Sabar which can be identified as a dance, rhythm and a drum at the same time, every dance event has its name, (Tanebar, ngente, mariage, tur) every drum part has its name (Thiol, tungune, mbeung, nder) and every rhythm danced to has its name (thie boudiene, barambaye, njaari gorong). This might be quite confusing names to remember especially upon first hearing to a non-native. Seye however simply states that most Sabar events are roughly divided into two major categories, day time Sabar and Night time Sabar. Adding that the day time sabar are classified as the smaller Sabar, which might also be referred to as sabaru ngoon, yendoo or tuur/tur. Depending on the specific times of the day and occasion. The night time Sabar on the other hand, usually classified as the 'bigger' Sabar can also be referred to as the 'Tannebeer' or 'Taneber', (different authors seem to spell this terms differently) takes place during night time. The night time events are said to be more elaborate as professional artist or dancers. Pop singers or even stilt dancers might be present and also sometimes, other rhythms of other ethnicities could also be played but this varies widely depending specifically on the reason for the occasion and gathering.

Most Sabar events take place in the open air, usually in the streets, with canopies for sun shade at the day time and lights for the night time (Seye, 2016).

4.3 The Performance Analysis

These performances were both held in the open streets of somewhere in Germany. The Mit Africa video was held in Koln Germany in 2012 and 2013 respectively. The people present at this event seem to be there for the fun of the drum beats and dancing. Their roles do not

seem quite clearly defined but they seem to know what is going on and can relate to the sense of happening. The drummers are however men whom seem to know their onions and have clearly defined their roles in the drum beat. This seems to be a case with most Sabar performances as the drummers are also mostly consisted of men even though there is a woman present in the Jeri- Jeri session and the dancers most often times consist of women, thus dividing their roles based on their gender, age, or family origin. Seye also states that most Sabar events are usually organised by the women back in Senegal but also this depends on the nature of the event and the purpose for the gathering. As she puts it, the men sometimes may seem uninterested during a dance performance seating at the edge of the canopies and acting like a shield for the women and children, while the women and children are hailing most of the times and also sometimes dancing to popular rhythms.

I chose these videos like I stated earlier, because of the presence of the audience of different nationals from different works of life and I was indeed fascinated by the resonation given to the rhythms of the Sabar drums by these foreigners. Another reason was because it represents some part of African culture of the Africans in diaspora living in Europe. In all, these videos have major characteristics of what a smaller Sabar event looks like even when it seems so informal and lacking in rigidity. The videos also appear to be encores or preludes of a tannebeer, (the bigger night time events) but I cannot exactly say for sure as they were both uploaded between the months June and August which still have a bit of the reflections of the sun at night time.

In dividing the participants into opposing categories, they consist of the drummers, the dancers and the on lookers or audience. Dancers here are not for the most part women, as different people including men and children seem to be involved but not necessarily stealing the show. The division or borderline between the performers and the spectators is very fluid as all participants are potential dancers such that each dancer in this events dances as well as watches and enjoys what is going on.

In the Jeri-Jeri session, there are an ensemble of about seven drummers playing a mixture of different kind of drums and the 'cool' drum being the most significant. They are drumming and singing at intervals, with one of the drummers that seems to be the lead drummer, being the same person doing the little singing involved. Overall, they all really seem to be enjoying what they are doing. Also amongst the audience, is someone with a camera is also noticeable recording what is going on, apart from the one that recorded the video that was uploaded.

The exact rhythms played, couldn't be ascertained for this paper, but they seem to switch from one rhythm to another and the participants plus audience, mostly consisting of foreigners are very excited to be present while nodding, moving their bodies and at some point even dancing, thus creating a ground of resonance and interaction between the audience and the performers.

