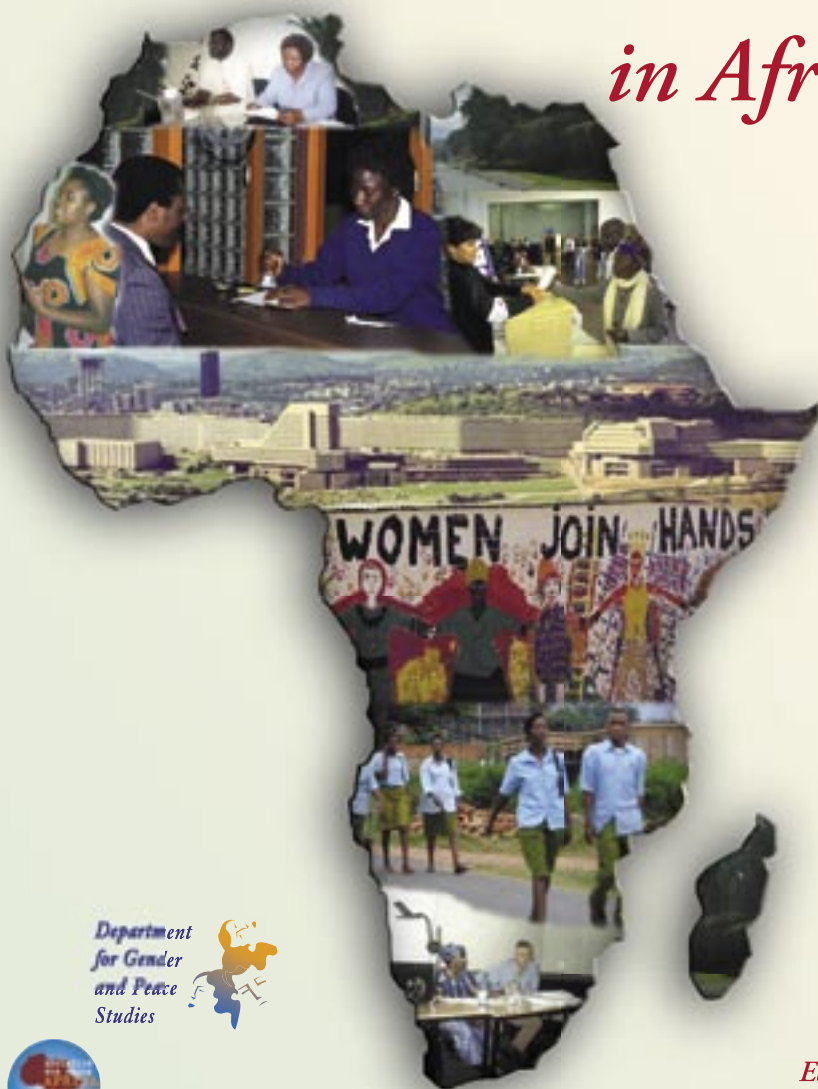University for Peace

Gender and Peace Building in Africa

Department for Gender and Peace Studies

Edited by:

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Sara Sharratt

Sara Sharratt received her Ph.D in Clinicl Psycology and is Profesor Emerita of Psychology from Sonoma State University, California where she taught for 18 years. She specializes in Gender Studies and Feminist Psychology. She has taught in universities around the world, including the University of Maryland in Germany, Holland and Belgium and at both the University of Costa Rica and the National University of Costa Rica in their joint graduate programme in Women's Studies. She is an international consultant on gender issues and violence against woman especially during war time. Dr. Sharratt is co-editor of **Assalt on the Soul:Women in the Former Yugoslavia***, a book on the plight of woman in the former Yugoslavia. She has directed programs on gender and violence and sustainable development for the government of Costa Rica. She has had an extensive practice as a Clinical Psychologyist, both in the United States and Costa Rica and she is a distinguished Visiting Profesor in the M.A. programme of the Department for Gender and Peace Studies at UPEACE.*

INTRODUCTION

When Maj Okot visits a rehabilitation centre in Gulu (Northern Uganda), he meets his former colleagues, many of whom were abducted by his unit. Major Okot had eight wives when he was in the bush. The abducted girls are handed out to the commanders. Maj Okot says he is not sure what he will do with his wives now. "If they want to leave me they are free, if they want to stay with me they can." BBC news UK edition, Feb 23 2005.

In 2004, I visited Northern Uganda, a war torn area for almost 19 years, with the Women's Initiative for Gender Justice. What struck me about the above quote is that in Uganda the abduction and enslavement of girls is also common in areas not suffering from declared wars. Only the expressed "generosity" towards these girls, manifested in allowing them to choose to stay or leave, is unusual. The same enslavement occurs in many other parts of the world.

Women suffer the burden of discrimination and violence in "peace" and in "war" and, for feminists, this situation alerts us to the poignant realization that the distinction between the two circumstances is, for girls and women, arbitrary.

Perhaps, in some instances, there is a difference of degree, but not of kind, in the intensity of the violence.

I think of Tutsi or moderate Hutu pregnant women in Rwanda being gang raped and then hacked to death to extract their fetuses in order for the murderers to see what a "Tutsi fetus look like". In the Democratic Republic of Congo, rape is a prelude to murder, to child marriages, honor killings, sexual slavery and a growing AIDS epidemic among women. In Ciudad Juarez (U.S Mexico border city), about 370 women have been brutally killed, and several hundred more have disappeared. The victims are young women, generally under 29 years old. They are mostly poor, often workers in the maquiladoras (assembly factories), and live in marginal areas of the city. Most of the victims suffer torture, mutilation, and sexual violence before being killed.[1] Guatemalan authorities confirmed to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) that, between 2001 and August 2004, they had registered the deaths of 1,188 women. Mutilations are also the rule after rape and sexual violence.[2] In Costa Rica, my country of birth, proud and world known for having abolished its army, an alarming number of women are murdered by their husbands or partners each year.

If what happens to us women worldwide is that we live in the midst of an undeclared war, it follows that, in talking about gender and peace building, we must also envision a different world for all of us. We all live in a world engendered by wars. Peace will be a different peace for each gender.

Africa is a continent of profound contrasts and this particularly applies to women. I have been visiting this continent for over 30 years and have been cognizant of the strength and vision of its some of its people. Through the years, I have also shared the joys and sadness of its women. Diverse feminist struggles have emerged alongside extreme levels of sexual violence and inequality between the sexes, HIV/AIDS epidemics and endless national and international wars.

One of these struggles began ten years ago, when a group of women in Kenya established the village of Umoja (which means unity in Swahili) on a field of dry grasslands. The women said they had been raped, and, as a result, abandoned by their husbands, who said they had shamed their community. Stung by the treatment, Lolosoli, a charismatic woman with a crown of dark hair, decided no men would live in their village of mud-and-dung huts. The men of her tribe started their own village across the way, often monitoring activities in Umoja and spying on the women. What started as a group of homeless women looking for a place of their own became a successful and happy village. About three-dozen women live in Umoja, and run a cultural center and camping site for tourists.[3]

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[1] Alpizar, L. Impunity and Women's Rights in Ciudad Juarez.
Human Rights Dialogue, 2, #3, fall 2003, p.27-29

[2] Guatemala: No protection, no justice: Killings of Women in Guatemala. Amnesty International, 9 June, 2005.

[3] In a Corner of Kenya, Women Rule: Neglected Rights Create a Village Emily Wax, Washington Post, July 15, 2005.

Feminist struggles like that of the women of Umoja are having an impact. In recent years, laws have been passed by Kenya's legislature which give women rights to refuse marriage proposals, fight sexual harassment at work, reject genital mutilation and to prosecute rape, an act so frequent that Kenyan leaders call it the nation's biggest human rights issue. The most severe penalty, known as the "chemical castration bill," would castrate repeatedly convicted rapists and send them to prison for life. "We are at the start of something important for African women," said Margaret Auma Odhiambo, a leader of western Kenya's largest group for widows. The members are women whose husbands have died of AIDS.[4]

The struggle, however, is not limited to Kenya. During his last visit to Darfur, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan was welcomed by Sudanese women who had been branded by rapists. The women wore red bands tied around their arms in acknowledgment of their courage and their survival. In Uganda, thousands of women are rallying this month for a measure called the "Domestic Relations Bill", which would give them specific legal rights if their husbands take a second wife, in part because of fear of HIV infection. In Rwanda, eleven years after the genocide (during which an estimated 800,000 people were killed) women in the country hold 49 percent of the seats in the lower house of parliament. Many of these women are war widows who have said they felt compelled to rise up in protest after male leaders presided over the 1994 slaughter of Tutsi tribal members by the Hutu majority. And in West Africa, Nigerian women are lobbying strongly for the nomination of more women politicians, including a president in 2007, saying that men have not run the country properly.

BACKGROUND FOR THE PRESENT VOLUME OF READINGS

Among other outcomes, extreme atrocities seem to yield creative visions and actions. Global, coordinated efforts toward gender equity by women worldwide are now more prevalent. The present volume of readings represents this globalized effort to provide contextualized theoretical and practical readings in the fields of gender, peace building and conflict resolution.

This compilation was preceded by two important seminars. The first "The Faculty and Staff Development Seminar on Gender and Peace Building" was organized by teams operating from three different continents. The teams, which included the University for Peace (UPEACE) Department for Gender and Peace Studies in San Jose, Costa Rica; the UPEACE Africa Program in Geneva, Switzerland and Oxford, Great Britain; and the staff of the Dag Hammarskjöld Centre for Peace, Good Governance, and Human Rights of the Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (MEF) in Kitwe, Zambia, brought together 30 participants from over 25 different countries between the 26th and the 30th of July 2004.

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[4] In a Corner of Kenya, Women Rule: Neglected Rights Create a Village Emily Wax, Washington Post, July 15, 2005.

During the seminar, Training Material Packages (TMPs) based on graduate courses being offered by the UPEACE Department of Gender and Peace Studies at the Main Campus in Costa Rica were distributed to all participants who committed themselves to utilizing them in their respective institutions of work.

"<u>The Second Faculty and Staff Development Seminar on Gender and Peace Building</u>" was held on April 3rd to 7th, 2005, in Kitwe, Zambia. The event was hosted by the University for Peace (UPEACE) Africa Program, in conjunction with the Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (MEF), and convened participants from thirteen countries from across the African continent and from partner institutions of the UPEACE Africa Program. One of the main objectives of the second seminar was the sharing of different teaching experiences based on the use of the TMPs. Most of the participants found the TMPs to be invaluable in their teachings and trainings on gender and peace building. One of the main follow up recommendations by the seminar participants was the need to generate Africa specific content to supplement the TMPs.

The present volume is, therefore, a response to the need for material with specific African content in the areas of Gender and Peace Building. It involves contributions from 10 countries and 11 of the 13 contributors are African.

THE READINGS

The topics covered in this volume provide a wealth of information and ample room for thought provoking discussions, further research and study of Africa's challenges for the future, especially, in terms of gender relations and peace.

All contributors agree that, in spite of the various ways in which women contribute to the peace process, formal peace negotiations and traditional institutions exclude women from participation in leadership and decision making positions (Emebet Mulugeta Tefera). Moreover, the gains made in gender relations during conflicts are usually reversed in the post conflict period (Desmond Olounphe George-Williams). The contributions that women have made not only to peace efforts, but also during war times have typically been invisibilized, making the practice of exclusion from peace processes easier to impose. The description of women in all these narratives only as victims also negates women's participation and reinforces stereotypes about their capabilities. Men's experiences which create a genderized reality, exclude women from spheres of influence and decision-making. Victims are not usually seen as power brokers. (Nadine Puechguibal).

Most of the contributors describe the differential impact of conflict and its added weight on women and girls, including contracting and living with HIV/AIDS (Emebet Kebede, Yas Taherzadeh). Particular attention is paid to the description of

the experience of the girl child during war, outlining atrocities committed against girls, and noting that the line between victims and perpetrators has been erased in modern conflicts (Catherine Onekalit).

This volume also explores important developments towards gender equity and gives clear suggestions about how to strengthen this central principle in organizing for a different world. Gender is offered as a possible tool for building peace while noting the numerous gains that women have made in their struggle for gender equity, which is necessary for social and political development (Mary E. King). The importance of education for women is underscored as a path towards greater political stability and democratic rights and the need to support multiple efforts for the empowerment of women. Also discussed is the need for this change to be made policy level in order to create equal sharing of benefits between women and men, and make possible the gender mainstreaming of all spheres during a peace process (Consolata Kabonesa). Gender equity and human rights are intrinsically connected and struggling for one means struggling for human rights for all (Stany Ntaka Nsamala). Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same, but that women's and men's rights responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female (Medard Rugyendo). Peace seems also to depend on multiplying peace building direct actions as demonstrated by the women's non-violent protest against the might of oil companies in the Niger Delta (Iyenemi Norman Wokoma). Finally, this volume presents a new vision, where peace will indeed have a new meaning in a world yet to be constructed and one also where justice will be for all (Mary Ang'wa). Utilizing some new pedagogical approaches (Amr Abdalla) will hopefully helps us in our path towards liberation.

The deep contrasts that are characteristic of the African continent, from North to South, East to West and that impact women in particular have multiple and well documented origins. National and international wars, hunger, diseases, all sorts of discrimination and subjugations, political corruption, the arbitrariness of wealth distribution, just to name a few of the causes, require urgent attention by an international community with women's eyes. To empower African women in their search for true justice and peace is essential.

The different programs of the University for Peace and all affiliated institutions play a significant role in the theoretical development and the construction and implementation of possible solutions. The authors of the articles compiled in this important publication provide insights, offer options, denounce injustices, open new territories, suggest changes and above all, raise their voices in unison in solidarity with African women's struggles, which is the struggle of women worldwide. An invaluable contribution such as the present volume will surely stimulate many more.

Gender and Peace Building in Africa:
Analysis of some Structural Obstacles
Nadine Puechguirbal

Nadine Puechguirbal currently works as the Senior Gender Advisor for the newly deployed UN peacekeeping mission in Haiti, the UN Mission of Stabilisation in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

She has acquired extended field experience over the years, first with the International Movement of the Red Cross (in Somalia, Former Yugoslavia, Kenya, Malaysia, Rwanda), later with the United Nations (in Haiti, Laos and the Democratic Republic of Congo).

From 2000 to 2003, she worked for UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) at the headquarters in New York. In 2003, she was seconded as the Deputy Gender Advisor to the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

Ms. Puechguirbal is a PhD candidate on the subject "Gender perspectives in post conflict: comparative study between Somalia, Rwanda and Eritrea" at the Department of Political Sciences, University La Sorbonne, Paris, France.

INTRODUCTION

In 2003, the Mano River Women's Peace Network (MARWOPNET)[1] was awarded the United Nations Prize for Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly in recognition of its outstanding achievement in the promotion of human rights, including women's rights. For the past years, the MARWOPNET has endeavored to involve women in peace building processes in Western Africa and ensure that their voices were heard at the peace negations table. Like the MARWOPNET, several women's organizations throughout Africa have been involved in peace building efforts at the grassroots level to ensure that a gender perspective is taken into consideration in the signing of peace accords, thus bringing to the surface women's needs and expectations in a male-dominated process. Earlier in October 2000, the UN Security Council adopted the groundbreaking Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security that calls on all actors to take "measures that

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[1] The MARWOPNET is a network of women's organizations from Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea. It was established in May 2000 to contribute to the search for regional peace and security through advocacy; conflict prevention and resolution; and peace building with a gender perspective.

support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements". For the first time in the UN history, Resolution 1325 (2000) acknowledges the contribution of women as peace makers and agents of change for peace beyond their status of victims of armed conflicts and enables women's organizations to gain leverage on getting access to official peace negotiations.

However, in spite of all these progresses, we are forced to recognize that women are not systematically involved in peace processes and that obstacles to their participation are numerous, ranging from lack of time, status, resources, political experience and exposure, to the burden of traditions, etc. How can we explain that women who are active in the promotion of peace and reconciliation in communities at the grassroots level become invisible in official and formal peace processes? It seems that we are losing momentum here but for what reason? What does it tell us about the position of women within societies that makes them seen as less able than men to participate in peace settlements?

Although international observers regularly praise the work done by women in peace building efforts, very few of them give us an account of structural obstacles within societies that prevent women from being recognized as full actors in a process led by men in power. This article will try to shed a new light to the nature of those obstacles by first analyzing language in international peace agreements and UN resolutions that set the tone for the rehabilitation of post-conflict societies; language is always a key indicator of how men and women are defined within a given society and what roles they are expected to play. The article will then demonstrate that, as long as women are confined to their biological fate in the private realm, they will never be accepted as autonomous individuals in the public arena. Finally, the article will suggest a few ideas to integrate a gender-perspective into peace building efforts so that women's contribution is taken seriously and their voices are heard without any justification of their very presence in peace processes.

SEARCHING FOR GENDER-SENSITIVE LANGUAGE IN PEACE AGREEMENTS AND UN RESOLUTIONS

First of all, we can identify a pattern in the language used in peace agreements as well as UN resolutions that define the mandate of peacekeeping and peace building missions: in all the documents, women are mainly defined as victims or as "women-and-children", thus limiting their capacity to be seen as actors and independent individuals in the peace process. For example, when the Lomé Peace Agreement was signed in July 1999 to bring peace to Sierra Leone, there was only one reference to women in the body of the text, as follows: "Given that women have been particularly victimized during the war, special attention shall be accorded to their needs and potentials in formulating and implementing national rehabilitation,

reconstruction, and development programmes, to enable them to play a central role in the _moral_, social and physical reconstruction of Sierra Leone."[2] Interestingly enough, women are indeed often seen as the keepers of the moral basis of the society, the family honor as well as the bearer of the cultural values of the community. This means that they have to behave according to a strict division of labor that encompasses all the tasks related to the home and the community. The UN Security Resolution 1470, adopted on 28 March 2003 to extend the mandate of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), emphasizes the need to "pay special attention to the protection of women and children". At a time when women and girls are victims of increased sexual violence, protection should be strengthened and all the violations of human rights of women and girls should be condemned. However, women should also be involved in the definition of protection and should be part of the solution in the reinforcement of protection mechanisms as well as in the fight against impunity.

In Liberia, "despite all the efforts of the women, the peace agreement does not contain a gender perspective but – the usual pattern – does include an article on the rehabilitation of vulnerable groups and war victims: women, children, the elderly and the disabled."[3] The UN Security Council Resolution 1509 that was adopted on 19 September 2003 to create the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) stresses that the mission's mandate should pay "particular attention to vulnerable groups including refugees, returning refugees, and internally displaced persons, women, children and demobilized child soldiers". In this case, it is particularly interesting to underline the use of sex as a sociological variable at the same level as other variables: refugees and displaced persons are composed of men, women, boys and girls. In addition, by putting women in the same groups as the elderly, the handicapped and the children, one assumes that women constitute a minority sociological category in the same way as categories that are based on age, color, religion, handicap, ethnic group. This very definition undermines the potential of women as independent actors with rights.

In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, the Marcoussis peace agreement doesn't contain any gender-sensitive language although it emphasizes issues of security, violation of human rights, humanitarian assistance to populations as if men and women, boys and girls had the same needs and priorities and experienced the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire with the same coping mechanisms. Throughout the peace agreement, women remain totally invisible. UN Security Council Resolution 1328 of 27 February 2004 that creates the UN Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (ONUCI) emphasizes the "special needs of women and children" but doesn't give women any

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[2] Jeannette Reno, " Women's strategies for peace: Gains and Losses in Sierra Leone", in _Report on the Workshop on Conflict Transformation in Africa: African Women's Perspectives_, Dakar, 23-26 May 2000, p. 74. Emphasis is ours.

[3] Nadine Puechguirbal, "Involving women in peace processes: lessons learnt from four African countries (Burundi, DRC, Liberia and Sierra Leone), in _Gender and Peace-Building in Africa,_ Training for Peace, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo, 2004, p. 55.

agency in the post-conflict rehabilitation of the country. Although more and more resolutions acknowledge in their preamble Resolution 1325 (2000), they fall short of elaborating on the contribution of women to peace building efforts. We could continue the long list of peace agreements that do not contain specific language on gender issues. Since peace accords will frame the society that will be built in a post-conflict environment, it is of prime importance that work be done on changing the language that is used by the men at decision-making levels. It is a joint responsibility of national and international authorities together with the UN that is very often called to broker a peace fire and facilitate the peace process. As one African woman states it, "Once the foreign mediators come and the official negotiations start, you have to be able to sit at the table and speak their language."[4] Women have never been traditionally trained to acquire negotiation skills and a lack of exposure to a political environment has steadily hampered their progresses.

As we will see below, "the use of a language that defines women first and foremost in their reproductive role participates in making them more vulnerable and somehow jeopardizes their lives by anchoring a conservative vision of gender roles in the mind of the people"[5]. Such a definition is a major hindrance to their empowerment because it apprehends women as weak human beings in need of protection without any control over their own lives.

THE BIOLOGICAL FATE OF WOMEN

Women are indeed defined according to what they are, not what they do, according to what French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir used to call "anatomy as destiny". Women are constructed as passive elements subordinated to a male power always apprehended within a more active dynamics. As a result, women are very often associated with maternal capacity only, thus keeping them secluded from outside political activities and official peace negotiations. However, it seems that the "biological fate" of women is seen by some observers as a major asset for peace building and conflict resolution, as underlined in the Study of the UN Secretary General on women, peace and security: "Women from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, Somalia…. have drawn upon their moral authority as mothers, wives or daughters to call for an end to armed conflict."[6] Although we acknowledge this important contribution by women, it is dangerously too close to the essentialist concept that defines women as "natural" peacekeepers because of their nurturing role as mothers. By restricting women to the private realm where

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[4] Elizabeth Rehn & Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, *Women, War, Peace, The Independent Experts' Assessment,* Progress of the World's Women 2002, Volume 1, UNIFEM, New York, p. 81.

[5] Nadine Puechguirbal, "Women and Children, deconstructing a paradigm", in *Seton Hall Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations,* Women and Children, Volume V, Number 1, Winter/Spring 204, p. 12.

[6] United Nations, Women, Peace and Security, Study submitted by the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), Chapter IV. Peace Processes, p. 55.

they are bound by their main duties as mothers and wives, we prevent them from expanding their roles into the public world run by men who take decisions on their behalf. We can add that whether in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia or Burundi, "women are often marginalized and prevented from attending formal peace negotiations that take place in the public realm, on the basis that they do not "fit in" in such an environment. What the essentialists forget is that a woman is not naturally more inclined to peace than men: she has been socially conditioned to be a good mother and a good wife who take cares of her children and extended family. She then has had to develop capacities and skills to adjust to those functions that are learnt, not innate"[7].

On the one hand, since women's experiences are different from men's reality, they are easily excluded from spheres of influences and decision making where they are not membersdo not belong to. Since women are "naturally" more peaceful than men, they contribute to the feminization of peace which, in turn, reinforces the masculinity of war. As Cynthia Enloe stresses it, "militarized masculinity is a model of masculinity that is especially likely to be imagined as requiring a feminine complement that excludes women from full and assertive participation in postwar public life"[8].

On the other hand, if we continue to define women with "special needs", "in need of protection", "victims", always dependent on a male entity and always associated with children, we undermine their capacities and further marginalize them in peace processes. As Michael Fleshman writes, "[…] the contributions of women peacemakers in Africa, from Somalia to South Africa, have gone largely unnoticed. Dismissed by governments and rebel movements who consider making war and peace to be men's work - and often relegated to the role of "victims" by well-intentioned diplomats and aid agencies – women have had to fight their own battles for a seat at the peace table"[9]. One has only to remember the Arusha peace process for Burundi to measure the structural obstacles that women face on the road to the official negotiation table. At the beginning of the peace process, Burundi men couldn't see why women were so insistent about being involved in the negotiations. The men were adamant that they could represent women's interests. As one Burudian woman witnessed: "[…] In the first rounds [of negotiations], only men attended. This we felt was not normal since the problem of Burundi affected all of us. So we tried to find a way to join in the negotiations. Even after we got there,

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[7] Nadine Puechguirbal, "Involving women in peace processes: lessons learnt from four African countries (Burundi, DRC, Liberia and Sierra Leone), in *Gender and Peace-Building* in Africa, Training for Peace, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo, 2004, p. 59.

[8] Cynthia Enloe, "Demilitarization – or more of the same? Feminist questions to ask in the post-war moment", in C. Cockburn, D. Zarkov (Eds.), *The Post War Moment, Militaries, Masculinities and International Peacekeeping*, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 2002, p. 23.

[9] Michael Fleshman, "African women struggle for a seat at the peace table", *Africa Recovery*, United Nations Department of Public Information, Vol. 16, no. 4, February 2004, p.15.

we noticed the men were not happy with our presence. 'We don't see any reason for you women to be here', they said. 'You should return home. These issues on peace are exclusively men's business!' Eventually, we were allowed in as observers but with no right to take part in the talks"[10]. Even when they are accepted at the peace table, very often women have a status of observer, not a status as full member with a voice or a vote. To make their voice heard, Burundian women had to continue using informal tactics, i.e. lobbying political parties in the corridors, before or after talks, thus watching the peace process from the outside. As Ann Tickner warns, "Many contemporary feminists see dangers in the continuation of these essentializing myths that can only result in the perpetuation of women's subordination and reinforce dualisms that serve to make men more powerful. The association of femininity with peace lends support to an idealized masculinity that depends on constructing women as passive victims in need of protection"[11].