Sabar dance events can definitely be defined as performances because they display a customary structure which have specific modes communication that are different from ordinary everyday life. According to Seye, (2014:85) Schechner presentation of performance points that there are signals involved in beginning and ending a performance. Signals through the use of music and dance that communicate strongly even beyond verbal communication. The use of these signals and codes through music is very prominent in the Sabar, and this makes it suffice to set up the performance frame.

In this context, the Sabar therefore possesses multiple semiotic resources (Signals and codes in music) with which the performers or the drummers may use to recreate a literal text in rhythmic body movement, making the Sabar event heavily language based.

Bennett in 2008 also emphasizes that for the 'wealth of signifying potential' in dance to be realised, it must be interpreted or translated as 'hubs' of symbolic activity with multi textual contexts and not as 'mere' literal or musical work, as Anthropological based studies have shown that dances are not only embedded in cultural contexts, they also form part of it, with a signification that involves all aspect of social life.

This scenes of performers and forms of behaviour in these performances hereby draws all the human beings present together. First and foremost creating a sense of being and unity.

This also creates strong bonding with audience as often time artists in different fields of art love to create strong bonding with their work of art. As a Sculpture once puts it,

"I dream of the day when I shall create sculptures that breathe, perspire, cough, laugh, yawn, smirk, wink, pant, dance, walk, crawl… and move among people as shadows move along people." —David Medalla

The Sabar event can also be seen as a point of reference to cultural identities especially within 'black diaspora' communities and a necessary cultural prop which is often times used as a form of communication and team bonding instrument but not only with the black community

and also with the international community.

Another way to understand what is happening during the Sabar event is to view the event as a "transportation of performance" as presented by Schechner in 2006. (Seye, 2016). As I stated earlier that the events in the videos being analysed could be either Preludes or encores, the "transportation performance" presented likens the preparations and warm up sessions which could be seen as prelude and the cooldown period or encore, as transportation to and from the "performance world". Where the warm up session transports into the performance, and cool down session brings you back.

It can also be seen as transportation of the original Wolof culture and people of Senegal during Sabar events. Seye also stated that sometimes, there is a certain level of disorderliness usually towards the end of a Sabar event. This might not be disorderliness in a negative way as participants or the audience are sometimes over joyed and carried away by the fun of dancing. This "carried awayness" is quite obvious also in these videos even though recorded in Europe, far away from West Africa. To show their delight and excitement, several people enter to dance spontaneously and simultaneously and also depending on the event, if it is near ending, the drummers might not bother to try keep order until they decided to stop to mark the end of the event.

4.4 Sabar Expressions and Circle

Furthermore, the Sabar event can also be described as an expression of joy and to celebrate happy occasions. As a kind of therapy to relate and connect with people, forgetting everyday troubles. The sounds of the drums and dancing can also be seen as a source of energy (Seye, 2014:92). These joys and expression of happiness are guided by rules of the performance standard, ideals, norms or values of the tradition. By the setting of these standards, enables a performative interaction of the people in Sabar dance events.

The interaction between the dancers and musicians or drummer also relies on the professionalism of the drummer, knowing what and when to play it, is very important in Sabar drumming. Knowing when to switch to another rhythm and know exactly how to play every kind or at least various kinds of rhythms is key. This also helps the drummer communicate with the dancers and audience on many different levels. The drummer can feel when the dancer is keying into the beats of the drums and can also tell which ones they resonate more to. This professionalism in drumming also involves know how to play for different categories

of people. For example, the young, the old, middle aged and children. Categories of people may also involve different ethnicities and tribes. The Sabar drummers in the videos attached are well on point with these. They play for all nations.

To be a good Sabar dancer, the dancer also has to have good ears to hear the beats and a good Sabar dancer has the ears for Sabar rhythms. This helps the dancer in his or her dance steps and movements. Even though the dancers at most Sabar events might not know all the rhythms, it is important to at least understand the dance rhythm that is being played at the moment to be able to move your body. This is not necessarily the case anyway, as according to an interview with Karim Thiam, conducted by Seye in 2006, the young musician emphasized thus, "The most important thing is to know the tradition. Sometimes when I am playing……there are people that dance whatever they want. Then me too, I will play whatever I want…… but if you dance according to the rhythm, I will play what you dance". This, helps to create a level of interaction between the player and the dancer or audience. It also builds that positive and level ground where the players and the dancers and audience come to an agreement.

4.5 Conclusion about Sabar

There is definitely something in Sabar, which at first could be intimidating or daunting feeling, and then when finally accustomed to, gives a sense of magical appeal and control. As it seems, it could be an arena full of rules and at the same a place where rules are bent. It could also be criticized, acknowledged and felt. It is a work of art that's affects human consciousness. The dancers that emerged in the Mit Africa festival video spontaneously, dared to be seen and heard and where able to connect with the drummers to express themselves. This behaviour encourages a reflection of life in all its ramifications. The dancers all have a story or history behind them. It could be a reflection of happiness, joy, or even hardships. It could be as form of decolonisation and creation of self-identity. This emotions can also be related to other types of dance and not just the Sabar. This could be ballet, Tango or even Salsa.

Skinner in 2012 uses Argentinean dance scholar, Marta Savigliano as an example for tango. Savigliano, who wrote about her identity and the Tango dance, described dance as the 'locus' of her Identification since migrating from her homeland culture. (Savigliano 1995:12)(Skinner 2012:1). She describes it as a place to find that space, to decolonize herself as a woman most especially, in a male dominated post-colonial South America. "*Tango is my strategic language, a way of talking about, understanding, and exercising decolonization*". (Savigliano 1995: 16)

(Skinner & and Kringebach, 2012).

Schouwenaar in her blog article also expresses same kind of emotions about Sabar, as she puts it, "…Sabar teaches me all lessons in life a person must learn. Sabar is like facing a mirror….. When I enter the Sabar circle I enter a momentum in time, place and space where I am both absent and present. I am more present than ever in a way, but my mind is in a different place…"

Similarly, as this dance and tradition embodies language and identity, it also emotions as it relates to the different dancers with different meanings. As Seye put it in her conclusion, the Sabar can embody "the constant tension between social norms and individuality" which is one of the enduring aspects of human life as it teaches expressions and interaction which is none verbalized.

The Sabar tradition is also constantly repeated during any Sabar event which makes it real as theories of performativity have also argued that identities and social roles need to be repeated to be considered as real because the actions within the frame of the Sabar performance, even though performed outside everyday life can affects and have consequences in everyday life. (Seye, 2016).

5.1 Analysis: Qualitative Data Analysis Findings and Report
Analysis of the two interviews Conducted.

This Chapter gives an overall overview, qualitatively, of the 2 interviews conducted. The participants involved are female West African immigrants in Finland, who have resided in Finland for over ten years. The overall process of data collection is based on the methodology as discussed earlier, which aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How the people living in diaspora see the impact of the western media and pop culture on the understanding of feminism and gender equality in West Africa?

2. How do they see these changes to be presented or embodied in different performances or performative acts like dancing?

To answer the above research questions carefully, I analysed the participants' history, behaviour and educational background, as well as their previous everyday lives before migration to Europe and after and exposure to forms of popular culture through the media and how these shifts have affected their attitudes, self-concepts and learning processes towards western popular culture and their opinions on gender roles and gender equality and Feminism. This approach allowed me to find out the varying shifts in ideologies, way of life and perceptions to enable me draw a conclusion and hypotheses with regards to the influence of 'Western' way of life and popular culture and how this has somewhat impacted on their views of gender roles, gender equality and feminism.

Additionally, I paid attention to country background specific aspects of the participants which might have impacted the ways in which the participants have been exposed to Western influence or education and pop culture and these aspects, taken into considerations where appropriate.