ELEMENTS FOR GENDER-SENSITIVE PEACE BUILDING

If we are serious about bringing a gender perspective to peace building, there is a need to deconstruct a few assumptions that are interlinked about the roles of men and women in conflict and post-conflict situations, as follows:

a) We assume that peace building should aim at restoring stability and order according to rules and norms that prevailed before conflicts broke out. As Meintjes, Pillay and Turshen underline it, "The return to peace is invariably conceptualized as a return to the gender status quo, irrespective of the nontraditional roles assumed by women during conflict"[12]. However, we can question that women want to return to a pre-war environment that was defined according to the masculine norm of reference and a strict division of labor that excluded them from public visibility and responsibilities. As we know, war changes gender relations by allowing women to get out of traditional roles and take over more responsibilities in the absence of men. Women's experiences of war are not taken into account and translated into social gain for a redefinition of gender roles that would be non-oppressive for women and girls in a post-conflict society. As Christine Chinkin writes, "Concepts of reconstruction and rehabilitation may be misnomers in the case of women. Both concepts assume an element of going back, restoring to a position or capacity that previously existed. But this is not necessarily what women seek"[13].

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[10] UNIFEM, "Engendering Peace, Reflections on the Burundi Peace Process", *African Women for Peace Series,* 2001, p.5.

[11] Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations, Feminist perspectives on Achieving Global Security,* Columbia University Press, New York, 1992, p. 59.

[12] Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredeth Turshen, "There Is No Aftermath for Women", in *The Aftermath, Women in Post-Conflict Transformation,* Zed Books, London & New York, 2001, p. 9.

[13] Christine Chinkin, "Gender, International Legal Framework and Peace-Building", in *Gender and Peace-Building in Africa,* Training for Peace, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, Oslo, 2004, p. 32.

b) We assume that changes in gender roles through armed conflicts can only be a temporary upheaval mainly due to the exceptional circumstances of the war and that once peace is brought back, men and women will return to their traditional roles. The problem is that women are under pressure to fit into the patriarchal pattern of society that is reinstalled after the war although disguised under the rhetoric of human rights. But also women might feel relieved to return to "normalcy" after bearing the brunt of war; or is the return to the status quo ante imposed to on them without giving them a chance to express their own views in the process? Women may feel more confident about themselves after taking over men's jobs, roles and responsibilities or taking up arms and becoming combatants. But are women in a position to sustain this confidence? A woman's new strength and determination are rarely acknowledged because they may only be a subterfuge to hide their fears ; "how should one theorize about the postwar disappearance of women's apparent new independence and confidence? Do independence and confidence, in fact, disappear? Or is it a matter of relief from wartime burdens? Is there a reversion to norms that had apparently changed but that, in fact, had only been suspended?"[14]. Sondra Hale writes that Eritrea women took an active part as combatants in the revolutionary war against Ethiopia in the 60's. While combatants were conducting social, economical and political transformations in the liberated areas, the rest of the society continued to live according to local tradition and culture, far away from the impact of the revolution on gender roles. She stresses that, « in a way, we could say that civilian Eritrean society was frozen during the war »[15]. As a result, female combatants who had experienced more equitable genre roles at the front were confronted to a very difficult reinsertion into a very conservative society that did not evolve at the same pace.

c) Another problem in the participation of women in peace processes is that very often the same male actors who used to be combatants are now sitting at the peace negotiation table as acceptable peace makers. Same men in different clothes, the very same men who are going to define the status of women in the post-conflict environment with the blessing of the international community. After a problem of language, we are now confronted to a problem of definition. One may ask, like Cynthia Enloe, "to what extend extent is the status of a local woman, any woman, in the postwar setting, defined by influential decision-makers chiefly in terms of what they were during the recent war?"[16].

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[14] Nadine Puechguirbal, "Women and War in the Democratic Republic of the Congo", in *Signs, Journal of Women in Culture and Society,* Volume 28, number 4, Summer 2003, The University of Chicago Press, p. 1278.

[15] Sandra Hale, « Liberated but not free: Women in Post-War Eritrea » in *The Aftermath, Women in Post-Conflict Transformation,* Zed Books, 2001, p. 125-126.

[16] Cynthia Enloe, "Demilitarization – or more of the same? Feminist questions to ask in the post-war moment", in C. Cockburn, D. Zarkov (Eds.), *The Post War Moment, Militaries, Masculinities and International Peacekeeping,* Lawrence & Wishart, London, 2002, p. 29.

Women's roles in post-conflict will be influenced by their experiences during the war through a very strict definition of genre roles, i.e. whether as:

i) "Heroic mothers": women are often used in the nationalistic discourse to emphasize the ideological conquest of the nation: it is reminded to womenwomen are reminded that, biologically and traditionally, that they are the home keepers, that they must take good care of their children and the cultural values of the community; at the other end of the spectrum, it is reminded to the menmen are reminded that, physically and traditionally, that they are the protectors of women and children, as well as the nation, the *motherland*. At the end of the war, there are great expectations that women will be ordered to focus on their reproductive role to replenish the nation with sons; or

ii) "Victims of war": as we have seen previously, victims in need of protection can't at the same time been seen as confident actors in a peace process; it's just another justification to exclude women from the public scene because they are made to believe that they are "weak", "vulnerable" and unable to articulate their own needs; in addition, women themselves may not be aware of the changes that happened in gender roles during a conflict and understand them as empowering. As Meintjes, Pillay and Turshen write, "It seems likely that many [women] do not consciously internalise or conceptualise the changes in their roles; without a conscious translation, there can be no concerted efforts to defend women's opportunities and gains in peacetime"[17]; or

iii) "Trouble-makers": in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, women belonging to the Women's Network for the Defense of Rights and Peace, mobilized in the eastern part of the country to request their participation in the peace process. However, "[…] its members found it was difficult to promote peace without endangering themselves. They received threats from the [local] rebel [group], which accused them of destabilizing the town. Their office was ransacked many times, and peaceful demonstrations were systematically interrupted [by the rebels] for security reasons"[18]. Since women's participation in peace building efforts is often seen as an extension of their domestic responsibilities and therefore not taken seriously, why are they representing such a threat to security? Or are they a threat to male power holders? Indeed, women can't be seen as actives agents of change for peace who have the potential to challenge the male power.

d) Interestingly enough, women are often told that they have to be representative of their community at the grassroots level if they want to have some credibility at

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[17] Sheila Meintjes, Anu Pillay and Meredeth Turshen, "There Is No Aftermath for Women", in *The Aftermath, Women in Post-Conflict Transformation,* Zed Books, London & New York, 2001, p. 9.

[18] Nadine Puechguirbal, "Women and War in the Democratic Republic of the Congo", in *Signs, Journal of Women in Culture and Society,* Volume 28, number 4, Summer 2003, The University of Chicago Press, p. 1275.

the peace table; is there such a requirement for men? As Sanam Anderlini underlines it, "Those who have doubts [about the participation of women] also argue that often women delegates at negotiations are not representatives of women in society as a whole, that they are often of the elite, do not share the concerns of the poorer sectors of society and, as a result, are no different to the men. Interestingly, the same argument, while equally true for men, is never used as a rationale for their exclusion"[19]. We are confronted to a double-standard in the political discourse that, on the one hand, marginalizes women and, on the other hand, legitimates the position of the male so-called peacemakers.

CONCLUSION

The participation of women in official peace negotiations won't be enhanced if national and international actors continue to define them as victims, belonging to the vulnerable groups and always associated with children, thus depriving them of their agency as autonomous individuals. There is much work to be done on improving language in peace agreements and UN resolutions and mandates with the aim of correcting a vision of the world according to the masculine norm of reference. Interestingly enough, there is a widely shared view that after we have tackled the main issue of insecurity, e.g. disarming male gang leaders, militia, rebels, military groups, we will at the same time solve women's problems of insecurity. That is why, with the support of the international community, men allow themselves the right to represent women at the official peace negotiations because they are the voices of the mainstream. According to this scenario, post-conflict societies will then be able to move on along the path to peace, irrespective of the differential impact of the war on women, men, boys and girls.

As Cynthia Enloe observes: "Men, like it or not, are the 'key players' in the making and unmaking of any society's governability - as party leaders, funders of political activists, clerics, business investors, militia leaders - so it is THEY whose security relevances needs to top the agenda. And again if we pay attention first to them, women's security will automatically be enhanced as a result"[20]. Women's issues and concerns are still insignificant in regard to the serious concern of security in the public arena. Moreover, peace means very often the end of the war and is seldom apprehended in terms of "positive peace", i.e. inclusive of physical and economic security, beyond an halt to hostilities and violence. As Ann Tickner stressed it, "Women have defined security as the absence of violence whether it be military, economic or sexual"[21]. Men and women do experience war in many different ways

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19 Sanam Anderlini, "The untapped resource: women in peace negotiations", *Conflict Trends,* Women, Peace, Security, ACCORD, 2003/3, p. 19.

20 Personal communication with Cynthia Enloe, Boston, October 2004. Ph.D. University of California/Berkeley, Research Professor in the IDCE Enloe's feminist teaching and research has focused on the interplay of women's politics in the national and international arenas.

21 Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations, Feminist perspectives on Achieving Global Security,* Columbia University Press, New York, 1992, p. 66.

but since only men's perspectives are expressed at the peace table, we can't say that we have an all inclusive peace processes in Africa and elsewhere. And without the participation of women, there can't be any sustainable peace.

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Nadine Puechguirbal, "Women and War in the Democratic Republic of the Congo", in Signs, Journal of Women in Culture and Society, Volume 28, number 4, Summer 2003, The University of Chicago Press, pp. 1271-1283.

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Gender Mainstreaming and Implications for Peace

Consolata Kabonesa

Consolata Kabonesa has over 10 years of specialised experience in gender programming, gender training and research at both local and international level. She has worked in a broad international context including projects with the UK Government Agency for Development (DFID), NORAD, HIVOS (Dutch NGO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), the US Government (USIA), Sida/SAREC, Uganda Red Cross, several National Women's Groups as well as several Foundations, including: the Rockefeller Foundation, The Carnegie Corporation, and the Ford Foundation.

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INTRODUCTION

Conflict and wars have plagued the world over, such that peace and security has become a big concern for the human race. Scholars have identified conflict as a phenomenon that can be traced from the playground to the highest level of government[1]. So conflict is something that is with us at all times in our homes, communities, places of work, etc., however, the size and magnitude increase as the level of context rises. One of the main causes of conflict is that individuals, groups and countries have different goals in life and pursuing individual goals cause friction among actors that may escalate to violence or war. Various types of conflicts have also been identified, however, many of these strategies for conflict resolution and maintaining peace have not been designed from a gender perspective.

To achieve and maintain peace within any context requires the participation and involvement of both males and females regardless of their class, age, race and ethnicity in the process of peace building. Ensuring the involvement of women and men has recently become a desirable strategy at international and local levels. This strategy is termed "gender mainstreaming."

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[1] Weatherby, J.N., D. Long, R.L. Cruikshanks, R. Gooden, E.D. Huff, E. Kranzdolf, and E.B. Evanns JR (1994). Chapter 4: Conflict Resolution and the Other World in *The Other World: Issues and Politics of the Developing World* p. 56-79. White Plains, New York: Longman Publishing Group.

Mainstreaming gender "involves ensuring that gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality are central to all activities – policy development, research, advocacy/dialogue, legislation, resource allocation, and planning, implementation, and monitoring of programmes and projects."[2] The argument of mainstreaming gender at the onset of policy ensures effective and efficient resource allocation and distribution, and accountability. One point to remember is that what has not been provided for in the policy is not easy to monitor or evaluate at the implementation level. Therefore, gender mainstreaming should start at the policy level and feed into all the programmes and activities. However, before gender is integrated in any policy, programme and/or project an understating of related terms such as the difference between gender and sex; issues of equality and equity, gender division of labour, and the role and application of gender analysis is crucial. This Chapter highlights gender issues to be considered when mainstreaming gender in the peace process, explains the above gender related concepts and the concept of peace is defined to contextualise gender mainstreaming. A historical perspective of gender mainstreaming is given and then the stages of mainstreaming gender in peace initiatives.

CONCEPTS RELATED TO GENDER MAINSTREAMING[3]

Gender and Sex

Gender refers to the social and cultural construction of female and male identities. The social and cultural constructions about men and women lead to socially constructed roles, responsibilities and obligations of, attitudes about, and relationships between men and women. The differentiated perceptions and expectations of men and women lead them to occupy specific positions and/or space in society. In addition, the differences that arise out of these social constructions, attitudes, perceptions and expectations change over time; vary within and among cultures; and vary within specific political and economic contexts. Indeed gender relations have changed and continue to change on the African continent as elsewhere with changes in socio-economic and political stability. The concern with gender in situations of conflict arises because gender constructions impact differently on men and women's access to, and control over, resources that are key to economic, political and social development. Resource allocation and distribution is important in peace building and maintaining of peace, as conflict can create unequal access to, and control over, productive resources that can be perpetuated after the conflict. Sex, on the other hand, refers to biological characteristics that

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[2] UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.
www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsandefinitions.htm

[3] Parker, R.A., I. Lozano, and L.A. Messner (1995) *Gender Relations Analysis: A Guide to Trainers.* Save the Children; UN Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women.
www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsandefinitions.htm (accessed 9/15/2004); and UNDP (2001) Gender Appraoches in Conflict and Post-Connflict Situations.

define females and males. The biological characteristics are universal, and it has been common to allocate and distribute resources according to sex and not the responsibilities and roles of individuals.

Equality and Equity

The concept of *equality* is conceptualized from a rights based approach that all human beings are free to develop their personal abilities and make choices without limitations set by stringent gender roles. Gender equality entails consideration of and valuing different aspirations, concerns and needs of women and men. Hence, giving equal rights and opportunities to women and men, girls and boys to fully participate in social/cultural, economic and political spheres promote sustained development. Consequently, women and men would have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and potential to contribute to sustained development, and to benefit from the results equally.[4]   *Gender equity*, on the other hand, refers to justice and fairness in treatment and recognition of the potential and access to opportunity[5] for both females and males. It refers to fairness or justice in the allocation of resources, benefits and services between men and women. It recognizes the differences that exist between men and women and argues for these differences to be addressed from a holistic manner to rectify gender inequalities and imbalances in society.

Gender equality and equity ensures that gender relations or the hierarchical relations of power between women and men that tend to disadvantage women are addressed in society. Thus questions on how the national budget is shared among all the sectors of the economy, and whose needs are considered and addressed using the national budget, become pertinent in ensuring long-term peace at a national, regional and global level.

Gender roles and gender division of labour

Gender roles should be analysed in peace building to ensure that no particular interests, aspirations or needs of particular group of the society are addressed at the expense of another ethnic/racial group, or particular gender. It is important to examine the different roles and work/tasks or responsibilities society has assigned to women and men in a given context. Examining gender roles and division of labour does not only highlight the interdependence nature of their tasks but also how women are over burdened with unpaid work in the home and the community.[6]

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[4] Read Canadian International Development Agency. What is Gender Equality?
http://www.acdicida.gc.ca/cida_ind.nsf/8949395286e4d3a58525641300568be1/0b4081ac59052fde852568fc0067579d?
OpenDocument (accessed 25/5/2004)

[5] Access to information and productive resources during the process of resettlement.

[6] Women in conflict situations are over burdened by the newly acquired males (due to their contextual position) in addition to their assigned reproductive, productive and community roles.

Gender Analysis[7]

The aim of gender analysis is to identify areas for action, identify processes and structures that perpetuate inequalities in society, design interventions, and highlight implications of interventions for both men and women in a particular context. The process helps to understand the different effects of gender roles and gender division of labour, resource allocation and distribution of benefits on women and men in society. Gender analysis is used to provide disaggregated data documenting and addressing the relationships between men and women, their access to resources, participation in decision-making processes, their activities, and the constraints they face relative to each other. Gender analysis should focus on whether the policy challenges, or reinforces, existing power structures based on gender.[8] Thus how the needs of society are discussed and interpreted is intrinsic to the design process of a holistic policy and legislation that leads good governance.

Various methods and tools are used to conduct gender analysis of the roles played by women and men, girls and boys in the household, community, workplace, political processes, and economy[9]. For example: The Harvard Analytical Model is used to assess resources, needs, tasks/activities, and benefits of communities and households; and the Capacities and Vulnerabilities Framework assesses factors that influence the ability and strengths of individuals and groups, and resources people have to cope with sudden crisis.

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming has its roots in the feminist movement's initiatives and efforts to effectively address inequalities in society in a sustainable manner. During the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, gender mainstreaming and gender analysis were emphasized as crucial processes of the peace process.[10] Later, the Economic and Social Council of the UN officially defined gender mainstreaming as:

> The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences as integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that

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[7] Read Canadian International Development Agency. What is Gender Analysis
http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/cida_ind.nsf/0/a09305fd3bfc0784852568fc0067579f?OpenDocument (accessed 25/5/2004)

[8] Carrière, Elizabeth (1995) *Seeing is Believing: Educating Through a Gender Lens,* cited in

[9] Read the Oxfam Training Manual for the various training Manual such as Harvard analytical Model, the Gender Planning Model of Caroline Moser, the Social Relations framework, etc. and UNDP (2001) Gender Approaches in Conflict and Post Conflict Situations;

[10] Bushra, JE and E. Piza Lopez (1999) *Development in Conflict: The Gender Dimension.* Report of an Oxfam AGRA East workshop held in Pattaya, Thailand 1-4 February 1993 UK: Oxfam

women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.[11]

However, there are many definitions of gender mainstreaming by international, regional and local organizations. For example, according to the Council of Europe:

> Gender mainstreaming is the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies, at all levels and at all stages, by actors normally involved in policy-making." Mainstreaming is thus a strategy for mobilizing ordinary actors – administrators, clerks, and leaders – to put on "gender lenses" and to enhance equality in their everyday praxis. The latter implies the application of both carrots and sticks. The carrot emerges from the fact that neither late-modern societies, nor organizations can function well or be productive and competitive without the full participation of both women and men.[12]

Regardless the origin of definition, gender mainstreaming is aimed at addressing gender inequalities among men and women, and boys and girls in society. It involves bringing the perceptions, interests and priorities or concerns/needs of men and women in the mainstream or at the center of the planning process to achieve gender equality and equity in society. A gender perspective ensures paying specific attention to women's issues, enabling a better understanding of gender relations and roles and the gendered nature of society that promote inequality and poverty.

Thus, the UN agencies and other bodies promote gender mainstreaming as an effective strategy to address poverty and lead to sustainable development. Consequently, gender mainstreaming is backed by a number of international and regional instruments and legal frameworks.[13] One such framework is the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which stresses a gender perspective in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in the peace building process. In addition, the resolution highlights addressing the special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and during post conflict reconstruction. Other important frameworks are Windhock Declaration and the Nambia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations[14] that give details on the implementation of mainstreaming gender in peace operations.

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[11] ECSCO, Agreed conclusion, 1997/2

[12] Horelli, Liisa, How To Mainstream Gender Equality: Experiences From The Finnish Context.

[13] Read Chinkin, Christine (2004). Gender, International Legal Framework and Peace Building in Karame, Kari, *Gender and Peace Building in Africa* and UNDP (2002) Gender Approaches in Conflict and Post Conflict Situations. NUPI.

[14] Read Chinkin, Christine (2004). Gender, International Legal Framework and Peace Building in Karame, Kari, *Gender and Peace Building in Africa* and UNDP (2002) Gender Approaches in Conflict and Post Conflict Situations. NUPI.

According to Miller and King, peace is "a political condition that ensures, justice and social stability through formal institutions, practices and norms."[15] They further emphasize that if peace is to be achieved and maintained the following have to be met:

- A balance of political power among the various groups within a society, region, or, most ambitiously, the globe.

- Legitimacy for decision makers and implementers of decisions in the eyes of their respective group as well as those of external parties duly supported through transparency and accountability.

- Recognized and valued interdependent relationships among groups fostering long-term co-operation during periods of agreement, disagreement, normally, and crisis.

- Reliable and trusted institutions for resolving conflicts.

- A sense of equality and respect, in sentiment and in practice, within and without groups and in accordance with international standard.

- Mutual understanding of rights, interests, and intents and flexibility despite incompatibilities.[16]

Mainstreaming gender in the above requirements ensures the full participation of women and men regardless of their age, race and ethnicity in the peace building process.

Other scholars have also argued that conflict cannot be avoided because of the very nature of the human condition hence it is important to implement strategies that aim at reducing conflict within particular contexts. Mainstreaming a gender perspective will ensure that conflict is minimized.

WHY THE CONCERN WITH GENDER?

The concern with gender emerged in the 1980 after realizing that the Women in Development (WID) approaches[17] were in some cases marginalizing women further. As Rhoda has argued:

> "Gender emerged as feminist theorists sought to understand the complexities of women's subordination. Feminist scholars argued that the western academic tradition of which most universities and

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[15] Miller, and King (2003) *A Glossary of Terms and Concepts in Peace and Conflict Studies.* University for Peace p. 29

[16] Ibid p.29-30

[17] For Information on Women in Development approaches and Gender and Development read Parker, R.A., I. Lozano, and L. A. Messner (1995) Gender Relations Analysis: A Guide to Trainers. Save the Children.

> colleges in the world are part, has systematically ignored the
> experiences of women in the fields of learning, concepts, theories
> and research methods."[18]

This is so to say that women's subordination is not biological, but rather a social construction in the same way as masculinity and femininity are socially constructed. It is crucial therefore, to make the distinction between sex and gender, and to assess how the distinctions affect women and men's contribution to society and their own individual development. In addition Vicent argues that there are various stories documenting women's positive contributions to peace building[19] and African women in particular constitute a category of person with special characteristics that are crucial to peace building. This requires addressing women's experiences and concerns as a heterogeneous group, and issues of construction and reconstruction of gender roles and gender inequalities.

Gender is an important concept in peace as it deals with social constructions that lead to differentiated treatment of males and females in terms of allocation of goods and services, productive resources and benefits accruing from resources – thus bringing about differential impacts of development to men and women. It is important to address gender differences during reconstruction and conflict resolution to avoid continued tension and achieve a fair and just process of development. Gender mainstreaming should be the overall tool and strategy in peace building because "experiences and perspectives of women and men, and boys and girls before, during and after wars and conflicts are shaped differently by their gendered social roles."[20]   In other words, gender mainstreaming addresses the needs/concerns and interests of members of society regardless of their sex, race, ethnicity, and age or disability status.

MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN PEACE[21]

As already highlighted, gender mainstreaming strategy encompasses all sectors.[22] There are a number of examples of mainstreaming gender in post-conflict structures

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[18] Reddock, Rhoda (2000) Why Gender? Why Development? p.23-50. In Partpart, Jane L, M. Patricia Connelly, and V. Eudine Baritean, eds. *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development*. Ottawa; on Canada: International Research Centre. p. 36

[19] Vicent Lousie (2001) Engendering Peace in Africa: A Critical Inquiry into Some Current Thinking on the Role of African Women in Peace-building. African Journal in Conflict Resolution. No.1 African Centere for the Constructive Resolution Disputes.

[20] International Alert (2002) Gender Mainstreaming in Peace Support Operations: Moving beyond the Rhetoric to Practice. p.10

[21] Hannan, Carolyn (2000) From Concept to Action: Gender Mainstreaming in Operational Activities prepared for the Technical Review Meeting of Assessment of Gender Mainstreaming and Empowerment of Women in Sub.Saharan Africa – A Review of UN Supported activities, UN HQs New York 20-21 March (2000)

[22] Read UNDP (2002) Gender Approaches in Conflict and Post Conflict Situations.
www.undp.org/erd/ref/gendermanualfinla.pdf

such as setting up of a Gender Affairs Unit in East Timor and the Gacaca courts in Rwanda, initiatives in Sierra Leone,[23] and more in Fadul[24]. In addition, the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement on Women (OSAGI) has provided issues that should be covered in documenting good practices in gender mainstreaming initiatives.[25] From the above examples, the groundwork for mainstreaming gender in peace exists, and the examples can be tailor made to fit particular contexts in Africa. Mainstreaming activities follows a particular pattern as highlighted below.

Policies[26] and strategies

The policies for peacekeeping operations and peace building should be gender main streamed. The process begins with participatory collection of data on the policy. Design of the policy/ strategy should involve all the stakeholders: peacekeepers, personnel in peace building process, community members (men, women, and youth, people with disabilities, elderly and leaders) and NGOs. The data once collected should be gender disaggregated and analyzed to identify opportunities/strengths and constraints/ weaknesses related to economic, social/cultural and political issues. For example, the data should include available and required skills of men, women, the youth and people with disabilities; available and required resources in the communities; psycho-social needs of individuals to be resettled; and programs for communities where to resettle refugee, etc. In this line International Alert[27] has emphasized conducting gender analysis of conflict situations and peace-building initiatives before the UN peacekeeping missions are initiated. This would ensure that interventions are based on keys issues within the community.

Creating a gender responsive environment in institutions

Gender aware leadership should be made a priority. Decision-makers need to be gender aware of the effectiveness of gender responsive policies and strategies in the peace building initiatives. There should be awareness rising activities/workshops for all involved in the peace process. The workshops should focus on introducing gender issues in conflict and peace building exercises.

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[23] Jack, Amani El ( ) Gender and Armed Conflict: Overview Report. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies: BRIDGE

[24] Fodul , N., (2002) Gender Sensitive Design and Planning in Conflict Situations –Annex 3: Sudan Case study, London: Agency for Co-opreation and Research in Development (ACORD). www.acord.org.uk/Publications/G&Cresearch/annex3sudaneng.pdf

[25] OSAGI (no year) Gender Mainstreaming http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/goodpraexamples.htm (accessed 9/15/2004)

[26] For gender blind, gender aware, gender neutral, gender specific and gender distribution policies see UNDP (2001) Gender Approaches in Conflict and Post Conflict Situations.

[27] International Alert (2002). Gender Mainstreaming in Peace Support Operations: Moving beyond the Rhetoric to Practice.

Training

Gender training of both male and female military and civilian peacekeepers guarantees their understanding of gender issues in a particular context of operation. In addition, effective gender mainstreaming requires training of employees, who are implementing peace programs and interventions in gender analytical skills. This ensures that they are knowledgeable about the gender inequalities and imbalances, and gender relations at the household, national and at the community levels. According to Horella knowledge consists of three types: concepts and theories of equality; specific knowledge domain and methods of change –analytical techniques; process tools and training methods.[28]

Capacity building for returnees

Capacity building for returnees in the skills that can help them in their new positions in society is very important. This activity should be conducted through gender analysis of the needs for males and females, the youth and people with disabilities.

Representation

This includes increasing the number of women in decision making processes and building their capacity in leadership and decision-making skills. Oladipo[29] believes that the management or resolution of conflicts in Africa should rest on true democracy, which allows every one a voice in how the destiny of his or her country is fashioned. He further argues that in true democracy people are able to participate effectively in the political process, government programmes and policies and are able to express of their collective will; and in true democracy it is no not possible for the few to abuse the many and conditions for bitter social struggles and conflicts may no longer exist.

Okwadiba Nnoli is of the same view that "peace cannot be sustained without democracy which ensures the full liberation of the creative energies of individuals and groups in all facets of the life of the society"[30] Nnoli goes a step further to identify the category of people who should participate- all regardless of race, age ethnicity and sex. However, in gender mainstreaming special attention should be paid to women because they are affected differently by conflict or the war; they cope differently[31] and bring varied experience to the process of peace. Article 142b of the Beijing Plat Form for Action stresses the importance of having women

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[28] Horelli, Liisa, How To Mainstream Gender Equality: Experiences From The Finnish Context

[29] Oladipo O. (1998) Modernisation and the Search for Community in Africa Crisis and Condition of Change Remarking Africa: Challenges of the Twenty First Century. Ibadan: Hope Publications. p.18

[30] Okwadiba Nnoli (1994). Ethnicity and Democracy in Africa: Intervening Variable. Ikeja: Malthouse Press Ltd. p.19

[31] Read Byrne, Bridget (1996) Gender, Conflict and Development: Volume 1: Overview. Brighton, UK: Institute of development studies

representatives in administrative structures nominating or promoting candidates for judicial and other positions in all relevant international bodies at the international, regional and national levels.[32] It is important to involve women as it contributes to accessing the local communities to address other issues of security[33]   Rehn and Sirleaf give further highlights in integrating women in the peace process[34] to ensure that the under represented member of society are represented at all levels of the peace building process/ peace keeping operations. This involves careful identification of women, youth and people with disabilities, representatives of society.

Gender unit

Creation of a gender unit in peacekeeping operations to monitor the process of gender mainstreaming and act as a support unit to the implementers is crucial. The gender unit can recruit under represented people particularly for positions. It is important that the "unit" is sufficiently staffed and resourced from the out set, with access to top-level decision makers, other wise its capacity will be compromised. The gender unit will also ensure that a gender perspective is mainstreamed in the research agenda of institutions involved in the peace building process.

Gender budgeting

A gender mainstreaming strategy has to be supported by proper planning and budget allocations for the process. Mainstreaming gender in peacekeeping operations, peace building process with out the budget to implement creates dormant structures and falls short of the commitment to achieving sustainable development.[35]

Monitoring and evaluation

Gender sensitive indicators should be developed at the on set of the mainstreaming programme and should be used in the monitoring process.   The process of monitoring should be participatory including all the stakeholders. Ensure the collection of gender disaggregated data to ensure that issues/ concerns, interests and needs of both men and women are addressed and enable better understanding of the impacts of conflict on different sectors of society.

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[32] Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Fourth World Conference on Women, 15 September 1995, A/CONF.177/20 (1995) and A/CONF.177/20/Add.1 (1995). www1.umn.edu/human/intee/e5dplw.htm (accessed 2801202004)

[33] Puechguirbal, Nadine Involving Women in Peace Processes: Lessons from African Countries (Burundi, DRC, Liberia and Sierra Leone) in Karame, Kari Gender and Peace Building in Africa. NUPI

[34] Rehn, Elizabeth and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf , Women War Peace file://D:\Conflict References\Gender studies\Women, War and Peace\UNIFEM - Women, War and Peace_files\assessment.jpg

[35] Hannan, Carolyn (2001). Overview of the Work of the Inter-Agency Taskforce on Gender Mainstreaming in the Programme Budget Process presented at Workshop on Meeting the Challenge of Gender Mainstreaming in the Programme Budget Process, ILO, Geneva, 22-23 November 2001

CONCLUSION

A gendered perspective of the peace process examines the political, economic and social spheres to highlight the gendered nature of the structures and how the structures bring about gender inequalities. A gendered perspective addresses the conflict experiences of men and women, the youth and people with disabilities and provides clear guides for interventions that addresses their needs and concerns. A gender perspective calls for addressing gender inequalities in society to achieve equality and equity.

There is a symbiotic relationship between mainstreaming gender, peace and sustained development. Mainstreaming gender of all spheres and all levels of interventions during the peace building process ensures balanced and equitable resource allocation and distribution to all sectors of the society and the sharing of benefits equitably between men and women.

Thus, gender mainstreaming would enable poor women and men to transform their lives and livelihoods by. Ultimately, this would contribute to poverty reduction and progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

However, gender mainstreaming requires extra resources and therefore adopting gender budgeting is crucial to realizing the set goals. This requires commitment on the part of state and government (decision makers and other politicians), and other organizations. Finally, a gender unit is crucial to support and monitor the gender mainstreaming activities.

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What Difference does it make?
Gender as a Tool in Building Peace

Mary Elizabeth King

Mary Elizabeth King in 1988 won a Robert F. Kennedy Book Award for her book Freedom Song: A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement (1987), an account of her four years working in the U.S. civil rights movement alongside the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr (no relation).

Her second book Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr: The Power of Nonviolent Action, published by UNESCO in 1999, covers nine contemporary non-violent political movements. Its second edition was brought out in New Delhi, in 2002, by Mehta Publishers and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. She is the co-author, with Casey Hayden (Sandra Cason), of a document entitled 'Sex and Caste', which originated from the civil rights movement and was published in 1966 by Liberation, the magazine of the War Resisters League. 'Sex and Caste' has since been credited with being one of the generative documents that helped to launch the 'second wave' of feminism. An authority on non-violent strategic action in acute conflicts, King holds a Ph.D. in international politics from the University of Wales at Aberystwyth. In 2003 in Mumbai (Bombay), she was awarded the International Jamnalal Bajaj Award for promotion of Gandhian values outside India.

Africans understand the connexion between gender and peace more cogently perhaps than any other people. In July 2003, heads of state and government of the African Union (AU) adopted the far-reaching Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa. It offers, thus far, the most comprehensive protection to African women of any international or regional human rights instrument. Calling for an end to all forms of violence against women in the public and private spheres, it addresses equality in marriage before the law and the right to participate in political and decision-making processes. The protocol goes so far as to express the right to peace, including the entitlement of women to participate in the promotion and maintenance of it. It sets forth economic and social welfare rights, including equal pay for equal work, maternity entitlements, and recognition of the economic value

of women's work in the home. The protocol also advances the rights to a healthy environment and sustainable development and significantly acknowledges reproductive rights.[1]

With respect to the rights the protocol cites, governments are required to take legislative, institutional, and other measures—such as public education, information, and communication—towards their realisation. Yet the protocol also notes the limits to legislative prescriptions alone and takes a holistic approach to women's rights, calling for states to 'commit themselves to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of women and men, with a view to achieving the elimination of harmful cultural and traditional practices... based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes, or on stereotyped roles for women and men'. In the first such instance in international law, the protocol explicitly prohibits female genital mutilation.[2]

As headlines and the global news media properly report that African governments and institutions have failed to protect women and girls from gang rape, abduction, sexual slavery, forced collaboration with armed militias, forcible flight, displacement, and HIV/AIDS, the African Union promulgated a document advancing the rights of women beyond that of any other legal instrument while, moreover, asserting a right to peace.

For years, Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), the nongovernmental organisation (NGO) led by Bineta Diop, has, in conjunction with the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD), been working to bring the gender dimension onto the African agenda.[3] They held a series of meetings in Lomé, Togo (2000), Tripoli and Sirte, Libya (2001), and Lusaka, Zambia (2001), in which FAS and the women's committee pointed to the necessity for women participating in continental decision making. As the African Union replaced the Organisation of African Unity, and the AWCPD took the place of the previous women's committee on peace and development, they convened in Dakar, Senegal (2001 and 2003), Durban, South Africa (2002), Maputo, Mozambique (2003), and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (2004), and launched a robust campaign for gender mainstreaming.

In June 2002, FAS and the AWCPD were joined by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), based in Durban, and a number of

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[1] Karen Stefiszyn, 'The African Union: challenges and opportunities for women' (MSt diss., University of Oxford, 2004).

[2] For eight diverse editorials on the significance of the protocol, see '"Not yet a force for freedom": the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa' in Firoze Manji and Patrick Burnett (eds.), *African Voices: On Development and Social Justice. Editorials from Pambazuka News, 2004* (Dar es Salaam, Mkuki Na Nyota Publishers, 2005), pp. 93–12.

[3] Prior to becoming the executive director of FAS, Bineta Diop was with the International Commission of Jurists, where she had an illustrious career as an advocate for human rights. FAS has its international secretariat in Geneva and its regional office for Africa in Dakar, Senegal.

African women's networks in a consultation in Kwazulu-Natal that produced the Durban Declaration on Mainstreaming Gender and Women's Effective Participation in the African Union. The Durban declaration was brought to the AU inaugural session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July in Durban. With the leadership of Presidents Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal and Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, the assembly adopted the provisions of the declaration and unanimously adopted the principle of gender parity. A year later, a strategic planning meeting held in Dakar resulted in the development of the Dakar strategy, a strategic programme of action. which was presented to President Wade.

The Durban Declaration and Dakar Strategy provided the basis for a meeting in Maputo in July 2003, convened by FAS and the Foundation for Community Development in Mozambique. Led by Dr Graça Machel, who also serves as the chancellor of the University for Peace. In elections for the Commission of the AU, which took place in Maputo, women comprised half of the ten members selected in the first concrete manifestation of the principle of gender parity. The same session adopted the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa as an adjunct to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. While the AU charter stipulates that every individual is equal before the law and entitled to equal protection before the law, the protocol addresses the gender dimension of such rights and entitlements.

In July 2004 in Addis Ababa, under the leadership of AU president Alpha Omar Konaré and prior to the AU summit, a meeting attended by a broad range of women's organisations and networks produced the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. Hence the African heads of state and government proposed to monitor themselves on gender mainstreaming. In 2005 in Abuja, Nigeria, FAS, the Women, Gender and Development Directorate of the AU, and the nongovernmental Africa Leadership Forum organised a consultation to continue monitoring advancements on gender parity. In May of the same year, FAS broke ground in Dakar for its Pan-African Centre for Gender, Peace, and Development. At the inaugural meeting at the centre, FAS conducted the two-day Dialogue with Arab Women on Economic and Political Issues.[4] On 2 May 2005, FAS premiered the first African Gender Award, which was given to Presidents Wade and Mbeki for their leadership on behalf of gender parity in Africa.

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[4] See Olumide Ajayi, '"Gender is my agenda": from Solemn Declaration to solemn action. indicators for Solemn Declaration's monitoring and evaluation', address delivered at the Dialogue with Arab Women on Economic and Political Issues, Pan-African Centre for Gender, Peace, and Development, Dakar, Senegal,1 May 2005.

WHAT EXACTLY IS THE LINK BETWEEN WOMEN'S RIGHTS, GENDER, AND BUILDING PEACE?

Gender as a term originates with Old French and until the modern era pertained primarily to the linguistic and grammatical 'kinds' of words in three classes (in some languages two) denoting masculine, feminine, or neuter.[5] According to UNESCO's *Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language,* a person's sex is a matter of chromosomes; a person's gender is a social and historical construction and the result of conditioning.[6] 'Feminist' works focus on women, and as a genre such projects are emancipatory for them. Feminism holds that women should be free as human beings to make fundamental choices in their lives. The term *feminism* is inherently pluralistic, referencing *choices.*

It is possible and sometimes necessary, however, to analyse gender in political activity from perspectives other than those of feminists. Major work is underway on 'masculinities', the fastest growing and possibly most important sub-field of gender studies. Inherent in the term *masculinities*, chosen by those working in the area, is the concept that there is no single form of masculinity.[7] In other words, what is in the Spanish-speaking world called *machismo* is not synonymous with 'manhood'. Future explorations of gender issues will less likely rely solely on analysts, activists, thinkers, and theoreticians who identify as feminists. Although gender remains central to understanding power dynamics, it should not be treated as a variable or some sort of special, added element.

Gendered socialisation processes are fundamental to war and peace, which is not to say that women exude maternal attributes or have a reflexive interest in peace making. Notions that women possess a 'natural' bent toward conciliation and peace delegitimise women's voices in policy and international relations. Rather, as Susan Moller Okin writes, the 'social institutionalisation of sexual differences' goes to the heart of politics, and therefore, peace.[8]

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[5] The first example of usage cited by the Oxford English Dictionary is in Old French, ca. 1384. Chaucer used the word in 1398, employing the French spelling *gendre.*

[6] *Guidelines on Gender-Neutral Language* (Paris, UNESCO, 1999), p. 5. Go to http://www.unesco.org.

[7] An example is the work of Padare/Enkundleni—the Men's Forum on Gender—founded in Zimbabwe in 1995 by Jonah Gokova, a winner of the 2001 Africa Prize for Leadership sponsored by the Hunger Project. Padare runs workshops in which men can address definitions of masculinity that encourage risky sexual behaviour and spread AIDS; it also organises media campaigns and promotes guidelines and a code of conduct. Upon receiving the prize in New York, on 13 October 2001, Gokova explained in Shona and Ndebele (both Bantu languages) that traditional meanings for masculinity exclude women, and thus 'some Zimbabwean men have created a new space for critical discussion of male gender roles and their often disastrous consequences for women. Anti-sexist men should not be spectators; men should be active in discussions of the effects of gender. Men should promote women's rights as human rights and should fight to ensure that sexophobia is eradicated. The responsibility for the spread of AIDS lies with men, their multiple partners, and their dominance on contraception questions. We in Padare attack those presumptions... Men are best confronted with the devastating results of their behaviour not by women or physicians, but by other men'. See http://www.padare.com.

[8] Susan Moller Okin, 'Humanist liberalism' in Nancy Rosenblum (ed.), *Liberalism and the Moral Life* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 39.

A new perspective gaining recognition asserts that the empowerment of women is the only way to achieve lasting peace. At the core of such thinking—which represents an 'instrumental' view rather than an 'institutional' perspective—rests the concept that building sustainable peace requires the significant involvement of women and women's groups. This viewpoint incorporates findings that improvements in the education and status of women stabilise and uplift the whole of societies, that is, the situation of men, children, and women. The uplift of women and their increased participation in public policy is now widely viewed as fundamental to expanding economic growth, improving health status, reducing poverty, sustaining the environment, and consolidating democracy in societies long bowed to authoritarianism and tyranny. In Africa, there is more than a suspicion that the exclusion of women is connected to acute violent conflicts. Meanwhile, around the globe, a consensus is forming that calls for changes in age-old practices that have denied rights and entitlements to women.

Yet despite substantial evidence, within the broad academic field of international relations, contemporary figures, no matter their personal convictions, appear unwilling to admit the significance of gender. One explanation points to the dominance of the school of realism which, in the era after World War I, has defined what counts as 'appropriate' questioning. This school of thought seeks to confront the so-called real world. Realists do not ask 'What if' or 'Can we build a better world'? Such thinking renders innovation difficult and threatening. According to Steve Smith, a leading British academician of international relations, theoreticians perform an ideological function in meting out 'very real sanctions' for those who try to dismantle the field. The 'disciplining of the discipline', as Smith phrases it, is the domain of positivists, whose scientific and systematic inquiries prove sufficiently influential to define what counts as an answer to the questions being asked by the discipline. In emphasizing what can objectively be proved, positivists seek scientific evidence. They ignore questions of what should be or what could be, and thus such questions are neither answered nor studied. Not only have positivists with their quest for scientific evidence tended to view questions posed by feminists or gender specialists as extraneous, they also dismiss as irrelevant anyone who challenges the dominance of realism. 'What difference does it make if women are included'? So potent has been the influence of the positivists and the realists in filtering research in international relations that the only feminist interpretations considered acceptable have been those from the liberal school of thought, with its view that the laws pertaining to men simply need to be applied to women.

Yet empirical studies conducted since the 1970s demonstrate that women's literacy upgrades entire societies.[9] The benefits are evident across major indices, including infant mortality, health status, and family income. During the 1970s, studies by

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[9] It has long been known that education of girls is one of the shrewdest investments a country can make. In 1977, I asked Robert McNamara, then head of the World Bank, what I thought would be a hard question. 'If you could only do one thing to improve development all over the world, what would it be'? He responded, 'That's an easy question, Mary. I would put every girl in the world into school'.

James Grant and others working in Kerala, India, and Sri Lanka became the basis for the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index. In a progressive departure from assessing the welfare and status of peoples purely by income measurements, the index added infant mortality, literacy, and gender empowerment to the equation. Subsequent data from Indonesia substantiated the theory of the immediate impact in the uplifting of women as reflected in the positive improvement of all measures of societal welfare. The research from Asia has led analysts to contend that when all the benefits are calculated, educating girls yields higher rates of return than any other investment available in the developing world. The data prove an indisputable connexion between female literacy and child survival.

The 1998 Nobel prize-winning economist Amartya Sen observes

> an ability to read documents and legal provisions can help subjugated women and other oppressed groups make use of their rights and demand more fairness. And female literacy can enhance women's voices in family affairs and reduce gender inequality in other fields, a benefit to men as well as women, since women's empowerment through literacy tends to reduce child mortality and very significantly decrease fertility rates.[10]

More children are attending school than ever before, yet millions of youths around the world, especially girls, are still being denied a basic education, according to UNICEF. While the gender gap is lessening globally, in many countries particularly those in the Middle East, South Asia, and North, Central and West Africa far fewer girls than boys are receiving a basic education. Girls who lack primary schooling are more likely to fall victim to sexually transmitted diseases and are less able to bring up a healthy family later in life. Fewer than 100 million children will be excluded from primary school in 2005, which on the bright side is a decrease from approximately 115 million in 2001, according to UNICEF. Ghana and Senegal have made notable progress in Africa, but some countries in Central Africa, West Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia continue to educate far fewer girls than boys. Peru, São Tomé, and Vietnam can also count themselves among those countries with marked gains. World-wide, some 565 million women are illiterate, unable to count change, sign their names, fill out an application, or follow simple instruction'.[11]

The Ghanaian statesman James Kwegier Aggrey expressed well the payoff from educating females: 'if you educate a man, you educate an individual; but when you educate a woman, you educate a nation'. Access to education helps in overcoming

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[10] Amartya Sen, 'To build a country, build a schoolhouse', *New York Times*, 27 May 2002.

[11] 'The fruits of girls' education', *News and Views: A 2020 Vision for Food, Agriculture, and the Environment*, International Food Policy Research Institute, December 1999, pp. 1–2.

traditional inequities of caste, class, and gender, just as removing such inequalities contributes to the spread of education.[12] With education, quality of life improves and incomes rise. In addition, education enhances overall economic growth and greater care of the environment. The data are irrefutable, yet formidable factors prevent policies and action based on the scientific evidence of the wide-ranging societal benefits for everyone of educating women and girls.

The costs of schooling, economic benefits of girls' unpaid labour in the home, and fears for the safety of girls outside the home are among the most persistent barriers to universal education. Where social taboos forbid male teachers from instructing girls, the availability of female teachers may be lowest. Most important are attitudes that devalue the education of girls.[13]

In Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000, some 164 countries participated in the World Education Forum and affirmed their commitment to achieving Education for All. Recognising gender equity as a crucial component of meeting such a goal, the forum committed itself to eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality at all levels of education by 2015. Some 122 countries are moving towards achieving the 2005 goal, but 31 are at risk of accomplishing neither.

During the preceding decade, a series of UN conferences steadily built commitment to the norms and values that would inspire the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000, one month before the Security Council passed Resolution 1325, which calls for involvement of women at all levels in the building of peace. At the UN Millennium Summit, conferees reached agreement on eight development priorities—the Millennium Development Goals—based on freedom from want and freedom from fear. They range from halving the number of people living in absolute poverty to combating HIV/AIDS to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. World leaders at the summit set 2015 as the target date for achieving universal primary education. According to UNICEF, gender equity is a pre-requisite for reaching such a goal.[14] Of course, war and violence can ruin or interrupt progress toward it.

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[12] George Mathew, 'Amartya Sen and the Kerala "Model"', *The Hindu*, 9 January 2001.

[13] According to Rosalynn S. Carter, apart from the intrinsic value of education and its economic benefits, young girls need to be in school during their formative years in order to be physically protected while their limbs and organs mature. During frequent trips to Africa for The Carter Center, she observed that girls often work on farms and in fields from dawn to dusk, despite the fact that they are expected soon to become mothers.

Her point is reinforced in another context by the late Myron Weiner of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In *The Child and the State in India: Child Labor and Education Policy in Comparative Perspective* (Princeton University Press, 1991), he notes that in Scotland in the nineteenth century, childhood education was made compulsory because of the influence of the Presbyterians and their conviction that each person should be able to read and interpret the Bible. While children in Wales and England were down in the coal mines, the welfare of Scottish children was protected, as they were in school.

[14] Associated Press, 'Mixed word on schooling: Error! Main Document Only. UN cites growth, but a gender gap persists', Error! Main Document Only. *International Herald Tribune*, 19 April 2005, p. 7.

Afghanistan under the Taliban represents an example of how the systematic denial of education for girls and women, in this case based on social taboos, subsequently reinforces their exclusion from public participation. Some Afghan women risked their lives to provide schooling for girls and medical care for females, and, indeed, they became symbols for the crisis in that country. Yet, as noted by Noeleen Heyzer, executive director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), indicators pertaining to the exclusion of girls and women from education and other spheres of life are not normally monitored, collected, or systematically analysed.[15]

Such issues of females and education do not exist solely in developing countries. Only 3 per cent of full professors at universities in the United Kingdom are women. In the summer of 2001, the top television and front-page national news story for several days was that girls had exceeded boys in the examinations that lead to university study. Commentators intoned about this dreadful predicament. Imagine: girls excelled in the tests by 1.9 per cent. The British government established a three-year research project to look into this 'problem'.

Richer Than Affluence

In *Development as Freedom,* Amartya Sen shows that variables relating to women's agency, or empowering women?especially through female literacy? do more to promote social well-being than the raising of a society's general levels of affluence. According to Sen, 'nothing is as important today in the political economy of development as an adequate recognition of political, economic, and social participation and leadership of women'.[16] Recent studies reveal the factors that improve women's voice and agency: the ability to earn an independent income, to find employment outside the home, to possess property ownership rights, and to be educated participants in decision making within and outside the family.

Is it true that nothing is as important in the political economy of development as recognition of participation and leadership of women? To prove his thesis, Sen points to a comparative study of 300 districts in India showing women's education and women's employment to be the two most important influences in reducing fertility rates. In other words, the factors—literacy and jobs—that aid the emancipation of women also make a major difference in fertility rates. Sen wryly observes, 'the lives that women save through more powerful agency will certainly include their own'.

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[15] Noeleen Heyzer, Statement of the Executive Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women to the Security Council's Open Debate on Gender, Conflict and Peacekeeping, New York, 25 July 2002.