5.2 Findings and conclusion
Overview and Summary of findings

The interview analysis of the participants involved is based on a hybrid approach combining a deductive and an inductive approach when coded. The findings are in sub categories or

themes that relate to the research and try to answer the research questions. In trying to make sense of the data gathered and bringing order and meaning to them, a conceptual form will be used through this model by describing and discussing each phenomenon.

Brief Introduction of Interviewees and Background

The two female interviewees that participated in this research, for confidentiality of identity purposes, their names will be in pseudonyms. One of the most common forms of creating anonymity in literature consist of giving pseudonyms to participants. (Clark, 2006) (Moore, 2012).

I begin with Dunia Gomis, whom I will mostly refer to here as Gomis. She is from Senegal and hails from the Manjago tribe. As she claims. The Manjago tribe has its origins also from parts of Guinea-Bissau and the Gambia. I met her for the first time in a Church. (A catholic church in Tampere) when I recently arrived and begun my studies in Tampere in August 2016. When we met, I had on my hair really long braided African hair extensions and she approached me asking me questions about my hair and how I maintained it. We exchanged contacts and did not keep in touch so much until we met again at the end of 2017. It was in her apartment this time as she had earlier invited me via phone call to come join in a certain celebration. Gomis has resided in Finland for about twelve years and she is married to a Finnish man. She has an Eight year old daughter and from what I gathered, she had been married for about nine years as at then. I immediately noticed the ambience of her apartment, the traditional African pieces of art that she had in her home amongst which was also the Sabar drum. I also noticed her love for African music and art as some music from Ghana was playing in the background. She expressed to me how much she likes also Nigerian artist and that she was also a dancer dancing sometimes in the Sabar dance group in Tampere. This made me take interest in her immediately especially for this research. This made me later contact her via phone call several weeks later kindly requested and explaining why I wanted her as a participant in this research. Gomis willingly obliged. She in my opinion, seems like a very cheerful, social and out spoken person. At some point before I scheduled a date for the interview, I got a friend request from her on Facebook which I accepted. Later on, I noticed her contents on Social media that she was very much interested in political, social and economic matters. The passion which goes into the long videos and contents she puts up mostly concerning Africans, relationships, immigration, loyalty, crimes and other times, some other less serious contents like cooking

and dancing. Gomis is thirty eight years old, educated up to higher diploma level, has a job in a care giving facility as a practical nurse, and is heterosexual.

The other participant, Omolola Jegede originally comes from Nigeria. From the tribe of Yoruba specifically from Oyo state in western Nigeria. I met her Husband in a bus on a weekday morning on my way to university and we got talking. We both recognised that we are West Africans and we soon began to chat about our roots and purpose in Finland. We exchanged contacts as most Nigerians would do after chatting for a while and that was it. Told him about this research and he suggested his wife. The Jegedes recently moved to Finland and have only been in Finland for about two years but they have been living in Europe for the past ten years which also makes her a good candidate for this research. They moved to Finland after the husband got an offer as a researcher in a tertiary institution and they have been living in Finland since then. I scheduled the interview through her husband as it was her husband I was more familiar with. They both have two children, a four year old boy and seven month old baby girl. Jegede is more on the quiet side, a little bit reserved, seems quite religious (Muslim) as she still covers her hair all the time when out, but could open her hair only in the presence of a female visitor. Jegede (Wife) is thirty three years old, educated up to university doctorate level but at that time still had not got a suitable job according to her, relating to her profession. From my observation, they both live a very plain and simple life. Not many furniture or household belongings, not too active of a social life but most of the activities of their lives seem to focus mainly around their children. The interview lasted about forty minutes using the electronic recorder on my mobile.

Traditional and Religious Beliefs

During the interviews, religion seemed to be quite predominant in the participants' lives. Among other seeming influences associated with feminism and gender equality is religion. (Klingorova & Havlicek, 2015). In the Jegede, 2018 interview, she stated that she would only conform to any forms of feminism that supports her religion which is Islam. Further stating that God has given a man and the woman different levels of elevation without one demeaning the other. Gomis, (2018 Interview) also referred to the holy bible when trying to elaborate claims that a man is the head of a home. She insisted that a man is the king of the Queen and the woman must bow to her husband. As she puts it, "a man is the head and the woman is the neck which can turn the head'.

These foundations in religious beliefs traces back to cultural legacies with which religion is a dominant factor in a way of life. Religion plays an important role in the cultural lives in different spaces and is also deeply rooted in an individual's influences and experiences especially in socioeconomic direction of societies. (Stump, 2008) (Klingorova & Havlicek, 2015). Africa is known to be quite religious and Nigeria and Senegal for example are known to be very religious countries. This religious dominancy also encompasses all other parts of Africa. Mbiti, in 1999 states that for an African, religion is an ontological and central phenomenon that pertains to the question of existence or being. (Mbiti, 1999). Within a social group of people, religion has rues and conducts that guides the way life should go, permeating all aspects of life including gender roles. According to the Organisation for economic cooperation and development (OECD) report in 2012, Nigeria is predominantly Christian and Islam that actively practises the religion which makes up to ninety percent of the Population and Senegal, being also predominantly religious.

Despite more questions about gender roles and feminism making their way continuously into religious debates, there have been many assumptions that the construction of gender roles are primarily based on upbringing , lifestyle, culture and religion. (King, 1995) (Klingorova & Havlicek, 2015). Additionally, most popular religions in the word today still support male dominance in the society and family structures especially Christianity and Islam which obviously reflects in the participants' central point of view concerning gender roles (Klingorova & Havlicek, 2015). This may however, not be the case in the oppression and subordinations of women or in the equity and or equality of human rights.

Cultural Dimensions and Cultural Transition

Environmental and cultural differences is another factor that was prominent during this research on the influences of Pop culture on feminism and gender equality and the ideas of gender roles. Changes in lifestyle and living situation is an outlook of this research as participants most likely at some point in their lives, have migrated from their country of origin or original place of birth. Jegede stated that the communal ways of living back in Africa affects how gender roles were played. She added that these days, they are beginning to shift and not be so defined anymore especially now that she lives with her family here in Europe. She gave an example of when she had her first baby back in Nigeria. As she put it, "there were so many family members around living with us to help with the chores. My mum, my sister, my niece

were all there during my Labour and delivery. My husband did not have to do any house chores but concentrated on his work by racing more money and trying to sustain the home financially. He didn't even know how to change diapers until we had our second baby here in Europe". She continues, "Now here in Europe, my husband helps with the dishes and house chores which he would not have bothered with in Nigeria because of the communal way of living as compared to the individualistic way of living here in Europe". She further emphasized that the lifestyle in Europe is so different such that it makes gender roles more or less fluid and nothing is specifically assigned to anyone in particular. Whereas, this would not have been the case if she were presently in Nigeria.

Gomis, also offered same perspective. She told of how life was so much different for her here in Finland as compared to back in Senegal. The weather, electricity and other basic amenities are also factors that have made issues in her life, roles, problems and thoughts very different and have been shifted to a recognisable extent. She stated that back home in Senegal, she would probably not work as much as she does here in Europe but instead concentrate more on house chores and making sure that everything within the home is in order. She expressed her love for cooking and domestic stuff but laments that she barely has the time these days. These differences in lifestyle changes certainly boils down to the different cultural and lifestyle dimensions in Europe in comparison to that in Africa.

The Social environment in which an individual is born or lives could shape their lifestyle, attitude and emotional behaviour reactions. (Neculaesei, 2015). This also influences thought, language and behaviour which affect gender roles especially when transmitting form one cultural environment to another. In general, what could determine an individual's cultural values that affects perceptions, behaviours, mentalities and attitudes towards gender for example, are mostly contents of national culture which could be based on ethnicity, religion, location, climate, economy and or levels of education in that particular culture. Neculaesei, argues that western culture distinguishes between sex and gender which serve to portray differences between men and women. This binary and hierarchical division according to Coetzee in 2017, is a concept that was imposed on some African societies through western colonial rule. This insinuates that some already existing cultural values amongst Africans could already have been inherent through western colonization making what we know as original gender roles in Africa inherent from the western culture regardless of change of location or cultural transition.