[16] Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), pp. 189–203

The Academy for Educational Development has summarised data showing that nations with higher rates of secondary school enrolment twenty years ago are currently experiencing greater political stability and allowing more democratic rights than countries with lower rates of such enrolment in the early 1970s.[17] An educated populace can better take advantage of democratic opportunities than can an illiterate people.[18] The validity of improving access to education has led to experiments involving providing hot meals for schoolchildren and paying stipends to poor parents to help keep their children in school.[19]

DOORS OPEN TO GENDER STUDIES

For most of the twentieth century, social scientists and policymakers—whether from the East, West, North, or South—did not see the female half of humanity. Economic deliberations on employment, sociological presentations of the family, and formulations of social policy accepted gendered divisions of power as natural, as a given. The absence of women from senior positions of political power only confirmed the marginal position of females. Tiny changes in the status of women made it seem that progress was on the march. Development studies of the 1960s and 1970s referring to 'workers' assumed them to be male. Economic systems never acknowledged or quantified the unpaid work of women. When it was actually considered, the studies often involved a sense of voyeurism, assumptions about the desirability of women being sequestered, or an interest in exotic customs and fantasy scenarios of female submission.[20]

Today, however, an international consensus is forming around the evidence that peace is impossible without the cogent involvement of women and women's groups. Peace itself has been re-conceptualised. It is no longer something hammered out between belligerents or warlords, nor is it simply a settlement on paper. Indeed, women and women's groups may be among the most potent forces available for the prevention of acute conflicts, warfare, and violence.

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[17] The academy's Web site is www.aed.org, from which its publications can be ordered, or pubsinfo@aed.org. See especially 'A national vision for girls' education in Ghana and a framework for action', 2002 Sage Project. The SAGE Ghana II project is a continuation of the Strategies for Advancing Girls' Education (SAGE) project, which sought to mobilise multi-sectoral constituencies to improve the participation of girls in formal education. SAGE Ghana II works with educational systems and communities to promote values and skills, such as high self-esteem, leadership, gender equity, safe schools, and the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. It also involves the business sector and news media, to gain their support for helping girls to obtain access to an education, stay in school, and become achievers. See http://www.aed.org/Projects/sage.cfm.

[18] Sen, 'Build a schoolhouse'.

[19] See Amy Waldman, 'Mystery of India's poverty: can the state break its grip'? *New York Times*, 29 April 2005, regarding an acclaimed programme mandated in 2001 by India's Supreme Court to provide cooked lunches to all primary schoolchildren. Also see Jon Jeter, 'Brazil pays its poor to send kids to school: officials say program cuts truancy, hunger', *Washington Post*, 1 July 2003, p. A7, about the federal district of Brasília offering stipends of $5 per child per month for up to three children per household to impoverished parents for their children regularly to show up for school.

[20] Joanna de Groot, 'Conceptions and misconceptions: the historical and cultural context of discussions on women and development' in Haleh Afshar (ed.), *Women: Development and Survival in the Third World* (London and New York, Longman, 1991), pp. 118–20.

The horrors of World War I led to the creation of the interdisciplinary field called international relations. At the time, whether international co-operation could work was the subject of huge debate. Conventional wisdom held that anything of significance involved relations between nation-states. Prior to World War I, a rigid disciplinary distinction among history, geography, or law was paramount. The social sciences struggled in their infancy. With European colonialism at its end some decades later, the newly established departments of international relations opened their doors to post-colonial studies. In turn, post-colonial studies pried ajar the academic gate to development studies, within which a sub-field arose called women in development, or WID.

Empirical studies of development assistance revealed that in agricultural subsistence societies, such aid often displaced women from their traditional domain of agricultural production. WID studies demonstrated that bilateral and multilateral development assistance programs in general often had an adverse effect on women, stigmatising them and further alienating them from education and training unless the programs deliberately incorporated countervailing measures. In other words, novel technical assistance provided to men where women were in charge of food production and food preparation—including tilling the land, managing the harvests, and handling storage—resulted in the status and role of women being further degraded.[21] WID thus shed new light on the meaning of 'development'. The countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development had by the mid-1970s committed themselves to supporting progress for women in their development assistance. Sweden has long promoted benefits to women in its aid programs. South Africa now utilises gender-impact budgeting.

Until recently, women's invisibility in political life was a trans-cultural phenomenon. Political behaviours and thinking were especially discriminatory endeavours of human activity. The high politics of state policy, security, and macroeconomic management functioned as a male preserve almost everywhere, with the possible exception of Scandinavia. The foundations of community and society were so embedded in gendered identities that many people believed that the entire societal apparatus, including institutions of war and peace, would be disrupted by considerations of gender equity.

Yet, through the portal of development studies would emerge the study of gender into the full light of day as an interdisciplinary subject in its own right. Gender studies would show that gendered roles affect virtually all of human life. As the search for knowledge on gender has proceeded, the entire domain of politics has been shifting. Over the past thirty years, a volcanic outpouring of theoretical

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[21] The classic texts that documented the adverse effects of development assistance from the 1970s remain useful. See especially Ester Boserup, *Women's Roles in Economic Development* (London, Allen and Unwin, 1970); Irene Tinker and Michèle Bo Bramsen, *Women and World Development* (Washington, D.C., Overseas Development Council, 1976); Gita Sen and Caren Grown, *Development, Crises and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives* (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1987).

literature and empirical studies has flowed across all areas of the social sciences, including the rapidly growing field of peace and conflict studies, the fastest growing area in the social sciences world-wide. Similar upheavals occurred during the same period in literary disciplines, literary criticism, psychiatry and psycho-analysis, philosophy, and theology. Gender as a cross-cutting inquiry cut a path through virtually all disciplines of the arts and sciences.

Beginning in the 1970s, a rash of developments, including the emergence of women-directed research centres and think tanks, began to take shape as if to make up for lost time. WID became gender and development (GAD). Data mounted on the ramifications of literacy and education for girls and women. The African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town, and the promulgation of the new South African constitution—now considered the most gender-balanced constitutional document in the world—rose from the ashes of apartheid. The contours of an endogenous Muslim feminism also emerged. Nayereh Tohidi, author of the 1996 *Feminism, Democracy and Islamism in Iran,* which fleshes out the theory and theology of a nascent 'Islamic feminism' movement, later found that the hunger for her material was so great that it had been reprinted by an underground press in Iran without her knowledge.[22]

In March 2001, Secretary-General Kofi Annan met with the academic advisory council of the University for Peace (UPEACE) in New York. Among his answers when asked what he hoped from UPEACE in ten years, he stated that he would like to see it take the lead in mainstreaming gender studies world-wide.

GENDER AND THE BUILDING OF PEACE

The term *peace building* may have first been used in UN operations in Namibia in 1978. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali cited the concept in the 1992 and 1995 editions of *An Agenda for Peace*, and the United Nations subsequently pursued initiatives with aspects of peace building. One example is the Peacebuilding Support Offices under the Department of Political Affairs, first operative in Liberia in the late 1990s and later in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic.

In general, the term *peace building* refers to policies and programmes to restore stability and effective social, political, and economic institutions after a war or serious upheaval. An extremely broad concept which encompasses democratisation, gender, human rights, and development, peace building can be thought of as a bridge from conflict resolution to 'positive peace'. It generally aims to create and ensure conditions for 'negative peace'? the absence of violent conflict engagement—

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[22] Richard Morin and Claudia Deane, 'Exploring the realities of "Islamic feminism"', *Washington Post*, 9 October 2001, p. A27. Also see 'Indigenous conceptions of women's human rights: Mahnaz Afkhami', *al-Raida* (Beirut), 8:74/75 (Summer/Autumn 1996), p. 16.

and for the more complex positive peace, including the institutionalisation of justice and freedom. Peace building aims to create and foster stability and adequate functioning of a region or nation-state. Although peace building is often understood to be the final phase of a conflict, such wide-ranging processes can start in the midst of a violent conflict. The conflict-transformation theorist John Paul Lederach and others have proposed that the term be written as one word, *peacebuilding*, an idea that is gaining currency in some circles of peace and conflict studies.

The significance of gender in the resolution of conflict and building of peace has until recently been completely overlooked. The torments resulting from acute conflict affect men and women differently, and their subsequent roles in peace building also differ. With Africans in the lead, shifts are underway in recognising that peace cannot be built without consequential involvement of women. According to Noeleen Heyzer, speaking on the contribution of UN funds and programmes to the implementation of the Security Council's first debate and landmark Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security in 2000, 'We have seen how women's protection is glaringly neglected, how their contributions to peace building are marginalised, and that without women's equal participation and full involvement in peace processes there will be neither justice nor development'.[23]

The Southern Hemisphere has produced path-finding demonstrations of the practicality and effectiveness of gender as a tool in the building of peace. In Somalia in 1992, a national network of women's social and humanitarian organisations called Save Somali Women and Children (SSWC) organised themselves into the Sixth Clan, and won a place in the peace process as a constituency and addition to the country's five established clans. Eventually persuading the leaders of the five main clans in southern Somalia to attend peace negotiations in Arta, Djibouti, in 2000, the Somali women challenged the delegates at Arta to think beyond clan boundaries in drafting a peace agreement. Singularly bringing together the warring clan-lords, they accomplished something no one else had been able to achieve. According to Asha Hagi Elmi Amin, leader of the Sixth Clan and now member of parliament,

> Our purpose was to create space for women in the peace process and to build a bridge to policy. The Sixth Clan was born out of frustration. Within our society, although victims of conflict we had no voice for the national solution. In a patriarchal society such as ours, women have no right to represent their clan, nor any responsibility for protecting the clan. A group of us had the idea to form our own clan, in addition to the five pre-existing clans. The Sixth Clan gave us the first political entry point for women as equal partners in decision making. The women elected me to be their leader. We went to the negotiation table with the five clan leaders.

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[23] Statement of Noeleen Heyzer, executive director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women, round table discussion on women and peace and security, New York, 26 October 2000.

> We put women's interests into the peace process... we engendered the language. Instead of merely referring to men, the language [in government documents] now says 'he or she'. This was a springboard to sharing... We are practical leaders.
>
> Women need to articulate their agenda before they go to the negotiation table. If you don't know where you want to go, you cannot get there. Women bring a wide set of concerns, such as health, education, and reconciliation. The peace process needs women; women don't need the peace process.
>
> The most difficult changes instigated by the peace process originated with the women, who had previously been used by men. In a hostile situation, how do we sustain our gains? The answer is that we need the support of other women, we need capacity building, and we need coalition building.[24]

Today, Somali women hold twenty-three seats in the parliament, five ministerial posts in the cabinet, and SSWC runs a training centre in Mogadishu. Amin reflected on how such achievements had been won:

> It was a mission that dared, and won. It won with great difficulty. First, we changed the attitudes toward women (which had been horrible), on the part of the people and the leaders. We made the impossible possible. Second, we exercised our political rights,... our own potentialities. We proved that if women are given the platform, they can wonderfully play a positive role. The problem is that we are generally not being given the platform.
>
> We impressed the men. We broke stereotypes. It is up to the women; if we don't display our commitment, nothing will change. The men want to sideline us, but they cannot deny us. Women should harness themselves with commitment and skills.
>
> The religious leaders came eventually to defend us. Our approach and persuasiveness persuaded the religious leaders, who began to support us.[25]

The women's network of the Mano River Union countries of Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone took on a similar role a few years later in West Africa. In Sudan after a nearly half-century of intermittent civil war, more than seventy women's organisations have begun networking, leading the peace-building activities of a vigorous civil society. As in much of the Islamic world, women in Sudan are at the forefront of social change and reform movements in human rights monitoring, non-violent struggles, and organising for peace building.

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[24] Asha Hagi Elmi Amin, address to the Dialogue with Arab Women on Economic and Political Issues, Pan-African Centre for Gender, Peace, and Development, Dakar, Senegal, 1 May 2005.

[25] Ibid. Personal communication, 2 May 2005.

Peace negotiations in the Great Lakes country of Burundi included the situation of Burundian women and girls. In July 2001, UNIFEM managed to bring Burundi's nineteen negotiating parties to accept the need for the direct involvement of women in the peace process. This led to the first All Party Burundi Women's Peace Conference. Twenty-three of the women's recommendations presented to the facilitator, former South African president Nelson Mandela, were included in the final peace accord. As Noeleen Heyzer observed, 'precedent was set and the entire peace agreement benefited. Now, support for implementation remains the crucial challenge'.[26]

In the aftermath of Sierra Leone's descent into civil war, a host of new voices came to the fore. According to Joe Pemagbi, who chairs Sierra Leone's National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights,

> We have seen that the authoritative nature of traditional African administrative structure excludes women and young people from the mainstream of decision-making. The chiefs and the "grey hairs" have the "authority" to take decisions on behalf of women and the community at large. We have also seen that the franchise at the chiefdom level favours men, limiting the participation of women in decision-making, including the right to choose their leaders. To understand rights, exercise rights and promote rights, rights should be exercised by those entitled to them, not by others on their behalf.[27]

Whether as soldiers, abductees, displaced persons, refugees, or survivors of land-mines or sexual violence, women experience conflict differently from men. 'The vast majority of those who die in African war zones are not directly killed by warriors', according to journalist Marc Lacey, 'rather, it is the disruption that a few thousand armed men in raging militias can create in the lives of millions of millions of civilians that send so many innocents to their graves'. Studies by Physicians for Human Rights and the International Rescue Committee blame 'the conditions created by wars in extremely fragile societies'.[28]

'Many women have been made widows, and particularly in Africa, death is culturally a tragedy and widowhood a curse', says Elizabeth Lavallie, member of parliament in Sierra Leone. 'Women can be disinherited and turned out in the

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[26] Noeleen Heyzer, 'The gender dimensions of conflict prevention and peace-building', statement to the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa', New York, 31 May 2001.

[27] Joe Pemagbi, 'The challenge to democracy in Sierra Leone' in Rawwida Baksh-Soodeen and Linda Etchart (eds.), *Women and Men in Partnership for Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Report of the Sierra Leone National Commission, Freetown, Sierra Leone* (London, Commonwealth Secretariat, 2002), p. 33.

[28] Marc Lacey, 'The world; beyond the bullets and blades', *New York Times*, 20 March 2005.

street... One sure way to protect the widow is to have her voice heard in post-conflict reconstruction from the village level upwards'.[29]

The surge in fanatical religious extremism and terrorism at the start of the twenty-first century and the so-called war on terror have made starkly visible the link between the fates of North, South, East, and West. '[T]errorism and the "war on terror" that followed, made clear to us that our destinies are linked and our lives intertwined', Noeleen Heyzer notes, and 'global security more than ever is linked with national and human security. The fear and violence that now characterise our world demonstrate, especially after the invasion of Iraq, that no one country, agency or sector of society, however powerful, can alone ensure global peace and human security. The common goals, norms and standards that we develop to guide our interactions with each other—whether as states or local communities, organisations or individuals are the best, and maybe the only, guarantors of human security'.[30]

AN EXPERIMENT WITH GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

India has underway a political experiment in local governance with profound global potential for social development. Indians consider such symbolic abstractions as courage and intelligence to be feminine attributes. Article 14 of India's constitution provides equality for men and women under the law. Yet females in rural India face some of the harshest discrimination in the world, their lives misshapen by malnutrition, a sense of worthlessness, and lack of a say in the decisions that affect their lives.[31] India's constitution has since 1950 allowed states to make education universal and compulsory, but most states have failed to implement this policy in full. Where education is offered to girls, it often falters for social reasons, such as a lack of sanitary toilets.[32]

India's seventy-third and seventy-fourth constitutional amendments, passed in 1992, mandate that not less than one-third of all seats in local governing councils be held by women.[33] They also set aside seats for lower castes—formerly

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[29] Elizabeth Lavallie, 'Gender equality in political and public decision-making' in Baksh-Sodeen and Etchart, *Women and Men in Partnership for Post-Conflict Reconstruction,* p. 42.

[30] Noeleen Heyzer, 'Women, war and peace: mobilizing for security and justice in the 21st century', Dag Hammarskjöld Lecture, 29 September 2004.

[31] World-wide, the social and economic conditions that subjugate women are expressed and reinforced by the institution of dowry. To secure a husband for their daughter, a girl's parents may pay up to five times their annual income in dowry 'gifts' to the husband's family. A daughter may thus be considered a great burden, a son an asset. Although dowry has been illegal in India since 1961, its practice is flourishing and on the rise. For women in many classes and castes, there is no way out. Subjugation and submission are pervasive, enforced by violence or the threat of violence.

[32] Cited by Sanataka Roy, 'Uncommon opportunities', remarks at a meeting of the International Commission on Peace and Food, Nehru Memorial Library, New Delhi, 21 November 2004.

[33] Kenneth J. Cooper, 'Empowerment of women: India's experiment, promise and failure', *International Herald Tribune*, 27 August 1996, p. 2

'untouchables'—and indigenous peoples according to their proportion in the population. The seventy-third amendment establishes *panchayati raj*, a system of local democracy through village councils known as *panchayats,* as 'institutions of self-government'. *Panchayats* is an ancient form of local government rooted in the idea that when five *(panch)* elders come together, God will be present. Approximately 70 per cent of India's population live in 630,000 villages. The seventy-fourth constitutional amendment deals with urban areas or municipalities. These amendments mandate that resources, responsibility, and the making of decisions devolve from the state governments—India has twenty-three states and seven union territories—into the hands of grass-roots representatives. Elections are to be held every five years.

No other country requires such broad participation from women in local governance. India's biggest domestic battles are now waged by women and non-governmental organisations. The organising of peace buses from India to Pakistan and fights against environmental degradation, water pollution, alcoholism, and corruption are led by women. In a campaign considered to be India's first distinctly grass-roots mass women's movement, some of the country's poorest women forced the large state of Andhra Pradesh to ban the sale of cheap, government-produced liquor. Women in the hundreds of villages campaigned for eighteen months, battling the liquor industry and their own husbands.[34] Researchers at the Institute of Social Sciences have shown that once in power, women overwhelmingly exercise judgment independently.[35] The UNDP is involved in training and resources for the 3 million male and female local *panchayat* leaders.[36] Of the 3 million representatives, 800,000 seats, or 24 per cent, are held for representatives of tribal, untouchable, or scheduled castes. Representation is in proportion to their presence in the population.[37]

Is this experiment in social engineering working? Is it transferring decision-making power from states to 3 million elected local government representatives, one-third of whom are women? It is, says George Mathew, the sociologist who heads New Delhi's Institute of Social Sciences. 'This is India's last chance', because evolutionary change has been insufficient to alter cultural practices and customs that can result in severe, extreme prejudice and impoverishment for Indian women. 'Without constitutionally mandated interventions, it could otherwise take 5,000 years fully to release the energies of women in India', he argues.[38]

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[34] Molly Moore, 'Indian village women fight state, husbands to ban liquor', *Washington Post*, 19 December 1993, p. A33.

[35] For further reading, see Bharti Tekchandani, Kiran Jyoti, and Priti Sharma, *They Call Me Member Saab: Women in Haryana Panchayati Raj* (New Delhi, Multiple Action Research Group [MARG], 1998); Bidyut Mohanty (ed.), *Women and Political Empowerment: Proceedings of the Women's Political Empowerment Day Celebrations, 1995–1999* (New Delhi, Institute of Social Sciences, 1999); George Mathew, *Panchayati Raj in India: From Legislation to Movement* (New Delhi, Concept Publishing Company for Institute of Social Sciences, 1994); George Mathew and Ramesh Nayak, 'Panchayats at work: what it means for the oppressed', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 6 July 1996.

[36] *Partnerships to Fight Poverty*, annual report (New York, United Nations Development Programme, 2001), p. 4.

[37] George Mathew, interview, New Delhi, India, 15 January 2001.

[38] Ibid. The institute's newsletter, *Panchayati Raj Update*, is available for an annual subscription of 50 rupees in India, or

The United Nations, Gender, and the Building of Peace

The work of women's organisations—which for 500 years has pressed for the right to education for females—began to bear fruit as the United Nations took shape after World War II. Delegations from Brazil, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic, with support from Indian and North American NGOs, pushed and forged recognition of the linkage between human rights and women's rights. As a result, the UN Charter, signed in San Francisco in 1945, includes the phrase 'equal rights of men and women'. The equal rights of men and women clause and its four articles established a legal basis for the international struggle to affirm women's human rights.[39]

When the General Assembly adopted the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, it ratified a document that used the term *everyone* instead of a male pronoun in most, although not all, its articles. The declaration is not a convention and not enforceable, but it is a guide with considerable moral authority on the world stage.

The series of UN-sponsored World Conferences on Women that began in Mexico City in 1975, followed five years later by the world conference in Copenhagen in 1980, and five years after that in Beijing in 1985, gave legitimacy to women's organisations at work around the world. Such conferences created a dynamic between practitioners of multilateral diplomacy and women's groups similar to that produced by the Helsinki Accords between multilateral diplomacy and human rights groups.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the General Assembly on 18 December 1979, commits countries to overcome obstacles of discrimination by taking concrete action to advance the status of women. It acknowledges women's traditional responsibilities in preserving families, while also calling for new norms for the participation of women in all dimensions of societies. The convention inventories a broad range of rights, including property ownership, inheritance, and access to health care, and it mentions family planning (but not medical abortions). It asks equality for women as citizens, with full access to the franchise for voting and political participation. It proclaims a right to education, including professional and vocational training, and the eradication of gendered stereotyping and segregation. It also establishes women's rights as workers receiving equal remuneration, social security benefits, and protection from sexual harassment and discrimination in the workplace on the

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[39] A useful review of five centuries of advocacy for women's rights is found in Arvonne Fraser, 'Becoming human: the origins and development of women's human rights' in Marjorie Agosín (ed.), *Women, Gender, and Human Rights* (New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, 2001), pp. 15–64.

grounds of marriage or maternity. The 1985 Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies continued the direction. These two agreements represent major multilateral steps towards a global treaty for advancing women's rights in all aspects of life, and they have coaxed some governments into examining issues that they otherwise would have ignored.[40] A number of countries—including Afghanistan, Australia, Brazil, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Uganda, and Zambia—have incorporated CEDAW treaty provisions into constitutions or bills of rights.[41]

In Vienna in 1993, the UN World Conference on Human Rights affirmed the universality of the human rights of women. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development—held in Cairo, where 184 UN member states met to consider the issues of population, development, and the empowerment of women—stressed gender equality. Women made it onto the population agenda, which had for decades instead focused on demographic calculations. The attention given to women's health, particularly their reproductive and sexual health, is perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the Programme of Action produced by the Cairo conference.[42]

More than half a century of deliberations under UN auspices has amplified the growing consensus on the impossibility of building peace without the significant involvement of women and women's groups. Secretary-General Annan cast new light on inclusive policies when in 1999 he addressed the World Bank, arguing in essence that development is a form of conflict prevention. He cited a study by the United Nations University in Tokyo which found that inclusive government is the best guarantor against internal violent conflicts. Such inclusiveness would require that all the major groups in a society participate in its governmental, administrative, security, and military institutions. Most explosive, the secretary-general noted, is what the study's investigators call horizontal inequality, in which power and resources are inequitably distributed among groups that are also differentiated in other ways, such as by race, religion, or language. Horizontal inequality leads to

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[40] See Nadia H. Youssef, 'Women's access to productive resources: the need for legal instruments to protect women's development rights' in Julie Peters and Andrea Wolper (eds.), *Women's Rights, Human Rights: International Feminist Perspectives* (London and New York, Routledge, 1995), pp. 279–88.

[41] Error! Main Document Only. Countries with a system of common law, including most Commonwealth nations descended from the traditions of the United Kingdom, are 'dualistic' in terms of ratifying international laws and UN treaties. That is, these instruments do not automatically become part of the nation's laws. 'Such laws must first be domesticated into the national laws in order to become part of the country's laws', explains Lady Justice Mary Ang'awa of the High Court of Kenya, thus 'the laws are dualistic in nature'. Treaties are submitted to parliament for domestication, which often takes place provision by provision, as 'parliament picks it apart', notes Ang'awa. Other countries with a system of civil law, including those in Francophone Africa, have a 'monoistic' application of international law. In these instances, once ratified, a treaty or convention is automatically domesticated, becoming part of national law. 'Eritrea and the United States would be examples of monistic application', said Justice Ang'awa, and thus one explanation for the failure of the United States to ratify CEDAW is that 'the U.S. Senate, which must ratify international treaties, would like to pick apart CEDAW, as do parliaments in the dualistic tradition'. Lady Justice Mary Ang'awa, 'Unveiling the myth of gender neutrality in justice', address to the Second Faculty and Staff Development Seminar, University for Peace Africa Programme, Kitwe, Zambia, 7 April 2005.

[42] Françoise Girard, 'Cairo + five: reviewing progress for women five years after the International Conference on Population and Development', *Journal of Women's Health and Law*, 1:1 (November 1999), pp. 1–14.

conflicts between ethnic groups distinct in one or more of these ways when one group feels discriminated against or perceives that another is privileged in ways that it fears losing. If conflict results from different groups' unequal access to political power, Annan said, then the logical conclusion is that democracy—inclusive democracy, not winner-take-all democracy—presents the opportunity for everyone to participate in the decisions that affect their lives.[43] Reducing unequal gender hierarchies could make a positive contribution to peace and social justice, and any security framework should be based on ungendered assumptions.[44]

Women's leadership in consolidating and sustaining peace at community levels has proved to be essential for nation building. According to Ambassador Gertrude Mongela, member of parliament in Tanzania, current president of the Pan-African Parliament, and in 1995 secretary general of the World Women's Conference in Beijing,

> the participation of women not only provides equal opportunity on a practical level, but also offers a new perspective and diversity of contributions to policy-making and priorities for development. Addressing gender issues is an important strategy in stimulating development, in alleviating poverty, and strengthening good governance. The main reason for this is that development can only be sustainable where its material benefits are fairly distributed, especially to those most in need, most disadvantaged and most vulnerable—and these people are often women.[45]

On 31 October 2000, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security. A debate preceding the resolution's passage posed the question, if warlords can be brought to the peace table, why are women not present?[46] In a sweeping mandate, the Security Council enjoined member states to take adequate steps towards ensuring all forms of protection for women in conflict, including increasing roles for them in the building of peace and peacekeeping operations and mechanisms. Peace, without the full participation of women, the Security Council evinced, is unsustainable. According to Noeleen Heyzer, 'formal negotiations that exclude half the population from the political process have little

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[43] Kofi A. Annan, 'Peace and development—one struggle, two fronts', address to the World Bank, Washington, D.C., 19 October 1999, p. 4.