However, role differences in cultures may not necessarily be associated with discrimination or gender inequality as biologically, male and female could be naturally different but culturally could be same or similar depending on the particular culture. (Neculaesei, 2015).

The Media and Digital space

The media and digital space was inevitable during the interviews as both participants first ever heard the term 'feminism' from either traditional media or digital media. The initial ideas, the changed notions and current perceptions were all received from the media. As Jegede earlier stated that her initial perceptions of feminism was an antagonizing struggle against men, She stated and referred to some posts via social media and trending hashtags like 'wife not cook'. Then much later in her life, she admits that her initial thoughts and views about feminism were again changed by certain television programs and social media. Jegede also agrees that watching certain television shows or programs in media channels and digital spaces has to a great extent changed or influenced certain areas of her life. She used the example of being on Facebook and reading some shared posts or watching some vlogs and how it has helped her better understand more perspectives. She however admits that she tries to resist certain pressures like for example, trying not to scold her husband or nag because she saw a man cooking and changing diapers for his baby on a certain YouTube channel.

 In tracing the influence of the media and digital space as an agent of popular culture on feminism and gender equality, the impact is inevitable mainly because the media is a like mirror used by popular culture to connect socialization and identity. (Trier-Bienek, 2015). Speaking of the media, the digital space as an angle of the media are seen as one of the main leakage spaces for societal realities. The media could create an unrealistic social expectations which could damage relationships between men and women, even women against women and create a feeling of distort between women or men against their bodies (Trier-Bienek, 2015). By this, the contents of online and television programmes or soap operas seem to creep into everyday realities as the line between facts and fiction has become very blurry in digital spaces recently. This is also because digital platforms like websites, blogs, forums, Television channels and most especially social media networks have become the major sources of information, communication and entertainment. Television programs or soap operas contents and characters are immersed deeply into real life. A typical example would be using the

illustration of Trier- Bieniek, the television series, *girls*. She Examines how the 'contradictions' of the feminists' were explored in the series and how the television series portrayed the current day feminism embodying issues related to sex, body image and female solidarity. The main character in the television series, *girls,* was played by Lena Dunham, (Hannah Horvath) who was seen as young, round, short-haired, tattooed and wore less makeup away from the 'glamorous' female celebrity image when accepting the golden globe award in 2013 for the show as a young producer, director and star, honouring the legacy of other female nominees, made a speech that immediately shoot her up as a feminist icon for the new generation feminists. She exclaimed thus; *"This award is for every woman who has ever felt like there wasn't a space for her. This show has made a space for me… making this show and the response to it has been the most validating thing that I have ever felt. It's made me feel so much less alone in this world."*

According to Gretter, Yadav and Gleason in 2017, they used an example of Ochs and Capps in 2009, which explained that media contents and stories shape our lives and respond to our need for clarity and coherence in the face of perplexing aspects of life experiences. This is to say that most of us as human beings easily relate to these stories and images which are mostly fictional and shared on digital spaces. Besides just being a source of entertainment, we naturally think in narrative ways which is one of the earliest and easiest powers of mind to appear in the young child and no doubts, the media space is heavily loaded with various forms of storytelling which range from advertisements or commercials, daily news and gossips to soap operas and series. We as human beings also constantly build ourselves through these narratives and images whether they are real or not, thereby subconsciously conforming to the enacted role that has been depicted by the media.