[44] Error! Main Document Only. J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering World Politics: Issues and Approaches in the Post-Cold War Era,* New York, Columbia University Press, 2001, pp. 36-64., see especially the chapter 'Gendered dimensions of war, peace, and security', pp. 36-64.

[45] Gertrude Mongela, 'Women take on the old boys club', Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA), April 2004, http://www.actsa.org/News/features/010504_democracy.htm.

[46] Petitioning the Security Council, UNIFEM noted five specific actions that should be taken:
Error! Main Document Only. 1. Support women's leadership in the building of peace. Women are increasingly participants in conflict, while the great majority is also holding families together. Despite their fortitude, and despite the fact that women and girls are most affected by conflict, women are for all intents and purposes ignored during negotiations to sue for peace.

hope of popular support. The whole peace process suffers when women are absent'.[47]

URGENTLY NEEDED: RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION

Gender studies has made important contributions to the broader field of peace and conflict studies, including insights into the costs to societies of the exclusion of women, understanding the value of non-hierarchical relationships for the prevention and resolution of conflicts, new knowledge on integrative agreements based on processes of consensual decision making, and the need to include marginalised groups and voices for building durable peace.

Despite the striking nature of the examples indicating the necessity of the empowerment of women and women's groups for a lasting, durable peace, this perspective does not always make its way into the international literature. Although valuable anecdotal material abounds, more research and documentation remains necessary. In the meantime, small studies are available.

As noted above, in Somalia in 1992 the Sixth Clan uniquely brought warring clan-lords together. In 2003, the UPEACE Africa Programme published 'The Sixth Clan', a small case study written by Debra Timmons. The story of the women's organisations of the Mano River Union countries of Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone is told in 'Engendering the Peace Process in West Africa: The Mano River Women's Peace Network', published in 2000 by Femmes Africa Solidarité. The tale of women's organisations and others working together in peace-building activities

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2. Bring to bear a gender perspective in the field of intergovernmental peace and security studies, including increasing the number of women in support of operations for peace. Expertise from gender studies must inform planning of such operations. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration need to be designed to address the needs of women combatants, girls, and women abducted into armed cadres or families of former soldiers who seek to reintegrate into civilian life. Electoral systems must take women into account as voters or candidates. Civilian police should address trafficking of females for prostitution and sexual violence associated with conflict.
3. Support gender justice in reconstruction, after a conflict. Successful reconstruction requires the use of all resources. Women, who have sustained continuity and held social and economic fragments together, constitute the most precious and under-utilized of these resources. Unless a nation's constitutional, juridical, legal, and electoral frameworks are built on gender equality, its full development will elude whatever machinery is established.
4. Bring to bear a gender perspective in the field of intergovernmental peace and security studies, including increasing the number of women in support of operations for peace. Expertise from gender studies must inform planning of such operations. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration need to be designed to address the needs of women combatants, girls, and women abducted into armed cadres or families of former soldiers who seek to reintegrate into civilian life. Electoral systems must take women into account as voters or candidates. Civilian police should address trafficking of females for prostitution and sexual violence associated with conflict.
5. Support gender justice in reconstruction, after a conflict. Successful reconstruction requires the use of all resources. Women, who have sustained continuity and held social and economic fragments together, constitute the most precious and under-utilized of these resources. Unless a nation's constitutional, juridical, legal, and electoral frameworks are built on gender equality, its full development will elude whatever machinery is established.
As cited in Nay Htun and Arusha Stanislaus, 'Conflicts and peace: challenges and opportunities for collaboration in Asia and Pacific', University for Peace, affiliated with the UN, and Mahidol University, Bangkok, March 2001, p. 22.

[47] Heyzer, Security Council's Open Debate on Gender, Conflict and Peacekeeping, 25 July 2002.

in Sudan can be found in a study by Mohamed Awad Osman, 'Transition from War to Peace', published by the UPEACE Africa Programme in 2003.

The following are among the issues needing further research and documentation, particularly from a hands-on perspective and by researchers working in the Southern Hemisphere:

- identification of reliable indicators pertaining to the exclusion of girls and women from education and other spheres of life and their introduction for monitoring
- differentiation of distinctive roles of women and women's groups in peace processes
- evolution of gender roles in the aftermath of conflict, including women's human rights, and women's interests in peace accords and post-conflict constitutional reforms
- appropriate action strategies for covering women and girls in international law, treaties, and conventions
- best practices and lessons learned from re-building the lives of male and female demobilised former combatants
- engendering the intersections between development policies and peace processes
- using gender as a tool for overcoming the schism between immediate humanitarian relief and sustainable development
- restructuring economies for peace based on gender equity
- militarisation, war making, and masculinities
- examination of the question of whether trafficking of women, so-called honour crimes, and other forms of sexual violence should be classified as war crimes or crimes against humanity
- examination of the validity of tertiary third-party sanctions against nations that persist in tolerating extreme violence against women and girls.

CONCLUSION

The Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, proffered by the African Union, is based on an understanding that peace, however defined, requires the full involvement of women and men. As Florence Butegwa, Sierra Leone's regional programme director for UNIFEM, notes,

> If you can think of peace-building as a project, then each person needs to be motivated to be a part of this project. The question of what a person gains from participating is not something that the

president or the government are going to define. It is something that
needs to be defined by the entire population.[48]

This chapter considers some of the dimensions of gender and the building of peace,
including recognition of gender as a component of foreign policy and international
relations; incorporation of gender theory into the theoretical work of the social
sciences, international relations, and peace and conflict studies; realisation that
gender can have an explicit impact on political and social relationships from the
village level to global processes; and, perhaps most important in the long run,
appreciation that women as human agents play indispensable roles in preventing
wars, ending strife, managing conflict, and building peace. The empowerment of
women is now widely viewed as essential for economic growth, improved health
status, decline of poverty, sustainable management of the environment, and
consolidation of democracy. A nearly universal consensus is building for altering
practices that have denied rights and entitlements to women. The United States,
which led in the formation of the United Nations, is no longer at the forefront of
the promotion of rights for women. Africa now leads the way. The evolutions
reviewed here on the development of gender parity in Africa are critical, if for no
other reason than the implicit discrediting of the clichés and canards long used to
trivialise and undermine the promotion of women's rights and gender studies as
'something Western' and alien.

The making of peace implies power, struggle, and negotiation, and the UN Security
Council has mandated the inclusion of women at all levels of building peace. The
sustained actions of African women's organisations and their male counterparts in
grasping the nettle of gender and peace building require long-term concerted action.
Such endeavours require combining power, struggle, lobbying, and negotiation with
the recognition that building peace?including democracy, gender, human rights,
development, and justice? necessitates the forthright involvement of women.
As Noeleen Heyzer notes, 'women's status will continue to be the barometer of peace
and security... Progress for women will mean progress for all'.[49] Building peace
without concern for gender is impossible.

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[48] Florence Butegwa, 'Gender and human rights in post-conflict reconstruction', in Baksh-Sodeen and Etchart, *Women and Men in Partnership for Post-Conflict Reconstruction*, p. 76.

[49] Noeleen Heyzer, briefing on the Immediate and Transitional Assistance Programme for the Afghan People, 2002, International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, Tokyo, 21–22 January 2002.

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Unveiling the Myth of Gender Neutrality of Justice

Lady Justice Mary Ang'awa

Lady Justice Mary Ang'awa is currently Judge in the High Court of Kenya. As a lawyer, she was a long standing Magistrate and later Chief Magistrate. She worked also as Commissioner on the Advocates Complaints Commission and as a Chair Person in the Rent Restriction Tribunal and Chief Magistrate.

Among the fellowships she has been awarded, Justice Ang'awa is a Fellow of the Eisenhower Fellowships and a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. She has been serving as also Chairperson of the Task Force of the Jurisprudence of Equality Program.

Justice Ang'awa's earlier training focuses on law: she holds a Bachelor of Law Degree from the University of Nairobi and trained for the bar in Kenya School of Law.

INTRODUCTION

In order to put the concept of gender neutrality in relation to justice, it is necessary to first illustrate the relationship of gender equity to the overall principles of human rights. The articulation of these relationships also demand explaining the linkage between human rights and discrimination.

I.   HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS AND DISCRIMINATION

The Universal declaration on Human Rights (UDHR)[1] Articles 1 and 2 provides that:

> "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
> They are endowed with reasons and conscience and should act
> Towards one another in a spirit of brother hood.

> Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this declaration without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex language, religion, political or other opinion national or social origin".

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[1] UDHR

The African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR)[2] articles 2 and 3 provides:

Every individual shall be entitled to the enjoyment of the rights and freedoms recognized and guaranteed in the present charter without distinction of any kind such as race, ethic, group, colour, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, national and social origin, fortune birth or other status.

Every individual shall be equal before the law.

Every individual shall be entitled to equal protection of the law. The protection in the law is provided for the international and regional instruments that deal with equal protection. These are rights which call upon society to ensure that there to be no discrimination against all people.

The convention of the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women[3] (CEDAW) Article 1 discrimination against women as describes.

"Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or vilifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civic or any other field".

This definition has been understood to be gender specific[4] having as its main emphasis on the "eradication of laws and practices which hinder women from exercising human rights."[5]

Lawyers and judicial officers who are the users of the law of the land are instrumental in ensuring that justice and the rule of law is upheld. It has transpired that many are not aware of the international and regional human rights instruments. Where they are aware of the international laws, these are not applicable unless they are domesticated into the national laws.

In the land mark decision of <u>Unity Dow</u>[6] decided in Botswana, the court was able to be persuaded through human rights international instruments that the laws of

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[2] ACHPR

[3] CEDAW

[4] K. Frostell, Gender difference and the non discrimination principles in the CCPR and the CEDAW. New trends in discrimination law – I international perspective edited by 1. Hannikaine ve nykanen.

[5] (No. 4) above.

[6] Unity Dow was married to a foreigner. The children's citizenship are those of the father. Every time she would travel to Botswana the children required a visa, yet a Botswana man having a foreigner wife did not require a visa for his children. The court held that the law was discriminatory.

nationality discriminated against the applicant even when the said laws were not domesticated.

II: APPLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

Most commonwealth countries fall under the categories of those countries that on ratifying an international law, the said instrument does not automatically become part of the country's law. Such law must first be domesticated into the national laws in order for it to have any application. This means that the laws are dualistic in nature.

Other countries have a monolithic application of the international laws. This means that once the international law are ratified, it automatically becomes part of the national laws and there is no need to have those laws passed through Parliament for enactment into the local national laws.

The judiciary plays an important role in the interpretation and application of the law. It is a separate branch of the government. Faced with the dilemma that the international instruments cannot be applied unless they are domesticated[7], a judicial colloquium was convened in 1988 by the then Chief Justice of India of Commonwealth judges, to find a way out.

They came up with the Bangalore's Principles on Domestic application on International Human Rights Norms.

These principles held that:

i)   It was within he proper nature of the judicial process and well established judicial functions of national courts to have regard to international obligations which a country undertakes whether or not they have been incorporated into the domestic law, for the purpose of removing ambiguity or uncertainty from national constitutions, legislation or common law.

The colloquium recognized that there was nothing wrong in knowing the human rights law. If the laws are consistent with the national laws then they should be mentioned and applied.

If the laws are contradictory or inconsistent with international laws the national court are bound to apply the national laws and not the international laws. Where this is done, the court should draw the attention of the authorities to such

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[7] In Kenya, the case of
     a) Okunda v R 1970 EA 453
     b) East African Community v R 1970 v 47

inconsistency and contradiction of the national laws vis `a vis the international laws. A court could therefore be persuaded or influenced by the international laws in reaching its decision in deciding whether the national law before it is inconsistent with regards the international law and whether it is discriminatory. A good illustration was seen in the Unity Dow Case.[8]

III: JURISPRUDENCE AND EQUITY PROGRAM

In order to infuse more gender equity in the judicial processes, a specialized training was seen as one of the best effective ways for imparting sensitization of lawyers and judicial officers. It was with this in mind that the International Association of Women Judges began a project known as Jurisprudence and Equity Program (JEP). In this project the aim was "designed to prepare judges to apply International Regional and National Human rights Norms to cases coming before them in their national and local courts including those relating to gender based discrimination and violence.[9]

The jurisprudence of Equality Program (JEP) was designed primarily for judicial officers but there are other jurisdictions[10] that have extended their program to lawyers and legal related NGO practitioners. The program works in the following manner:

The Task Force

In each country a task force is set up that is charged with administering all operational aspects of the project. This task force is responsible for selecting a two members team (composed of a judge, a legal academic or an NGO advocate).

Training of Trainers

The two members are then sent to a workshop to train trainers. (The workshop is commonly known as the 3T Workshop). The workshop prepares the training team to conduct human rights seminars in their respective countries.

The workshops are conducted twice in a year, for three years. Each year, two more new trainers are selected to conduct the two workshops in their given year.

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[8] No. 6 above

[9] Arlene patch united national 200
Judicial training.
Bringing International Human Rights Law has "Judicial colloquium on the domestic application of the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the convention on the rights of the child".

[10] Uganda

When the workshop is conducted by the two trainers, they would adopt a curriculum relevant to the circumstance of their country, but as far as possible, in line with the training material.

Follow Up

At the end of each project year, the Task Force and the Training Team conduct a follow up meeting with the "JEP" participants in their respective country. The purpose is to review the curriculum where there maybe legal changes, to discuss the way in which the participants have applied the training and to elicit suggestions on ways to improve the curriculum.

The end result is to produce a critical mass of JEP-trained judges and magistrates and later lawyers who will "apply human rights norms to cases coming before them that involve discrimination and/or violence against women".

IV: EXPERIENCES

The reactions of the participants who are trained are indeed positive. The participants are excited to be able to bring to life to laws that impose the rights of women, children and the under privileged in society.

The program aims to have participants involved in workshops where they learn by doing. At times the participants break into groups to solve a problem together using international instruments of human rights. Other times the groups constitute the court, the defense lawyers and the prosecution in solving the problems that is set before them.

There has been experiences where, as part of the opening session, participants are made to express who is a stereotype man and who is a stereotype woman. This exercise allows the participants to realize how that can lead to being discriminatory without one intending it.

By sensitizing the participants, the aim is to ensure that the correct practice of dealing with parties before them is applied.

In practice, it was noted however, that not all the participants actually respond to the workshops. In one incident, one male judge, after undergoing the session on stereotype with the rest of the participants left and never returned. Others, according to newspapers reports would in fact contravene the very human right principles the training was trying to promote.

On the other hand, nonetheless, the participants who have a positive attitude have good experiences to testify. From the newspaper reports once again, it was observed

that one lady magistrate in dealing with a case of neglected children, actually adjourned the court and took the children to eat in a restaurant then took them shopping to buy clothes and returned to court to make the appropriate orders for protection and care.

In another, a male judge was handling a case where a girl standing at a bus stop in the outskirts of Nairobi was kissed on the cheek by a boy unknown to her. He was arrested and the defence lawyer tried to impress that it was only a "peck" and therefore quite innocent. The judge took the offence seriously and did not treat the incident lightly.

V: SET BACKS

The majority of cases involving rights are heard in the subordinate courts. This means that the decisions of magistrates are not reported[11] officially in the law reports. Only High Court and Court of Appeal decisions are reported. There are a lot of good jurisprudence from the subordinate courts that require to be documented. The Kenya Women Judges Association is in the process of compiling these case laws to be placed on the web site. This will help in providing a documented basis for precedents.

VI: CONCLUSION

The JEP program has now proved to be of tremendous value to those who are faced with the responsibility to make legal decisions but are not conversant with applying the international instruments on the principles they are handling after attending the JEP trainings, judges, lawyers and rights advocates have come up with positive decisions that uphold human rights norms. This, in itself is enhancing equity in justice.

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[11] Kenia had 20 years with no law reporting but this has now been brought up to date, by the High Court of Kenya, Nairobi.

12 Take the example of Wambua V Wambua (2005) e KLR (www.kenylawreports.ke) High Court at Nairobi: Ruling by Justice Koome Civil Case No. 30 of 2003 May 21st, 2005. "Basic education is not just reading"

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Changing Gender Roles in Conflict and Post-Conflict Situations in Africa

Desmond Olounphe George-Williams

Desmond Oloumphe George-Williams has been lecturing on African Approaches to Peace Building, Introduction to Conflict Resolution, Peace Security and Democratization in Africa and Introduction to Peace Studies at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sierra Leona. He also lectures on gender, conflict and human rights to MA students at the Gender, Research and Documentation Centre of the University (GRADOC).

Through the outreach programme of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies he has been involved in collaborative work with various NGOs. He has also taken part in and facilitated a series of workshops and trainings on gender and peace and conflict issues.

For six years he was National Chairman for the Sierra Leone Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), a position which has taken him, among several places, to the refugee camps in Guinea, working with internally displaced persons and refugees. Mr. George-Williams holds an MA. in peace studies at the University of Bradford.

INTRODUCTION

Gender refers to women and men's roles that are socially determined. The worldwide quest for gender awareness has been on going and the struggles for emancipation that the women in the Western world went through are not entirely different from the struggles of women in Africa.

The concept of gender though, may be considered relatively new in Africa especially in comparison with the West. Despite its relative newness, gender considerations are of vital importance to the African continent. Most African states operate a patriarchal social system with cultures and traditions enforcing male dominance over their 'weaker' counterparts.[1] Increasingly however there is growing awareness that gender equality is a matter of justice and democracy.

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[1] Ibeanu, Okechukwu,(2001) "Healing and Changing" in *The Aftermath,* Led Books London, New York. pp.189 – 209.

The participation by African governments and their women in the various U.N. Programmes, beginning with the Decade of Women 1975 — 1985 through the Beijing Conference in 1990 to Beijing + 5, illustrates the increased realization in Africa that gender questions cannot be ignored.

Where gender equity is lacking, huge resources of talent and ingenuity for the advancement of mankind are being wasted. Where this realization is reached, men and women can together contribute different but complimentary skills, which can enrich democratic politics.

Though Africa has had more than its fair share of conflicts, especially the intrastate conflicts that followed the end of the Cold War, conflicts offer an opportunity especially in the post conflict period to redress the gender bias.[2] Periods of post-conflict peace building, offer a fresh start for ensuring that a more gender sensitive world is created. Evidences show that in the main, though women make substantial gains during conflicts/crisis periods by acquiring new roles and behaviours these are largely reversed in the post conflict period.[3] Even when governments make grandiose pronouncements on strategies and need to empower women these pronouncements are mainly false starts or at most remain at the level of policy that is never implemented. Only a few cases illustrate otherwise, for example, Namibia.[4]

What then are the reasons for this? Why is the pre-conflict status quo invariably returned? This article will look at instances in which women's newly acquired roles are reversed. The various changing roles acquired by men and women will be examined. Efforts at consolidating these gains and the failure of some of the attempts is looked at together with the impact of the conflict on gender. Examples from different conflicts in the African context will illustrate these points.

CHANGING TRENDS OF CONFLICTS IN AFRICA

A logical starting point is the examination of the emerging trend of conflicts in Africa acting as a catalyst for bringing gender issues to the forefront of national discourse. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) report of 1999 states that "Africa is the most conflict ridden region of the world and is the only region in which armed conflict is on the increase" Cold War bipolar rivalry created states ripe for revolts with implicit support to dictators in exchange for ideological preference.[5] With the props removed at the end of the Cold War, Africa

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[2] Meintjes, S., Pillay, A., Turshen, M., (2001) "There is No Aftermath for Women" in *The Aftermath,* Led Books London, New York. pp 3- 1 8.

[3]Ibid.

[4] Nzomo. M.. (2002) *Gender, Governance and Conflicts in Africa,* Dakar, Senegal.

[5] De Waal, A., (1996) *"Contemporary warfare in Africa; Changing Context, Changing Strategies"*, IDS Bulletin Vol. 27 no. 3 pp 6-16.

plunged into a period of inter state wars. In examining conflicts in Africa, however, the focus must not be only on political conflicts or complex emergencies, but also on international, local and personal conflicts. The reason being that women play an integral part in all these conflicts, mainly as victims though in some cases also as perpetrators.

The changing nature of conflicts has resulted in women and children being more greatly affected than before.[6] In the period of intra state wars where 'theatres of war' existed, the damage done to women and children was limited because the combatants were mainly men and laws and conventions were observed that protected non combatants.[7] With the increase of these unconventional intra-state wars, women and children became targets and suffered more than in the former types of wars.[8] This deliberate targeting of women and the devastating effects on the men, caused women to adopt coping mechanisms that were new and involved reversal of gender roles.[9] Women now had to take on roles that were hitherto men's roles. This redefinition of notions of masculinity and femininity in the process of conflict will be looked at in this writing.

Before venturing to highlight the changes, cognizance must be taken of the fact that these changes will vary from one conflict to another and in the specific impacts of the conflict on the men and women. In like manner, the ability to sustain the changed roles and maintain the new social relationships depends on the way in which the transition from war to peace occurs.[10]

ROLE REVERSALS DURING CONFLICTS

Conflicts, for the most part, were traditionally seen as a wholly male domain, especially during the inter-state conflicts, even though women played minor roles in these conflicts.[11] Women's roles increased considerably during the intra-state wars either as victims or perpetrators.[12] Like with the two World Wars in Europe, the increase in the intra-state conflicts has provided opportunities for women in Africa to take on more productive roles and break from the stereotypical roles assigned to them.[13]

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[6] Pillay, A.," Violence against Women in the Aftermath" in *The Aftermath,* Zed Books London, New York pp. 35 - 45.

[7] De Waal, A., (1996) *"Contemporary warfare in Africa; Changing Context, Changing Strategies"*, IDS Bulletin Vol. 27 no. 3 pp. 6-16.

[8] Pillay, A., "Violence against Women in the Aftermath" in *The Aftermath,* Led Books London, New York pg 35 - 45.

[9] Nzomo. M. (2002) *Gender, Governance and Conflicts in Africa,* Dakar, Senegal.

[10] Meintjes, S., (2001) "War and Post war Shifts in Gender Relations" in *The Aftermath,* Led Books London, New York. P. 64.

[11] Meintjes, S., (2001) "War and Post war Shifts in Gender Relations" in *The Aftermath,* Led Books London, New York. Pp 63 – 77.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

The traditional role of men in the home was as breadwinner. Their responsibility was to provide for the family. During conflicts, because the men go away from home to defend the land for long periods of time and, in some cases, forever (when they are killed during combat or taken as prisoners), the women must assume the task of breadwinner.[14] Some writers have pointed out that the role of women as providers of food for the family is nothing new, especially in the rural areas where the women produce the bulk of the food consumed by the family. In these areas, the husband's role is only as the titular breadwinner, providing the money for the woman to purchase the ingredients necessary for the preparation of the food. Women have also turned breadwinners in the family in cases where the husbands return home maimed by the conflict. In these instances, the women, much to the chagrin of the men, now shoulder the responsibility of the family. Even though this role reversal is accepted during conflict situations, every effort is made to reverse it in the post conflict period.[15] Some men because of the physical impairment, have to be fed by their wives and accept this reversal grudgingly, looking for any opportunity to assert their authority through physically beating or psychologically embarrassing their wives in order to enforce their wives' 'subservient positions'.[16]

Commenting on this in the conflict in Northern Uganda, El-Bushra records men feeling excluded from the family circle having ceded many economic responsibilities to their wives. This loss of 'manhood' resulted in men taking up drinking together with similar other dejected men. A situation which made the women more resentful of them, considering the men "unnecessary and functionless encumbrances".[17]

The toll of the impact of conflict in marriage relationship was not only in this form. El-Bushra reveals that during the conflict in Somalia and Somaliland women found new independence during the extremely difficult years of war. This experience increased the self esteem of Somali women to the point that after the war they took on more proactive roles in making decisions about marriage and divorce and were even choosing the type of men they wanted to many.

The increased activity of women during conflicts is similarly not confined to the domestic sphere. Women have become very active politically. Women have displayed themselves remarkably well as mobilisers against wars and conflicts.[18] Without intending to enter into the debate of women being natural peace makers because of their mothering nature, it is still crystal clear that during periods of

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[14] Bop. C., (2001) "Women in Conflicts, Their Gains and Their Losses" in *The Aftermath,* Zed Books. London, New York. pp. 19 —34.