General Understanding of the concept of Feminism and Gender Equality

As earlier stated in this research, there has been several debates and arguments as to what feminism really stands for and what it represents. The different waves of feminism over time, and the postmodern feminism wave left the participants somewhat confused initially. Jegede, during the 2018 interview, in giving final thoughts, stated that feminism is greatly misunderstood and that a number of people who call themselves feminist, especially in

Nigeria, do not actually understand what it means. "I initially thought it was a movement to antagonize men until much later when I began to grasp a better understanding of it". Freedman in 2001 States that in trying to analyse all that has been written or spoken in the name of feminism, it becomes glaring that it is a multifaceted group of ideas and actions and not one unitary concept.

Apart from the many different definitions and opinions about feminisms, it is also clear that some Africans tend to not identify with the concept or use the term. For various reasons ranging from lack of misunderstanding, stigma of being a man 'hater' or because it originally did not focus on the African woman's struggles.

Gomis, from her general understanding of the concept, refused to be identified as a feminist. When I asked if she was one, she paused for a while and she has no exact answer to that question. She explained that the term seemed too complicated and sometimes the movement seemed somewhat against men. This was no surprise as African female authors like Buchi Emecheta for instance, did not exactly identify with the term and somehow avoided its use in most of her discourses. Also, the example of the Nigerian female presidential aspirant who bluntly stated on national radio that she was no feminist, even though with the aim of getting into power to represent the Nigerian women on the global landscape and fight for women's right. In a discussion during interviewing Gomis, I asked if she feels that a man could also be a feminist and she responded that the term feminism would have to change because it sounds like something for only women.

This highlights the problematic of gender in the feminists' theories. Despite the adoption of the term 'gender equality' to aim same purposes as feminism, Freedman points out that gender still could be seen as something relevant to only women and social construction of femity because it was used by academic feminists to bring reputation to their work as writing about gender instead of 'women' could earn more respect. (Oakley, 1997) (Freedman, 2001).

Even up to the postmodern and post feminism era, there are still being lots of debates as to what post feminism is and according to Vicki Coppock, Deena Haydon and Ingrid Richter in the illusions of post feminism in 1995, post feminism has never been defined. It is still a "product of assumptions and an amorphous thing". (Gamble, 2006). Gamble also points that besides post feminism focusing around issues of victimization autonomy and responsibility, post feminism implies a heterosexist orientation which now seeks to find a place for men as husbands and fathers as well as friends and lovers.

As Gamble further states, whatever we may call it, and whatever form it takes, whether in accepting third wave feminism as being more capable than the post feminism movement, it is important that women continue to promote a cause and fight against any economic or political degradation or oppression and that the word 'feminism' must never lose its meaning. (Gamble, 2006).

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Interview Questions

The aim of my research is to analyse the influence of pop culture on feminism and gender equality on West Africans in diaspora. This research will analyse the interplay of recent studies and previous studies of research which might somewhat lead to a debate on not whether pop culture has a positive or negative influence but to analyse the level of awareness and influence of the western world on Africans through Africans living in diaspora and to ascertain if they had different views before their migration.

This research also aims to ascertain and analyse certain impressions and understandings of Feminism and feminists' movement, gender roles and Embodiments especially through the influence of pop Culture. I will therefore be analysing a music video of a West African dance group in Finland and interviewing about 2 females (West Africans) within the age group of 35-45 who have been living in Finland from 5 years and above.

The following are examples of questions that will be asked using semi Structured interview format:

1. Background

    a. Country of origin?

    b. Educational background?

    c. Married or single?

    d. Sexual orientation?

    e. Experience of studying or working abroad?

2. What does Feminism or gender equality mean to you?

3. How has living in Europe affected how you feel about it?

4. Do you consider yourself in any way a feminist, strong, not a feminist Or Anti-Feminist?

5. What are your views on gender roles?

6. What differences in Gender roles in Africa as compare to here in Finland?

7. Did it somehow change your views on Gender roles?

8. How do you perceive gender roles and embodiment when it comes to women in music videos

9. How can you describe gender roles and embodiment in relation to this video?

10. Final thoughts?