[15] Nzomo. M. (2002) *Gender, Governance and Conflicts in Africa,* Dakar, Senegal.

[16] El-Bushra, J., Transforming: Some thoughts on a Gender Understanding of Conflict Process. In *States of Conflict; Gender, Violence, and Resistance,* Zed Books, London New York. Pp 69.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Nzomo. M. (2002) *Gender, Governance and Conflicts in Africa,* Dakar, Senegal.

conflicts women play very important roles in trying to prevent or put an end to the conflicts of their times.[19] Even though women are viewed as generally absent from the public view, they have in many instances demonstrated publicly their detest for war. In Sierra Leone the role of women in demanding democratic elections from the military led National Provisional Riling Council (NPRC) has been widely reported.[20] The women had become tired of the 'liberators' doing the same things for which they had overthrown the then ruling All People's Congress party (APC). Nzomo, commenting on the active role of women as mobilisers in Sierra Leone, observes that "even in the face of threats and intimidation they have taken up issues ranging from domestic violence and female education to the building of peace and democracy in Sierra Leone".[21]

Another case in point is the role of women in the Eritrea conflict. Here we see that women played combative roles in the liberation struggle of their country.[22] This is not to claim that women did not play combative roles in the Sierra Leone conflict. There were notorious women like 'Adama Cut hand' and even 'Krio Mammy', a member of the leadership of the rebel movement the Revolutionary United Front (RUF).[23] Still, the proportion of women as combatants was much greater in the Eritrea conflict than in Sierra Leone.[24] The role of the women in Eritrea was not only as combatants, women also served in the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) struggling for the improvement of the status of women in the post conflict period.[25]

Women during the Mozambique conflict similarly organized the Mozambique Women's Organization through which the women rendered invaluable support to their men during the struggles.[26]

CHANGED ROLES: TEMPORARY OR PERMANENT?

These gains that were secured or promised have not been maintained. In fact some writers claim that there are no gains for the women. Bop shows the fragility of women's gains compared to the acuteness of their losses.[27] There is usually an urgent return to the pre-conflict status quo fostered mainly by men enforcing the

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Interviewed in Sierra Leone Broadcasting Service Television (SLBS TV).

[24] Nzomo. M. (2002) *Gender, Governance and Conflicts in Africa,* Dakar, Senegal.

[25] Nzomo. M.. (2002) *Gender, Governance and Conflicts in Africa,* Dakar, Senegal.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Bop. C., (2001) "Women in Conflicts, Their Gains and Their Losses" in *The Aftermath,* Zed Books. London, New York. Pp 19 —34.

patriarchal social structures. In the countries cited above: Sierra Leone, Mozambique and Eritrea there was some amount of determination on the part of the political leaders in the post conflict period to redress gender imbalance and involve women in the decision making processes of the various governments.[28]

President Robert Mugabe and President Ahmed Tejan Kabba on the aftermath of conflict in their respective countries both had words of praise for their women folk who had contributed immensely to the national struggle.[29] Mugabe stressed the principle of equality between men and women, pointing out that throughout the liberation struggle success and power are possible when men and women are united as equals.[30] President Kabbah on his part publicly acknowledged the role-played by women old and young alike.[31] Despite these good intentions not much improvement has been noted in the status of women.

In Eritrea though the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) included a positive gender agenda in the independent state that emerged after the war it soon became clear that legislations are not enough in the absence of civic gender awareness and a supportive democratic government.[32] The new constitution prohibited female circumcision, dowry and bride price and further prohibited any violation of the human rights of women. These brilliant legal provisions did not bring about the desired empowerment of women. The socio-cultural resistance, mainly on the part of men, was a major reason for the failure.[33] An inordinate fear on the part of men to see women as equals fuels this resistance. Most men are prepared to support women's advancement separately rather than together. We see the increase in numbers of Women's wings in many political organizations.[34] Women in these wings are encouraged by the men to develop parallel structures rather than compete with them on equal terms. It is not uncommon to find these women's' wings headed by a chair lady within the same group or political party. One of the reasons given in defense of this separate development is that women operate better in their own midst and are less shy to articulate their views when they are together, than in the presence of men. Some see it as a ploy to keep women from challenging this male dominance. A situation that might partly explain the NUEW/EPLF rift.[35] A similar point is emphasized by Bop in claiming, "The 'satellite' status of women's

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[28] Nzomo. M. (2002) Gender, *Governance and Conflicts in Africa,* Dakar, Senegal.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Meintjes, S., Pillay, A., Turshen, M., (2001) "There is No Aftermath for Women" in *The Aftermath,* Led Books London, New York. Pp 3- 1 8.

[34] Common Practise in *Political Parties in Africa.*

[35] Hale, S., (2001) "Liberated But Not Free, Women in Post War Eritrea" in *The Aftermath,* Zed Books London, New York. Pp 122— 141.

organizations inside the ruling parties illustrate the marginalisation of the issue of equality between the sexes".[36]

LIFE IN REFUGE: A FRESH OR FALSE START?

A major characteristic of the conflict in Africa is the large-scale dislocation of people. Consequently, these people, mainly women and children, fleeing the carnage find themselves in refugee camps in neighbouring countries.[37] Life in a refugee camp offers an opportunity of changing gender roles. Women, in most of these cases, flee without their husbands so they are faced with new challenges and in the process discover new potentials hitherto latent.[38] Not only has the absence of male caused a change in the pattern of division of labour, the women discover they are capable of taking on the increased tasks.[39] Living in the refugee camps also offers the women an opportunity of becoming agents of change. They come into a new environment free from constricting traditions and customs having an opportunity to create new institutions more favourable to women.[40] In such situations, increased opportunities exist for networking with the other women in the camps. This newfound freedom and importance is threatened again in the post conflict period when hostilities cease and calm returns.[41] The prospects of repatriation mean, for women, a reversal to the previous patriarchal institutions thereby thwarting newly gained independence, freedom and self-confidence.[42] For example, Liberian and Sierra Leonean women at a Conference in Dakar, Senegal in 1998 preferred to stay in their new environments they had created then return home.[43]

This view presents part of the picture of life in a refugee camp for men and women. The other part is not that benign. While women at times gain new identities in refugee camps, for others it can be a continuation of the hard life and injustices that they faced in their home countries. Crawley highlights the disadvantages faced by refugee women on the grounds of their sex:

> Women and girls become prey to men in positions of authority either as agents of the state or personnel of International or local NGO's who require sex in return for favours in the form of increase

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[36] Bop. C., (2001) "Women in Conflicts, Their Gains and Their Losses" in *The Aftermath,* Zed Books. London, New York. Pp 19 —34.

[37] Meintjes, S., (2001) "War and Post war Shifts in Gender Relations" in *The Aftermath,* Led Books London, New York. Pp 63 – 77.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Meintjes, S., (2001) "War and Post war Shifts in Gender Relations" in *The Aftermath,* Led Books London, New York. Pp 63 – 77.

relief food ration or certain other privileges. Such actions by men in authority though often criticized when ever it is found out continue to enforce notions of masculinity that take no cognizance of the rights of women. [44]

Men are affected by life in a refugee camp through the NGOs taking on their roles as providers for their families. [45] By the provision of relief food by NGO's the men feel redundant.

Legal instruments, both national and international, also do not help the women's cause during times of war and conflict. In the most instances the national laws are at best insensitive to women's vulnerability during conflicts. Even the UN Convention regarding the Status of Refugees falls short of recognizing people who flee generalized armed conflicts as refugees on the grounds that such persecution is not specific to the individual. [46] This Convention of 1951 places great emphasis on the ability of the state to protect the rights of its citizens. [47] Crawley and others have plausibly argued that the liberal constitution of the state enables the maintenance of a state system, which legitimates direct and indirect violence against women. [48]

RAPE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICTS

Central to a discussion on gender and conflict is rape and sexual violence. Increasingly, rape and sexual violence are not only widespread in the intra state conflicts but they also have serious effects on both sexes health and emotion and economic and social future. [49] Women more often than men, though not necessarily always, are victims of rape during conflict periods. In the Sierra Leone conflict there were few instances in which female commandos raped boys. [50] In the main, women and girls are the victims of sexual violence during conflict. Rape becomes possible because of the breakdown of law and order that accompanies violent conflicts and also serves as a strategy to demoralize the community. [51] Women are usually seen as symbolically representing the cultural heritage of their nations. [52] In being raped therefore, the women and the whole national community are defiled in the process.

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[44] Crawley, H., (2000) "Engendering the State in Refugee Women's Claims for Asylum" in *States of Conflict; Gender, Violence, and Resistance,* Zed Books, London , New York. pp. 87.

[45] Meintjes, S., (2001) "War and Post war Shifts in Gender Relations" in *The Aftermath,* Led Books London, New York. Pp 63 – 77.

[46] Crawley, H., (2000) "Engendering the State in Refugee Women's Claims for Asylum" in *States of Conflict; Gender, Violence, and Resistance,* Zed Books, London , New York. pp. 87.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Byrne, B., (1996) "Towards a Gendered Understanding of Conflict". IDS Bulletin Vol.27 no. 3, pp. 31 - 39.

[50] Report from Victims in Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Hearings.

[51] Sideris, T., (2001) "Rape in War and Peace, Social Context, Gender Power and Identity" in *The Aftermath,* Zed Books London, New York. pp. 142 — 158.

[52] Ibid.

Sideris, drawing from the experiences of women in the Mozambican conflict comments on how women are raped by children of their communities, some men are forced to participate in the raping of their wives or even daughters as happened in the Sierra Leone conflict where elderly women normally held in awe in their communities were raped by boy-soldiers.[53] These acts are considered an attack not only on the individual women , their families and communities but an attack on the overall social system. Sex offenders use the act to degrade their enemies and destroy the social fabric.[54]

While women suffer both physical and psychological violence through rape, men likewise suffer (though not on the same scale) especially when they are forced to stand and watch their wives, daughters or other female members of their families being raped.[55] Failure to perform their traditional roles as protectors also weighs heavily on their minds for most of their lives. A feeling of increased irresponsibility and guilt resulting from the perceived or actual mobility to care for their families set in.

Women who suffer from rape or other forms of sexual violence go through a double agony. The trauma and pain undergone through the act of violence at one level and the stigmatization they suffer when back in their communities.[56] Members of their families and communities reject most women who have been raped during conflicts. For fear of this, women prefer the safety of silence. Consequently, their perpetrators go unpunished and the women are caught up in their guilt. In some cultures, the honour of the family of the rape victim can only be restored through suicide.[57]

Governments and military officials normally see rape as an inevitable adjunct of conflict and until recently these actions were not considered serious offences. Now, however, the rampant rape and sexual offences that occur during wars have resulted in it being recognized as instruments of genocide, crimes against humanity, means of torture and crimes of war.[58] Rape was rampantly used in Rwanda during the crises. Kelly reports that at the end of the genocide, in some parts of Rwanda, there was hardly any woman alive who had not been raped.[59] In a survey done in Sierra Leone on war-related sexual violence among internally displaced persons (IDPs),

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[53] Reports from atrocities Committed during Civil War.

[54] Sideris, T., (2001) "Rape in War and Peace, Social Context, Gender Power and Identity" in *The Aftermath,* Zed Books London, New York. pp. 142 — 158.

[55] Reports from Victims in TRC hearings.

[56] Sideris, T., (2001) "Rape in War and Peace, Social Context, Gender Power and Identity" in *The Aftermath,* Zed Books London, New York. pp. 142 — 158.

[57] Kelly, L., (2000), Wars Against Women: Sexual Violence sexual Politics and the Militarised State in *States of Conflict; Gender, Violence, and Resistance,* Zed Books, London New York. Pp 45 - 65.

[58] Anowitz et al. (2002) "Prevalence of War Related Sexual Violence and Other Human Rights Abuses Among Internally Displaced Persons in Sierra Leone", Journal of the American Medical Association, January 23/30 — Vol. 287. No 4. pp 513 - 521.

[59] Kelly, L., (2000), Wars Against Women: Sexual Violence sexual Politics and the Militarised State in States of Conflict; Gender, Violence, and Resistance, Zed Books, London New York. Pp 45 - 65.

the research concluded that sexual violence committed by combatants was widespread and was perpetrated in the context of high-level human rights abuses against the civilian population.[60] The level of sexual offences in Sierra Leone was still less than in Liberia. A survey conducted in post-conflict Liberia discovered that the majority of the victims wanted legal protection for women's human rights though most of them indicated that they did not want their offenders punished.[61] Reasons put forward for not requesting prosecution include the need for reconciliation and the fear of reprisals.[62] Reasons of shame of fear of stigmatisation and rejection can best explain their desires. Such has been the level of socialization of these mainly grass roots / rural women that half of them interviewed claimed that their husbands had the right to beat them and have sex with them even if they (the wives) did not want sex.[63]

The rationale for explaining such views of the women is that they are totally dependent on their husbands and the extended family system.[64] By themselves they have no identity except through their husbands. Besides, acting in any way against their husbands is traditionally considered as denying blessings for the children. Such women who go through the socialization process they have under gone especially in their traditional schools / secret societies can not, and in most cases do not, see the need for changing the status quo.[65] They are quite comfortable in existing in a patriarchal, male-dominated system. Intensive sensitization might help change their strongly held views and beliefs. These women, unaware of their human rights, exist and must be empowered to think differently.

GENDER SENSITIVE STRATEGIES

Post conflict situations present a perfect opportunity of engendering society and making women empowered. Various strategies have been used with varying levels of success. Such strategies include affirmative action in which women are given preference over men for opportunities so as to reduce the wide disparities between men and women. Another strategy used especially in the political sphere to increase the number of women in decision making is the use of quotas. The United Nations and the Commonwealth have set the 30% target of women in decision making mainly in Parliament and Local government. While countries like South Africa and

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[60] Anowitz et al. (2002) "Prevalence of War Related Sexual Violence and Other Human Rights Abuses Among Internally Displaced Persons in Sierra Leone", Journal of the American Medical Association, January 23/30 — Vol. 287. No 4. pp 513 - 521.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid

[65] Anowitz et al. (2002) "Prevalence of War Related Sexual Violence and Other Human Rights Abuses Among Internally Displaced Persons in Sierra Leone", Journal of the American Medical Association, January 23/30 — Vol. 287. No 4. pp 513 - 521.

Mozambique are the two countries that have achieved this target others are still struggling, Namibia, Tanzania and Uganda are also worthy of commendation. In most other countries the main stumbling block is men's desires to uphold the patriarchal systems. The political leaders in some instance lack the political will to carry out such reforms while others do all in their powers to thwart these changes.

The general assumption is that women are not involved in the decision to go to wars though they play major roles at the local level in bringing ends to conflicts. Here again it must be noted that women in some cases are responsible for sending their men to wars either by subtle persuasion or through deliberate taunting or questioning of their manhood. Women representation in peace negotiating teams is mostly non-existent or symbolic at best. In these formal delegations the role played by women in creating the space necessary for the negotiations to take place is generally ignored. It is usually the pressure from women that lead to reaching local peace agreements through traditional peace promotion activities, e.g. Holding prayer meetings, singing anti war songs and reading poems on the battlefields.

The exclusion of women makes the post conflict peace process a gender concern. Where women have been included their contributions have been invaluable. Noticing their absence in the Nairobi Conference marking the closing of the United Nations decade for Women, specific recommendation was included in the Nairobi Forward — Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. (Nzomo 2002) Women are proving themselves as active agents of change during conflicts in Mozambique, Sierra Leone and South Africa.( ). The Inter Religious Council in Sierra Leone was one of the very first local groups to make contact with the members of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Included in the team that went to meet them was a female Haja. She recounts how on one of the visits a member of the RUF told her that she bore remarkable resemblance to his mother. Throughout the meeting this rebel soldier was extremely nice and on leaving he gave her a hundred Dollar note bill. Such an incident supports the essentialist view that women by their nature are better peacemakers.

Some other women's roles have been transformed considerably in the post conflict period by their gaining recognition. Rwanda is a case in point. Before the war the decision making role of the women was very limited. Women's role after the war was much more visible with some even included as members of the Gacaca courts used to try local perpetrators of the massacre. Though it could be argued that the demographic reality and the fact that women were the main witnesses and survivors to the crimes committed was a major deciding factor.[66] In Namibia likewise, as a result of the post-colonial definitions of gendered traditional politics, women have become more visible in the local public forum.[67] With the Hadendowa women in

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[66] Women's Peace Monitor, A biannual publication of ISIS-WICCE, Vol. 3&4

[67] Becker, H., (2001) "We Want Women To Be Given an Equal Chance" in *The Aftermath,* Zed Books London. New York. Pp 225 — 241.

Sudan, they are still very much invisible in the public arena but yet they contribute to critical decision making in key political issues.[68]

United Nations Security resolution 1325 passed on Women and Peace and Security seems so far the summit of efforts by the international community to make women and a gendered perspective relevant to negotiating peace agreements. In the short run the response for governments in Africa is encouraging.

Non Governmental Organisations (NGO5) become important instruments of change in most conflict situations. Collapse of state structures during intra-state conflicts render governments incapable of fulfilling their roles as service providers for their citizens. With the influx of NGOs who now assume the responsibility of providing essential service to the distressed populations they are initiate gender sensitive policies that are carried out. One such policy is encouraging women to compete with men for jobs advertised and at times the women are given preferential treatment. This practice in Sierra Leone has resulted in the increase of female drivers for example in NGOs and private own commercial vehicles (taxis) giving them an opportunity to improve their inc o me.

One difficulty identified that women face in consolidating their gains during conflicts is the way in which gender is preached. For the ill-informed gender is about equality i.e. 50/50 in the truest sense of the word. In Sierra Leone the formation of the 50/50 group of women politicians has not helped the situation. This thinking has resulted in stiff opposition from the men. Such has been the drive for equality that most men are antagonistic to the point of insisting that women contribute equal share to the running of the home. Such confrontational approach to men whose psyches are fixed with notions of male dominance pose problems for the realisation of gender balance. A more collaborative approach is proving more rewarding.

The inability of women to speak with one voice is another impediment in the fight for gender sensitivity. There are instances in which women's groups that have been major agents for change start splitting up due to personality clashes among them. The resultant multiplicity of groups makes it difficult for them to articulate a shared vision. This situation plays into the hands of men who exploit the differences and maintain the male domination.

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[68] El-Bushra, J., Transforming: Some thoughts on a Gender Understanding of Conflict Process. In *States of Conflict; Gender, Violence, and Resistance,* Zed Books, London New York. Pp 66 — 86.

CONCLUSION

This article has shown that women and en are both affected in various ways during periods of conflicts. The men may suffer as combatants and in most conflicts suffer more causalities as a direct consequence of the fighting. Women similarly suffer as combatants but more so as victims of the vengeance of men.

The opportunities accorded by conflict can enable women to change their stereotypic roles, creating a more balanced life. These gains are at time reversed by their menfolk though some remain. Determination on the part of governments to bridge the gap between policy and practice can influence the outcome. The overall picture shows that the battle for gender sensitivity is gradually being won, judging from the increase of women in decision-making positions and peace negotiating delegations. Continued resilience on the part of gender activists and institutions in using periods after conflicts to press for further changes will eventually succeed in creating a highly gender sensitive Africa.

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Gender Peace and International Law

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INTRODUCTION

Escalating conflicts, war and unrest in the different parts of the world over the last century have shown that women have been victims of unbelievable horrific atrocities and injustices.

While an estimated one hundred million people died in war over the last century, men and women often died different deaths and were tortured and abused in different ways – sometimes for biological reasons, sometimes psychological or social. While more men are killed in war, women often experience violence, forced pregnancy, abduction and sexual abuse and slavery. Their bodies deliberately infected with HIV/AIDS or carrying a child conceived in rape, women have been used as envelopes to send messages to the perceived 'enemy'. The harm, silence and shame women experience in war is pervasive; their redress, almost non-existent. The situation of women in armed conflict has been systematically neglected.[1]

In post conflict situations where law enforcement is weak and judicial systems are ineffective women continue to suffer violence from combatants, family members, neighbors or others. Even law enforcement officers and peace-keeping forces are not totally dissociated from such crimes. Until recently perpetrators of such acts in

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[1] Cynthia Cockburn, "Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence," 10th and 11th June 1999, The World Bank, Washington, DC http://www.worldbank.org/gender/events/Cockburn2.doc

times of conflict were hardly ever held accountable for such atrocities in post conflict periods in the process of establishing just social and political order.

The importance of equal participation of women with men in conflict prevention and peace building had been stressed by the UN Charter, the Beijing Platform for Action; by the Security Council; ECOSOC and other international instruments, however gender balance in peace processes still leaves a lot to be desired.

The challenge of addressing the impact of war on women and their roles in conflict resolution and peace building is a challenge that has not yet been fully met by international agencies like the UN though some encouraging attempts have been made.

INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS VS GENDER AND PEACE

Peace is more than the absence of war. It is a condition where exploitation is eliminated, in which overt violence has ceased, including structural violence (Johan Galtung).

In talking about gender and peace it is critical to address the issue of unequal power relations and participation in decision-making between women and men, which are amongst the structural causes of social and political instability that generates poverty. More than ever, the reduction of gender inequalities has a strong contribution to make to social justice and sustainable development.

In 1999 the UN Secretary-general Kofi Annan in his address to the World Bank noted that a study by the United Nations University found that inclusive government is the best guarantor against internal violent conflicts. This inclusiveness requires all major groups in society participate in significant institutions like, governmental administrative, security, police and military. He noted that the study points to "horizontal inequality", where power and resources are inequitably distributed among groups that are also differentiated in other ways: race, religion and or language which leads to ethnic conflict when one group feels it is discriminated against or another is privileged in ways that it fears loosing. He further pointed out that the solution for peace is the presence of " inclusive democracy" that would give everyone a chance to participate in decisions that affect their lives and reducing unequal gender hierarchies would make a positive contribution to peace and social justice.[2]

A major international instrument that emphasizes the concept of gender equality in terms of economic, social and political justice and what is commonly referred to as

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[2] "Peace and non-Violent Transformation of Conflict"; Study Guide; by Prof. Mary E. King University for Peace, San Jose, Costa Rica, 2004.

" The Bill of Women's Rights", is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which was first adopted as a United Nations General Assembly Resolution 34/180 on December 18, 1979 and became a treaty in 1980 having acquired the necessary required number of adoption by states.

CEDAW defines discrimination against women under article 1 of the convention as: "Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field". This is a convention that is more comprehensive than previous international conventions that deal with gender equality and the advancement of women's rights as it calls for equality in civil, economic, political and social rights and encompasses rights that were guaranteed under different conventions into one document.

A major issue that had not come to the forefront in the CEDAW at that time however was the issue of violence against women. Efforts to bring the issue of violence against women from the private into the public realm and to the UN agenda had been under way since 1970 by International women's organizations. This effort paid off when the issue of violence against women was brought to international attention at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993. The Vienna Declaration and Program of Action (Un Doc A/Conf.157/23, 12 July 1993) under Article 18; recognizes that the human rights of women and of the girl child as inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights and condemns gender-based violence and all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation, including those resulting from cultural prejudice and international trafficking, as incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person, and thus must be eliminated.

Following the Vienna conference, the General Assembly of the United Nations, on December 20,1993 unanimously adopted the Declaration on Violence Against Women (DEVAW) which is another major landmark at International level for the advancement of gender equality rights. Article 1 of the DEVAW defines violence as" any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private".

Despite the existence of international human rights instruments and instruments that are specific to women that condemn discrimination on the basis of sex, inequalities between women and men persist and grow, making gender discrimination the world's most widespread form of exclusion.

Gender based violence, for example, is an act that is still largely accepted and goes unpunished in the absence of (war which is a contributing factor to its escalation in times of war). The same is true in post conflict situations where heinous crimes committed against women during conflict are hardly addressed in the post conflict justice restoration processes. As has been quoted by women who witnessed first hand the impacts of conflict on women: "Violence against women in conflict is one of history's great silences"

Gender discrimination, which is manifested in the exclusion of women from decision making processes, especially in matters that affect their lives, is very much evident in conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building processes. Women are persistently excluded from decision making in peace negotiations and are not consulted for their opinions on matters related to maintenance and promotion of peace. Their exclusion has resulted in peace that fails to address key issues for women like redress for the human rights violations and abuses they have suffered, continued violence against women in post conflict situations and as refugees, etc. Exclusion of women from the peace process has contributed to the fact that peace treaties have seldom brought peace in terms of economic, social and political justice for all.

Rosika Schwimer, a prominent woman in the international Women's suffrage in 1904 pointed out that "A war ended by militants and with peace term dictated by militarism could only mean that the seeds of another war were planned for the next generation." [3]

The significant contribution that women's equal participation with men in peace process could make in maintaining international peace and security has not still been grasped widely at international level though it is slowly gaining attention. Grass roots, as well as international women's organizations have been pushing for decades the agenda of the inclusion of women in conflict resolution and peace building processes to the international forum.

The idea of the inclusion of women in such processes is not just simply mere participation but to have a direct influence on peace and security policies or peace promotion and violence prevention measures. They should also decide, which issues are important and when, where and with whom discussions should be held, how much money should be spent etc.

The fourth World Conference on Women which took place in Beijing in 1995, made a great contribution in bringing the issue of participation of women equally with men in conflict prevention and peace building processes to the international fora. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which was adopted at this

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[3] Costin Lela, B 1983 "Feminism, Pacifism, Internationalism and the 1915 international Congress of Women In Women and Men's Wars", edt. Judith Stiehm ; Oxfror Pergamon.

conference, deals extensively with such issues under the strategic objectives and actions on "Women and Armed Conflict". It declares that peace is inextricably linked with equality between women and men in development. It highlights that violations of human rights of women in situations of armed conflict are violations of the fundamental principles of international human rights and humanitarian law. Among other violations it specifically condemns ethnic cleansing as a strategy of war, rape including systematic rape of women in conflict situations and creation of a mass influx of refugee and displaced persons. The Beijing Platform also calls for the punishment of perpetrators of such crimes.

The declaration calls for equal participation of women with men in peace building and for the increased participation of women in conflict resolution at decision making levels through promotion of their participation in all forums and peace activities at all levels. It calls for the integration of gender perspectives in the resolution of conflicts and the maintenance of gender balance in the nomination or promotion of candidates for judicial and other relevant positions in all relevant international bodies such as the International Court of Justice, tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, etc.

The declaration also calls for the provision of appropriate training for prosecutors and judges and other officials handling cases involving rape, forced pregnancy in armed conflict situations, indecent assault and other forms of violence against women.

Women's struggle for decades to bring about their effective participation in conflict resolution and promotion of lasting peace culminated in the adoption of Resolution 1325 by the UN Security Council on October 31,2000, which is a great victory for the women's movement.

The process leading up to adoption of Resolution 1325 was set in motion in May 2000, when the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) adopted the "Namibia Plan of Action" at a seminar on "Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations." The following month, the UN General Assembly held a special session to discuss progress made since the World Conference on Women in Beijing. These two events set the stage for the very first session of the UN Security Council dedicated exclusively to "Women, Peace and Security" on 24-25 October 2000. UNSC Resolution 1325 was adopted at the end of this session and – with direct reference to the UN Charter – was made binding under Human Rights Law. Specifically, this means that citizens have the right to demand that their government and the governments of other states comply with Resolution 1325. Moreover, all member states are required to present reports showing exactly what measures they have taken and what progress they have made towards implementation of the Resolution.[4]

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[4] "Convention On The Elimination Of All Forms Of Discrimination Against Women"; United Nations General Assembly Resolution 34/180; 18 December 1979; Entered Into Force 3 September 1981.

In its preamble the resolution reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflict and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security and the need to increase their role in decision making in relation to conflict prevention and resolution.

The resolution recognizes that the full participation of women and girls in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. It urges member states to increase the participation of women in decision-making positions in conflict resolution and peace processes; it calls upon UN member States to influence the composition of delegations at peace talks so that women take part in the peace process from very outset; it also urges the UN Secretary General to expand the roles and responsibilities of women in the UN field based operations especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel.

It also makes an appeal to those involved in negotiating and implementing peace agreements to adopt a gender perspective, including measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements and measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls.

Through resolution 1325 he Security Council has expressed its willingness to incorporate gender perspectives in its peace operations. Furthermore the resolution makes a request to the Secretary General to provide member states with training guidelines on the rights, protection and special needs of women and the importance of involving women in peace keeping and peace building measures.

The resolution not only deals with the involvement of women in conflict resolutions and peace building processes but whole other gender related issues as well. For example it calls for parties involved in armed conflict to take special measure to protect women and girls from gender based violence especially rape and other forms of sexual violence and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict. It also emphasizes the responsibility of states to put to an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes including those related to sexual violence and other violence committed against women.

GENDER, INTERNATIONAL LAW AND POST CONFLICT SITUATIONS

History has shown that gender roles change in times of conflict and women assume more roles and responsibilities and decision-making powers in such situations. As a rule, post-conflict situations lead to an immediate reversal in attitudes towards

gender roles in the societies affected: Women immediately lose the privileges exceptionally given to them during wartime. For example women who had fought next to men during conflicts are relegated to their traditional roles as mothers and house wives.

Peace negotiations and post conflict reconstruction should go beyond the issue of ending war and address issues of social injustices, which are breeding grounds for another conflict. Unless the nation building process that follows the peace agreement addresses gender inequality issues and works towards advancing gender equality, the negotiation can not bring about lasting peace.

Issues such as ensuring that gender equality is reflected in constitutions as part of a constitutional reform; making sure that women get to access decision making positions equally with men through fair and transparent electoral processes; ensuring that judicial systems are gender responsive starting from the laws to be issued to the implementation of such laws, etc are crucial measures that need to be taken as parts of the post conflict reconstruction processes focused on addressing social injustices.

International instruments like the CEDAW that call for gender equality and other international conventions like the International Covenant on Economics Social and Cultural Rights and; International Convention on Civil and Political Rights; The Rights of the Child Convention, etc all call for equality in all spheres of society. However they loose ground in post conflict situations, as enforcement mechanisms for such instruments are weak and incorporation of principles of such conventions into national legislation is effectively carried out only in countries that have strong women's rights movements. Adherence to the principle of equalities enshrined in these human rights documents is critical especially for women who are highly vulnerable in post conflict situations where there is a total break down of the rule of law and justice systems.

One of the consequences of an ineffective judicial system and weak law enforcement in post conflict situations, is that women continue to be victims of violence from returning combatants, family members and even law enforcement and peacekeeping forces. For example domestic violence increases after conflict due to the contribution of many factors like: accessibility of weapons, the violence male family members have experienced or meted out, the lack of jobs, lack of access to shelter, access to basic services.[5] Very few countries have legislations against violence and if they do hardly enforced and more so during period of conflict or post conflict.

Since gender based violence mostly goes unpunished, such violence becomes accepted and legitimized in times of conflict as violence generally increases in times of war. "Militarization and the presence of weapons legitimize new levels of

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[5] Charlotte Lindsey, Women Facing War, Geneva: International Committee on the Red Cross, 2002.

brutality and even greater levels of impunity. Often this escalating violence becomes a new 'norm', which continues into the post-conflict period, where chaos adds to the many frustrations that were not solved by war."[6]

Existing international legal framework clearly prohibits and criminalizes violence against women but as Gay J McDougall, a former special rapporteur to contemporary forms of slavery recommended, " Such legal frameworks must better reflect the experience of women and the true nature of the harms to them, particularly during armed conflict."   She recommends the further development of the legal framework through consistent, gender responsive practice.[7]

The issue of justice and accountability for crimes of violence committed against women is an area that international instruments have not fully grappled with. As a result very few perpetrators who committed heinous crimes against women have been brought to justice and even fewer women have been granted redress in post conflict situations.

Accountability on the part of states and societies for crimes against women means more than punishing perpetrators. It means establishing the rule of law and a just social and political order. Without this, there can be no lasting peace. Impunity weakens the foundation of societies emerging from conflict by legitimizing violence and inequality. It prolongs instability and injustice and exposes women to the threat of renewed conflict. Despite the fact that international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law protects women against wartime atrocities.[8]

The issue of dealing with crimes committed against women in conflict situations has recently begun to be addressed internationally. The campaign of women's rights activists on ending violence against women whose momentum increased in the 1990s and culminated in the adoption of the DEVAW in 1993 is a major breakthrough. The principle incorporated in the document was tested in landmark decisions by the International Criminal Tribunals for former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. It has also influenced in defining crimes of sexual violence in the charter treaty of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The establishment of the international Criminal Court (ICC) is a major stride forward in terms of justice and accountability for women who have experienced violence in conflict situations. The Rome statue of the ICC incorporates; sexual violence including rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy and enforced sterilization in the definition of crimes against humanity and war crimes.

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[6] "Declaration On The Elimination Of Violence Against Women"; United Nations General Assembly Resolution 48/104; 20 December 1993.

[7] "Beijing Platform For Action" Fourth World Conference on Women; Chapter IV: Strategic Objectives and Actions; Women And Armed Conflict; UN Doc A/Conf. 177/20, 17 October 1995.

[8] Peace Women; http://www.peacewomen.org, http://www.peacewomen.org/news/1325 News/1325ENewsindex.html (Resolution 1325 Newsletter)

The statute also provides that there shall be a fair representation of female and male judges and expertise on violence against women is one of the legal expertises the court's judges are required to have.

However, cases can only be prosecuted at the ICC if, and only if, national governments are unable to or unwilling to have the case prosecuted in national courts. Thus the major role the statue of the ICC could play in terms of prosecution of crimes of sexual violence against women is by influencing the process of national law reform to recognize such crimes as crimes against humanity and war crimes and duly prosecute perpetrators of such actions.

The International Criminal Tribunals of the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda have raised the standards of accountability for crimes of sexual violence against women. Even though the judgments they have handed down constitute a tiny fraction of cases, these set historic precedents in prosecuting war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. In so doing, the judgments of the ad hoc Tribunals have clarified definitions of sexual violence, recognizing rape as a means of torture and a form of persecution. Sexual slavery, forced nudity and sexual mutilation are included within the scope of the judgments, and the Tribunals have noted explicitly that forced impregnation, forced marriage, forced abortion and sexual humiliation are serious violations of international law, and within the courts' jurisdiction. The Tribunals have also recognized that sexual violence is a weapon of war, used as a tool of terror and destruction. [9] Women judges and prosecutors have played a key role in influencing these ad-hoc tribunals to interpret international human rights and humanitarian laws with respect to crimes against women (gender violence).

Reparations, be it in the form of restitution, compensation, or rehabilitation is critical for achieving justice and accountability for victims as part of a peace building process. International humanitarian laws provide for state-to-state restitution to the injured state (not individual victims) by the state that caused the damage. In principle however individuals should be able to benefit form such restitution and recipient states should ensure that. In recent years international law has began to recognize repatriations for individuals. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) under article 75 provides for repatriation for victims in the form of restitution, compensation and rehabilitation, which could be awarded by the court. So far however, women have not been recipients of repatriations for the heinous crimes committed against them during conflicts.

Though international laws and standards have began to address the issue of accountability for gender based violence committed in times of conflict, unless there is an effective and just national system that advances gender equality and laws that prohibit any form of gender discrimination, ensuring that women's rights are

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[9] Charlotte Lindsey, *Women Facing War*, Geneva: International Committee on the Red Cross, 2002.

protected in the national building process would be difficult. International laws and conventions and decisions of special courts and tribunals like the ones set for former Yugoslavia and Rwanda could set precedents for international and national justice systems and international conventions like the CEDAW can provide principles of gender equality but at the end of the day it is the national system that needs to be gender responsive.

In the process of rebuilding their societies both women and men have to play key roles and cease opportunities to reform laws and traditions that promote gender inequality as part of the nation building process. To a certain extent grass roots women's groups in countries that just came out of war have been pushing for visions of peace based on the respect for the dignity of the individual regardless of sex, nationality, ethnic background etc. Many of these organizations function on the principle that peace is linked inextricably with equality between women and men and push the idea that full involvement of women with men in the prevention and resolution of conflicts is critical for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

GENDER AND PEACE OPERATIONS

The UN Security council has been deploying peacekeeping operations in post conflict situations since 1948. These operations serve under the UN flag and their mandate includes: border patrolling, monitoring cease-fires and assisting communities in their search for lasting peace and recently they also serve as; civilian police officers, electoral experts and observers, mine action experts, human rights officers, humanitarian specialists, etc. The Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) of the UN Secretariat supports such operations.

The issue of bringing gender perspectives to peace keeping operations had not been given much attention until the " The Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action" addressed in detail the issue of including gender in all aspect of multidimensional peace operations in 2000. In 2002 Resolution 1325 also provided for the incorporation of gender perspective in all peace keeping operations of the UN. The resolution also calls upon the UN Secretary General to appoint women as representatives of the UN in peace related functions.

Moreover the Secretary general called for the establishment of a gender unit in the DPKO to deal with gender issues in peace operations including gender advisor at the director level and general advisor at senior staff level, which was supported by the members of the Security Council and the General Assembly. Among the tasks assigned to the unit are: "ensuring inclusion of gender perspectives in the analysis, policy and strategy development and planning of peace operations; development of training programs to support effective implementation of operations; ensuring gender perspectives are included in political analysis; military operations, civilian

police activities, electoral assistance, human rights support and humanitarian assistance; training troops and civilian police on gender issues, etc"[10]

In recent years a few peace operations have appointed staff to work on gender issues. Peacekeeping operations in East Timor, Kosovo and DRC are some of the peace operations that have set up gender units, which in some cases consisted of one focal person. Their activities have included; conducting training to military observers and civilian police officers; building capacity of local women to participate in peace processes; assist in the formation of national women's machinery; raise awareness on gender issues among international staff; ensure gender concerns are integrated in the peace missions programs and activities, etc.

However reports done on integration of gender in peace operations indicate that these units function under severe constraints including that they occupy lower positions in the mission, their responsibilities are far beyond their authority and resources, they lack access to the head of mission etc. Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that works best if gender issues are treated right from the start of a program or an operation so that structures and programmes could effectively address gendered needs. In peace keeping operations if gender is to be integrated effectively, integration of gender concerns should start from the period of assessment of missions, technical surveys etc that takes place before a peace keeping operation is set up in a particular location. Reports indicate that this is not necessarily the case in peacekeeping operations that have tried to address gender concerns.

CONCLUSION

The objective of this brief article is not to address all issues of gender and international law in relation to peace. It is rather to highlight a few critical areas in peace and international law where there had been a serious attempt to incorporate gender concerns.

Recent development in international law has shown that the integration of gender concerns in conflict prevention, resolution and peace building is being addressed seriously though it does not necessarily mean that it is being implemented effectively. For example women are still extremely highly marginalized from decision making positions in peace processes; gender equality hardly surfaces in actual peace negotiations though international instruments like resolution 1325 call for that; issues of gender equality are not being addressed in the process of national construction, and; gender related crimes committed during conflict are hardly being addressed in post conflict justice restoration processes.

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[10] Seth Mydans, "Sexual Violence as a Tool of War: Pattern Emerging in East Timor," *the New York Times*, 1 March 2001.

Though the UN Charter under article 8 clearly states, " no restrictions will be placed on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs" very few women have served as representatives of the UN Secretary General as heads of missions in peace keeping operations. "In the 32 years between 1957 and 1989, only 0.1 percent of the field based military personnel in UN peace keeping missions were female."[11] Between 1994 and 2000 only 18% of UN personnel at director level were women and there were none at senior director level.

Women are also highly underrepresented in judicial processes. For example until recently no woman has served as a judge in the International court of Justice which was established over eighty years ago; until 2001 International Law Commission had no female members in its 55 years history until two women were elected in 2001; Of the judges who served at one time among the 14 permanent judges of the International Criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda, the number of women is less than three.[12]

As the article has briefly pointed out there are a number of international instruments that call for the advancement of gender equality in conflict prevention, resolution and peace processes. The CEDAW; Resolution 1325 of the Security Council; DEVAW; Beijing Platform for Action; The Rome Statute of the ICC, etc. all call for that in different ways.

The implementation of these international instruments however is still in its infancy as to bring about major changes in the marginalisation of women from the whole piece process. Pushing incessantly for the implementation of such instruments is a critical challenge that grassroots and international organizations working on "gender and peace" have to yet to meet.

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[11] E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/13, para 111.

[12] " Women, War and Peace": The Independent Experts Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace Building by Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf; UNIFEM; 2002.

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Gender and Human Rights in Central Africa

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Mr Ntaka has lectured in academic seminars on peace and human rights in universities and colleges and has been a long-standing activist in the field of peace and human rights. He has attended many forums and workshops in which he has been advocating for the introduction of peace and conflict resolution into the Congolese Educational system.

Mr. Ntaka holds a Master's degree in international law, where he specialized in armed conflicts, peace and international security, fields to which he has contributed in several publications and dissertations. He received a scholarship of African francophone countries for a post-graduate training in international law in Yaoundé (Cameroon). He also holds a training certificate on peace and conflict preventive diplomacy, sponsored by the UN in Addis Ababa.

INTRODUCTION

This analysis is focused essentially on the Central African geographical area. It was chosen because of the similar experiences of several Central African countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Congo- Brazzaville, Central Africa Republic, Cameroon, and Gabon) who endured similar experiences of post-colonial rule including: independence movements, national conferences, rebellions and different degrees of democratisation. All these counties also share the characteristic of having major populations of Bantu communities. This gives the region a common cultural identity with slight variations.

Addressing issues of Gender and Human Rights in Central Africa entails doing an analysis that is both diachronic and sociocultural on the African conception of Gender and Human rights as well as the evolution of this discipline in the judicial and social domains within Central Africa. The present study is focused on two axes: Gender and Human Rights. First, we are going to try to talk about Human Rights in Central Africa, secondly we are going to make an analysis of Gender

perspectives in central Africa, and finally, we are going to come to the conclusion, though partial and provisional, which will give the readers a perspective on Gender and Human Rights in Central Africa.

THE AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

It is true that neither development nor political stability is possible if individual and collective rights are ignored or if fundamental freedoms, including justice and equality, are not observed.

African States have been heavily influenced by the international and regional human rights instruments. In particular, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the European Convention on Human Rights (November 04, 1950), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (December 16, 1966) and the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (November 22, 1969).

The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (June 27, 1981) was developed to bring the African historical and cultural traditions and values into the international discourse on human rights issues. Among the values put forth by the African Charter, Keba Mbaye underscores three of the most important contributions of the document, namely: the critical role of the family, rights and responsibilities in everyday life, and the importance of the community.[1]

The predominant idea in the e African Charter on Human and People's Rights is its focus on the family as the natural element and basis of a society. The Charter clearly states that the family, which is tasked with imparting the moral and traditional values recognized by the community, must be protected by the state.

Like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights enshrines the economic, social and cultural rights of every African. However, the African Charter goes further than the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, prioritising the amelioration of the social conditions of individuals, the improvement of the standard of living of the population, the preservation of African moral values, and the protection of specific categories of persons (e.g. the elderly, the disabled, and children).

In most international declaration of human rights, women and children are accorded a more privileged place as persons more prone to vulnerability. As it can be noted in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, "Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection." The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in Article 10

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[1] Mbaye, Keba , Les Droits de l'homme en Afrique, Ed. A, Pedone, Paris, 1992, P. 161.

provides for "Special protection should be accorded to mothers during a reasonable period before and after childbirth." These conventions clearly outline the responsibility of the state to eliminate discrimination against women and guarantee women's and children's rights as mentioned in international declarations and covenants.

Several other international conventions have broadened the definition of women's and children's human rights, specifically: the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (December 20, 1952), the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (November 07, 1967), the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (December 14, 1974), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (December 18, 1979), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (November 20, 1989). All of these conventions have provisions that have enabled everybody to consolidate in their respective fields elements of social protection of women's and children's rights in order to make the most specific, global and effective.

Human Rights, as consecrated by the African Charter on Human Rights, initially focus on peoples' fundamental rights, depending on provisions of the International judicial order. However, this Charter emphasizes more the community rights rather than the individual rights so that the individuals are assumed to be supported by the communities in which they belong. In addition, the provisions on the rights of people to self-determination (Article 19 & 20) and economic well-being (Article 21), the people's rights to the economic, social and cultural development and the equal right to enjoy communal resources (Article 22), the people's rights for peace (Article 23) and the right to a pleasant global environment (Article 24) all reflect that focus on the community.

The community approach we find in the African conception of daily life leads us to another philosophical consideration. This is the African philosophy of the community and solidarity. The African community never considered things to be possessions of an individual. The philosophy here is that everything needs to be shared and not to be taken for selfish interests. Selfishness is highly stigmatised in the African lifestyle. "I am because we are, and we are because I am."

Consequently in Africa, the idea of a right without the existence of a responsibility attached to it is unacceptable. A right is real only because it is a duty of another physical or moral person. This is why the African Charter affirms, in the preamble, that the enjoyment of rights and liberties requires the accomplishment of each one's duties.[2]

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[2] Mbiti, J. cité par Makau wa Mutua, Banjul charter and the signs of African culture, in revue Africaine des Droits de l'homme et des peuples Tome 6, 1996 à 1997 n° 1 et 2 p. 61

Every individual has the same duties towards the family and the society, towards the state and other legally recognized districts, and toward the international community. Part of the individual's duties, as described by the African Charter, is to avoid prejudice and discrimination in interaction with others. This duty is integral to retaining good relationships that promote and reinforce the African values of respect and tolerance. To Preserve and reinforce these positive African cultural values is of the utmost importance in maintaining a healthy society capable of tolerance and peaceful dialogue.[3]

Having established that the African philosophy of human rights both flows from, and adds to, the existing international covenants on human rights, in the next section, we will examine the state of the promotion and protection of human rights in Central Africa.

THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN CENTRAL AFRICA

In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration on Human Rights to promote freedom, justice and peace in the world. However, it wasn't until the time of the former United States President Jimmy Carter's administration that the question of Human Rights was brought to the forefront and became a crucial factor in International Relations. Since that time, human rights ideals have been a major point of discussion and motivation in democratic movements around the globe.

As a result of the heightened importance of human rights issues in international relations, some States have made respect for human rights a central condition in their relations and cooperation with other nations. While other nations, known for flouting international human rights norms and conventions, face continuous criticism from both domestic civil society groups and specialized international intergovernmental- and non-governmental organizations.

In most African countries in general, and those of Central Africa in particular, few powerful political leaders consider the protection of fundamental rights and liberties to be equal in importance to state sovereignty and security. In Africa, some leaders believe that political and economic stability and state sovereignty and security must come first, before individual rights can be guaranteed. These leaders claim that there is lack of adequate resources to implement human rights protocols side by side with developmental priorities. In situations of competition between necessities of development and fundamental rights, the latter is usually sacrificed. Priority is given to economic and political progress rather than to the respect of Human Rights. For African Governments, the priorities clearly lie in meeting economic development goals and not in monitoring Human Rights protocols. In case of

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[3] See Art 29-7 : African charter of Human Rights and peoples.

conflicts between the government interests and the requirements of Human Rights protection, governments prefer to sacrifice interests linked to human rights. All these considerations jeopardize the possibility of unanimity from the international community on the universality and importance of Human Rights and the obligations that the State has with regards to protecting them.

An analysis of Human Rights, and more specifically of women's rights in Central Africa, reveals that the countries in this region, which have the same colonial histories, have produced similar challenges to development in terms of peace, governance, and Human Rights, and therefore one is justified in maintaining a regional perspective in due course.[4] The colonial movements that invaded Central Africa, while one can say that they made some efforts towards developing indigenous people, made a negation of human rights due to their policies which were based on the exploitation of black people and not the protection of their rights. The colonial history was not an act of charity but was rather based on exploitation of African people in various fields in order to provide labour for the welfare of colonizers. Later, this history was found to be an oppressive exploitation of the natural and human resources of the colonized people.[5]

After the independence movements in the 1960's, African leaders kept many of the pre-independence laws and regulations they found in place, re-shaping them only to fit the new dictatorial regimes that took over power from the colonizers. These oppressive regimes used the police, army and intelligence services as instruments for quelling dissidents and reinforcing dictatorship.[6] In all the Central African countries mentioned above, these practices led to massive and continuous human rights violations including arbitrary arrests, torture, murder, and the sending into exile of political opposition leaders.

During the 1990's, as the Perestroika movement grew in Eastern Europe and the former communist block, Africa was experiencing the impact of the shift in global power dynamics. Through a rather late awakening, dictatorial leaders in Central Africa discovered that in order to maintain the necessary monetary support and aid from the dominant Western democracies, they had to go along with the international movement of the democratisation of institutions. The rapid changes brought about by this global shift of power seem to have shocked the existing African systems and increased armed conflicts and humanitarian crises throughout the region. In the resulting violent Central African experience, human rights protection guaranteed by the African Charter and other international instruments have not kept government or rebel movements from committing human rights violations.

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[4] Ntaka Stany: Armed conflict and Peace process in DRC, in Revue trimestrielle des droits de l'homme, vol III, p16-35, Kinshasa, 2002

[5] Ibid, p.17

[6] Ibid, p.17

A CENTRAL AFRICAN VIEW ON GENDER

As we have demonstrated in the previous section, there is a relationship between the concept of gender equity and equality and the philosophy of Human rights. Lorena Aguilar defines gender as a reference to the opportunities associated with being male or female and the relationships, which are constructed and internalised through the socialization processes. In Central Africa the conception of inequalities based on gender comes from African traditions and customs. This discriminative conception was also exacerbated by colonial ambivalence on inheritance issues, essentially who could own and inherit property. Before and during independence, the women of Central Africa were, under traditional structures, relegated to a secondary position in the society compared to their male counterparts. After independence, the idea of discrimination based on gender dominated African State Institutions, such as the civil service. During the 1980's women's movements emerged in the region, promoting equality between men and women. These movements fought for women's rights in order to participate in the social, economic and political life of their nations. The end result of these fledgling women's movements has been the slow but steady gain of recognition and, eventually, an increase in rights.

Since the 1980's a progressive standard has been established as the result of feminist movements throughout the world. A real feminist network is taking place with the support of the UN instruments and other regional instruments such as the African Union and the European Union.[7]

This progress in socialization is based on increased women's involvement in the political arena. Today, some African women have risen to hold positions of responsibility and leadership within state institutions and other sectors.

In this section we are not going to review all typical cases of inequalities, but we are going to try to make a critical survey to see whether the African perception of gender has undergone a positive evolution compared with other civilizations. Some of these civilizations are taken nowadays as holding the torch of the long fight for the acknowledgement of gender balance and the abolition of all economic and socio-political barriers based on gender inequality.

During the colonial period the Central African populations were living according to customary traditions and this was the situation in all central African countries, their traditional perspectives on gender in all communities had common characteristics. The Bantu Customs of Central Africa were based on unequal relations between men and women, and discrimination based on gender, where women are still less advantaged in the social order.

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[7] Ntaka Stany , opcit, p18

Women face many customary prohibitions which reduce their chance of growing to their full potential. In particular, rural women suffer the most from these discriminations. They have more tiring tasks as compared to men. These inequalities were determined by the society in favour of men and were emphasized by the colonial powers which circumvented indigenous local customs, and indeed reinforced the existing discrimination.

This situation negated the fundamental rights of women. Colonial rule allowed men to dominate women through offering them an overwhelming access to power. As a consequence, women were expected to obey their husbands, while husbands had no such social obligation to listen to or seek the consent of their wives. Thus, practices implemented by colonial rulers instituted norms of discrimination and prejudice against women in Central African societies. Women's inequality, in many cases, is also legislated into a country's legal system. In many cases, women, by law, are prevented from holding property or taking legal actions without the authorization of their husbands or male relatives.

JUDICIAL ASPECT OF GENDER PERSPECTIVES

We had to wait until the 1980's to see things begin to change in Central Africa. These changes came about due mainly to external pressure from Western governments and international organizations and internal pressure from fledgling women's movements. One of the most important tools the international community and the women's movements had at their disposal was the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the United Nations in 1979, and enforced in 1981. The CEDAW was the first legally binding international instrument prohibiting discrimination against women and obligating governments to take steps towards women's advancement and access to equal opportunities. The CEDAW recognizes the rights of women in both the public and private spheres. Before this convention, the main UN organ dealing with women's issues had been the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), established by ECOSOC resolution 11 (ii) In 1946. The commission functioned as the preparatory committee for the different world conferences on women held by the UN (Mexico 1975, Copenhagen 1980, Nairobi 1985, and Beijing 1995).[8]

Since the ratification of the CEDAW, we have observed the emergence of women's movements under the auspices of the UN's increased inclusion of women's issues. The impact of this increased attention on women's representation in the public life varies from country to country. Significant progress has been made in countries where people have access to cultural exchanges with Western countries, increased

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[8] Human Rights Reference Hand Book, UPEACE, p 96.

opportunities for girls' and women's education, and opportunities to incorporate women as workers and leaders in the public sector; including government and non-governmental organizations, active women's associations, and groups supporting economic and political rights of women.

Unlike the English speaking countries in Africa, the Francophone countries in Central Africa have not developed study and research centres and associations to further develop gender perspectives in the region. In this case, our counterparts in Western and Southern Africa are much further ahead in their thinking on gender and peace building issues than the scholars of Central Africa. In Central Africa, we are just beginning to see the gains from the fledgling "women's movements" fighting for the protection and defence of women's rights and gender equality. Paradoxically, one source of growth of these women's rights movements in Central Africa has been conflict. During the conflicts brought on by the collapse of the Cold War, Central African women suffered a great deal due to social, economic, political and cultural violence. As a result, women's movements fought to raise awareness in the society of their plight and hold the leadership accountable for their role in the undermining of women's rights.

This is a historic moment in Central Africa, as new bills and legislation are beginning to be introduced which break down these archaic and discriminatory laws against women.

CONCLUSION

Although many English-speaking African countries have greatly advanced in the field of gender studies, it has only recently been realized in Central Africa as a new discipline. Steps therefore have been taken to incorporate the gender perspective when discussing Human Rights, since the two are interdependent. It is also our hope that the educational system will incorporate gender studies in its curriculum on the basis of it being the conjunction of many fields in the social sciences.

Central Africa still remains an untapped field in presenting the theory of Gender regarding Human Rights. According to our research, the department of Women and Gender studies of Makerere's University, founded in 1991, is the first such department in Sub-Sahara Africa. Although there are no research centers yet specifically on Gender; there are agencies and programs that target Gender as a priority at the level of the United Nations. The startling fact that non-governmental organizations have stepped back in their involvement regarding gender in Central Africa, highlights the reality of the situation and the immediate need for scientists, activists, and public institutions in this region to challenge the inherent customary traditions which continue to dominate our society.

After reviewing the history of Central Africa's struggle for human rights from the colonization period, through the independence, until present time, we are able to conclude that the issue concerning human rights and its gender dimensions cannot be clearly analysed without referring to the overall process of socio-political development. Gains, in terms of women's rights, seem to be more visible now thanks to the considerable support of the United Nations through their various conventions and programs that seek to protect women's fundamental rights as agents of sustainable and equitable development. The implementation of UN programs helped to bring to light changes within the African judicial system, and has opened up opportunities to draft the needed policies that will both protect and promote Human Rights, while taking into account the gender dimensions.

This new perspective has begun to change the customary and traditional order of life that still dominates the social, cultural, economic and political life in Central Africa. Albeit the initial steps that have been taken, before international policies and requirements can be formulated, individual states will need to be proactive in their reform of the legislature regarding Human Rights and incorporating gender equity. These local changes will require tremendous patience in order to remove the traditional barriers, which are already set in the people's mentalities.

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The Frightful Actuality:
Girls Tools of War in Africa

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INTRODUCTION: GIRLS, TOOLS OF WAR

Over the past few decades, Africa has seen a growth of internal conflicts, which sometimes spill over into cross-national clashes across borders. In these wars increasingly numbers of civilians are caught up in fighting, internally displaced in so-called safe and or 'protected areas' or forced to flee their countries altogether. The gendered effects of these conflicts are conspicuous not only in terms of gender-based abuses/violence but also in terms of the monstrous realization that girls are not only victims/survivors of war but have become direct participants and perpetrators of atrocities. In short they have become deliberate tools of war. Other than being subjected to gang rape, forced marriages with enemy soldiers, sexual slavery, used as entertainment and rewards for bravery to soldiers, serving as potters, thousands more fight in front line battles. Consequently they are victims of the most intrusive traumatic events and sexual humiliation[1]. Essentially, their integrity is destroyed and they suffer from varying degrees of anxiety and emotional distress that adversely affect the remainder of their lives.

Notwithstanding, if there is any one constant throughout the time I have written and researched on child soldiers, it is the girl child's irreversible vulnerability and

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[1] While it is true that many girls in times of conflict are sexually exploited, it is wrong to assume that all have experienced it. This is so because if you make this assumption, it means you are denying them their individual experiences and as such taking a risk of exposing them to stigmatisation, which as we all know limits their future prospects.

ability to be quickly transformed from victim to perpetrator. It goes without saying that in times of war the girl child is targeted with raging ferocity. A scholar in the field of child soldiering, Graca Machel elucidates;

> '…girls are deliberate targets of most recruitment's, especially adolescent girls who are often vulnerable and thought to less likely have sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS…' [2]

It equally goes without saying that gender inequality/gender violence is what sustains and, at many times, even nurtures war. In some cases, soldiers have even been given a girl for 'entertainment' as a reward for bravery on the battlefield.

This article is based on the premise that in Africa the girl child and war are two entities that exist concurrently. This article will narrate how violence against girls in conflict settings has led to direct physical harm, fuelled the spread of the HIV virus, and caused emotional trauma, stigma and social ostracism. The article will further disclose that there is a crucial link between gender inequality and war and also that the gender-inequality struggle in war torn Africa still leaves a lot to be desired.

'RECRUITING' TOOLS OF WAR

In a recent report by journalist Meera Silva , it is said that more than 100,000 children have been abducted, tortured and sexually abused before being recruited to fight in Africa's long-running civil wars in the past three years[3]. The truth is that more than a third of these are girls; there is just a lack of recognition of their participation in fighting forces. In the course of a research in March 2004 in Northern Uganda, investigating about the gender dimension of war one of my research participants fearfully recollected,

> 'We were forced to join them and had to obey less we were killed. We are there for sex and but also participate in front line battles. You know other recruits and I slain my best friend, we were all girl soldiers. It was scary. It was always like we are under a certain command, with strict instructions. Faces always distant yet tough, so tight up and lying in wait like lionesses ready to attack their prey' [4].

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[2] G Machel, *The impact of War on Children*, Hurst & Co. (Publishers) LTD, UNICEF , 2001.

[3] G Machel, *The impact of War on Children,* Hurst & Co. (Publishers) LTD, UNICEF , 2001.

[4] C. Akumu Onekalit, ' A generation of Thorns easily made, yet hard to break' The Child Soldiers of Northern Uganda, MA Gender and Peace Building Dissertation, UN University For Peace, Abstract translated from Acholi, picked from Interview with ex-girl captive at Gulu Save the Children Organisation. June 2004.

Sarah Ruddick substantiates this reality, she complacently writes 'traditionally in most cultures around the world it had been a male's lot to fight while females watch suffer and applaud'.[5] It is further reported that in eastern Congo, Uganda and Ethiopia a third of all child soldiers are girls[6]. It can then be inferred that these girls who are intentionally sucked into such a desolate moral vacuum, a space devoid of any basic moral values, become tools of war. A recent press release of Amnesty International reported,

> '…girls bear the brunt of armed conflicts fought today both as direct
>
> targets and as unrecognised "collateral damage"[7]

It is certainly frightful and a displeasure to know that the future mothers of nations are deliberate targets of conflicts. Yet the actuality is, these girls are often repeatedly exposed to inhumane circumstances which can desensitise them to violence, allowing them to become perpetrators of gross atrocities. Geoffrey Oyat of Save the Children supports without reserve this statement, saying, "Girls are forced to go through orchestrated events that turn them from victims to perpetrators."[8] Oyat further states that the tales of their capture and infusion into rebel activity is so fundamental that it alters the manner in which they function. For some girls, this altering has a profound and long-lasting impact on their lives. Some girls, ostracised by their families and communities when they return from their capture, commit suicide while other girls build hatred so deep that they see their only alternative to survival as guerrilla warfare.

In Uganda there is evidence that suggests that girls participate fully in warfare; a few girls have even been able to obtain positions of command[9]. Posa and Hunt of Women Waging Peace casually say that some young women have even defied the usual social stereotype associated to femininity and have become suicide bombers[10]. In a report translated by Ivan Gololobov, a female suicide bomber who survived her ordeal confirms Posa and Hunt's observation as she narrates how frustrated she was and how her frustration drove her to became a suicide bomber. From these stories it is easy to see that girls can cross certain boundaries that defy the social norms of what is expected of a them and, indeed, can even participate in violent acts like suicide bombing.[11] Nevertheless, in many circumstances, despite being

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[5] S. Ruddick, Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics for Peace, Massachusetts, Beacon Press, 1995

[6] Anayat Durrani, Children at War, November 18th 2004.
http://www.teenwire.com/index.asp?taStrona=http://www.teenwire.com/views/articles/wv_20031118p072_soldier.asp accessed on 18th December 2004.

[7] Lives Blown Apart, Amnesty International's global campaign Stop Violence Against Women
http://news.amnesty.org/index/ENGACT770952004 accessed on 18th December 2004.

[8] The independent Online edition, *Children of war: Africa's civil conflicts harm 100,000 young lives, Meera Selva*, 18th November 2004.

[9] R. Brett and M. Mc Mccallin, Children: The Invisible soldiers, Radda Barnen, Stockholm, 1998 p.83

[10] S. Hunt & C. Posa, *Women Waging Peace,* May 2001, p. 1.

[11] Women Suicide Bomber, Translated by Ivan Gololobov, Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed conflict, Ruhr University Bochum, Germany 02/02.04 Izvestia, No. 18 (26575) February 2004.

perpetrators, young women still face the wrath from fellow perpetrators of the male species and are indiscriminately sexually violated. As a result they are exposed to all kinds of violence, the consequences of which are no doubt life threatening.

RAPE AS A WEAPON OF WAR

It is no secret that rape is a weapon of war in Africa. Yet its damage can be devastating because of the strong communal reaction to the violation and pain stamped on not just the women and girls who are raped, but their entire families. The harm inflicted in such cases on a girl by a rapist is, in effect, an attack on her family and culture. In many societies women are seen as repositories of a community's cultural and spiritual values. Because of this special statues of women and girls in Africa, from the corridors of Liberia, into Sierra Leone, to the vast Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and from Ethiopia, to the countries with less land mass like Angola, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi; guerrilla forces have used rape to terrorise, humiliate, punish and ultimately control civilian populations into submission of their rule.

From human rights reports it is clear that some rapists have aggravated their crimes against girls by unimaginable acts of extraordinary brutality, like shooting victims in the vagina or mutilating them with knives or razor blades, in some cases with victims as young as five years of age [12]. At the heart of all these horrific scenarios are young girls and verily they are facing the wrath. A 19-year-old girl in Sierra Leon described being gang raped by not only the elderly commanders but also boy soldiers, she said,

> '…the commanders had their round, and then four children between
> ten and twelve years also used me. They were so small I could barely
> feel them inside me. They tried to imitate the older ones and one of
> them kept saying, "I'm trying it, I'm trying it. "It is war that has
> brought this humiliation, she lamented' [13].

These crimes of sexual violence have direct, profound, and life-changing consequences for the girls attacked and for their wider communities. The humiliation and pain is so grave that it degrades the individual by breaking not only the normal self but with the eventual rejection from her community, destroys all ties held. More still, many of the girls will never recover from the physical, psychological, and social effect of these assaults. Some may develop serious mental health problems, while others will die from the after-effects of the physical trauma.

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[12] Rape and other Gender Based Abuses in War and Civil Conflict, Human Rights Watch Publications, http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/africa1203/7.htm#_ftn192 accessed on 28th December 2004.

[13] Rape and other Gender Based Abuses in War and Civil Conflict, Human Rights Watch Publications, http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/africa1203/7.htm#_ftn192 accessed on 28th December 2004.

GIRLS AS TOOLS FOR FAMILY SHAME AND COMMUNITY OSTRACISM

More and more of Africa's girl children are bearing the aftermath of men's brutality. Their virginity prey to wicked savagery, these girls grow into women who loathe male company. A significant number of girls who have gotten pregnant as a result of rape suffer social disgrace. Sudarsan Raghavan a free press foreign correspondent reports from Sudan's Darfur province;

> '… There were no smiles, no blessings at the birth of the lighter-skinned girl with ebony eyes and curly black hair, not a glimpse of joy. For a family still bleeding from war, the baby was like salt on their wounds'[14].

Suad Abdalaziz, the mother of the child is reported narrating, her voice cracking and her face streaming with tears,

> 'They spat the words at me, 'we want to change the colour of your baby!!' They raped me, repeatedly. My father was angry and didn't speak the entire day; he was angry at the Janjaweed and the government for giving me this baby.'[15]

Suad's baby is one of the many babies that have emerged from the tableau of human suffering in the troubled province of Durfar. The babies are outcasts in a war-scarred society where rape is a source of shame and a father's identity defines the child. Relatives shun them, seeing in their tiny faces the atrocities committed by their enemies. Mothers struggle to accept them, torn between loyalty to their tribe and their maternal instincts to love and care. Still, many are resigned to a life of isolation, where marriage is unlikely and where their children will forever carry a stigma.

Unfortunately, Suad's story is hardly unique in Africa. In eastern Congo, Madina 17 saw her body changing. With no choice, she told her father about the chaotic day in Kivu, when five militiamen raped her[16]. It is reported that, when her baby arrived several weeks earlier, none of her relatives visited her, not even her father. And when the traditional naming ceremony was held seven days after birth, no one came to celebrate the birth of a baby born of hate, a child of doom. In general, she could not identify with her community, she was seen as a thorn, an outcast and banished from the community. It was said that her presence brought shame.

Awkward as it may seem social stigmatization, ostracism and labeling are not only limited to Congo, it's widely spread on the continent. In Northern Uganda it is

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[14] Sudarsan Raghavan, Babies born from wartime Rapes deepen their mothers anguish in Sudan. http://www.freep.com/news/nw/sudan1e_20041201.htm accessed 18th December 2004.

[15] Ibid.

[16] The Star, Gang Rape in Congo 17th November 2003. http://www.wherestheoutrage.org/articles/art_106.php

reported that there is a culture of name-calling.[17] Girls are given all kinds of names like 'Lanek' meaning killer, or 'Malaya' meaning whore. And their children, born out of rape in the battlefield, forever remain their burden since not even immediate families want to identify with children fathered by the killers of ones own kith and kin. This state of affairs is demoralizing and is a factor that has actualized former child abductee's becoming outcasts in a community that they once thought was home.

Worse still, many of these girls try hard to conceal their past but the name calling custom follows them. Frequent reference to them as 'used goods' taunts and breaks them further leaving no other choice other than migration to different communities, whom they suspect may not yet know their background.[18] Shameful as this is, it is happening right in our backyards, sometimes even in the kitchen. What happened to the African communal culture of 'adopting' biological or non-biological relatives, the creation of a home and building a family together? What happened to the Ubuntu spirit?[19] What a change, yet most awful.

SHAME, STIGMA AND OSTRACISM OF GIRLS THROUGH THE SPREAD OF HIV/AIDS

Undeniably, the repercussion of a life of violence and violation has varying effects of which, none is supportive to the well being of the girl child. Stigma aside, many girls at war are being infected with the HIV virus as a result of having multiple sexual partners not by choice but, as characteristic of violent conflicts in the continent. They are raped, and thereby 'soiled', and consequently are often excluded from their villages and families altogether. The United Nations AIDS (UNAIDS) reports that in sub-Saharan Africa 57% of young adults living with the HIV virus are young girls. The impact of the pandemic has been catastrophic, as those most important for family integration (women) fall ill and die, causing disintegration of families. Still, UNAIDS says that this alarming situation is fuelled by violence against the girl child, especially in times of war.

Certainly, sexual violence is a key factor that endangers a girl child to the AIDS virus. Some studies by Amnesty International suggest that usually, but not always, the first sexual experience of a girl will be forced, exposing the child to disease. Conflicts in Africa have been rife with mass rapes and sexual violence, ills that soar the spread the HIV pandemic.

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[17] C. Akumu Onekalit op cit p.64-65.

[18] S. Stavrou and R. Stewart, The reintegration of Child soldiers and abducted children: A case study of Palaro and Pabbo, Gulu District, Northern Uganda, in A. Twum-Danso, Africa's Young Soldiers, The Co-Option of Childhood, Institute of Security Studies 2003 p.47.

[19] Ubuntu a word that traces its origin in South Africa, it is popularly used to mean the spirit of togetherness, sharing and brotherhood.

Sexual violence as a premeditated tool of war, has exposed many young girls to sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) including HIV/AIDS, ensuring that many of these young girls will have no future, either dying a social death from the stigma and shame associated with STDs or dying a physical death from the terrible symptoms brought on by their infections. It then becomes a common phenomenon to find that large numbers of females who have been bared to conflicts are infected with HIV/AIDS. World Health Organisation (WHO) reports that the bodies of women and girls are more physiologically susceptible to STDs, including AIDS infection, than men. Gender based violence makes women and girls even more vulnerable. A new HIV/AIDS Epidemiological surveillance update for WHO further recounts that there are more women infected with the HIV virus than men and that this gender difference is even greater among the young people. The WHO report further stresses that violence against women is fueling the spread of the disease.

Surprisingly yet, many may be shocked with this report; but how can we when violence against girls has been, and is still, a feature of all recent and ongoing conflicts. WHO presents further evidence from studies carried out in Rwanda portraying how the HIV prevalence rate dramatically increased from 1% before the start of the conflict in 1994 to 11% in 1997[20]. In yet another report carried out in Northern Uganda it is revealed that not only has increased conflict constrained the fight against HIV but has heightened its spread. For that reason, northern Uganda has the highest prevalence rate of HIV, in a district that, prior to the conflict, was almost AIDS free[21].

In a report conducted by Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) it is said that 97% (of the sample studied) of females are resorting to commercial sex because of their vulnerability to violence as a result of war, domestic violence and loss of parents to AIDS[22]. The report further illustrates that from the sample selected, nearly half of the respondents have been infected or are vulnerable to catching HIV/AIDS and spreading it to their partners. Indeed, sexual violation of women and girls certainly spreads HIV and erodes the fabric of a community in a way that few weapons can. Causing such a devastating life-long catastrophe that could take decades to rebuild, if not forever.

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[20] World Health Organisation, Women and AIDS: Have you Heard us Today, 1 December 2004 http://www.who.int/features/2004/aids accessed on 24/04/2005.

[21] Urgent Protection and Peace Needed for Civilians, especially Children-In Northern Uganda, Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children p.2.
http://www.womenscommission .org/special/ug/points.shtml accessed on 26th Feb 2005.

[22] Gloria Katusiime, Uganda, Girl Child Commercial Sexual Exploitation on the Increase, May 15, 2003,
t.org/HIVAIDS/girlchildexploitation.html accessed on 12th December 2004.

SHAME, STIGMA AND OSTRACISM OF GIRLS SUFFERING FROM OBSTETRIC VAGINAL FISTULA[23]

There is another epidemic facing the girls of Africa. Although not as prevalent worldwide as the HIV/AIDS pandemic, in several parts of war torn sub-Saharan Africa, it is estimated that 90 percent of girls under the age of 17 are forced to have sexual intercourse and bear children, thus living and fulfilling the full demands of womanhood with a child's body[24]. Millions of girls are lured into sex as a result of poverty due to the constant wars year in year out. In many situations, these girls are subjected to sexual abuse. At such a young age, sexual intercourse with an adult male results in vaginal tears, destroyed reproductive systems, suffocation and emotional trauma. In addition, young girls who are forced to bear children are at greater risk for a medical condition called obstetric vaginal fistula, which occurs when the uterus ruptures during labor, penetrating holes in the walls between the vagina, bladder and/or rectum. In Ethiopia one girl, now 20 years old, is suffering from obstetric vaginal fistula due to this type of tearing. Here she tells her story:

> "I was abducted and raped from my village four years ago, I fell pregnant and spent six days in labour. The Doctors at the Addis Ababa fistula hospital where I walked to for days said my uterus was ruptured at labour and that my virginal tissue was said to be rotten, with holes between the virginal wall and bladder and also rectum. In addition to a fistula, I suffered a nerve damage that has left me crippled. I cannot get married now. No man would want me, I used not to control my urine and also used to smell'.[25]

This Ethiopian girl is one of the lucky ones to get medical attention, the reality is there are thousands out there whose only choice is to tolerate this unbearable pain; a suffering more than any 'woman' or girl should be called to endure. Yet still all over the continent this is a hidden calamity, and the suffering of its victims immense, yet invisible to the world. In Congo, 'where is the outrage', a website dedicated to voicing the concerns of women and the girl child recollects;

> 'Many girls are waiting inside a padded hospital ward. Lueders walks in, she is 16, a girl with gentle eyes. She waits in a crumpled room- with dozen others-to undergo a harrowing procedure: reconstruction of her vagina'.[26]

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[23] A medical condition also called Vesico or Recto Virginal fistula, where female reproductive systems, the uterus are destroyed. In worse cases there isn't even a virginal wall. This condition is caused by gang and repeated rapes / sexual violations/abuse, and early marriages. The condition is very common in Africa yet experts say it can be stopped. That it is just a matter of political will and money.

[24] Anayat Durani, Chid Brides, Forced to Marry, August 26, 2003.
http://www.teenwire.com/index.asp?taStrona=http://www.teenwire.com/views/articles/wv_20031118p072_soldier.asp

[25] Marie Claire International Report, 'The Forgotten Mothers' June 2004 p. 48.

[26] Where is the Outrage, Gang Rape in Congo http://www.wherestheoutrage.org/articles/art_106.php accessed on 26th December 2004.

In Eastern Congo gang rape has been so systematic yet common and the victims, without doubt, are the girls. As a result it is reported that, the incidence of vaginal fistula is on the rise, leaving these girls unable to control bodily functions and enduring ostracism and the threat of debilitating lifelong health problems. Medical reports around the world reveal that ruptured virginal tissue are usually as a result of young girls giving birth before their reproductive organs have reached full maturity[27]. This is tragic! Surprisingly however, this reality has received little attention thus far. Maybe if it had, the world might have invested in setting up more fistula hospitals in Africa, one of the world's most effected areas. Currently, there is just one hospital in Africa, in Addis Ababa, which is focused on confronting daily the human toll of this tragedy[28].

A report released by United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) confirms that this problem captures the tragic consequences of violence, war and female inequality and is further fuelled by childhood marriages[29]. Instead of addressing these issues, continually girls are raped, sexually mutilated, humiliated not as an accident of war, but as a tool of terror to humiliate and destroy. A girl kidnapped at the age of 13 by militias in Burundi told interviewers:

> "They would eat and drink, then call for you. They were many. It was so painful. If you refused, they used sticks to whip you. They all had sex with me. A man would come, then another and another and another. I wasn't the youngest."[30]

WHY GIRLS ARE EFFECTIVE TOOLS FOR WARFARE

Now, virtually all this social stigma is due to the fact it is a girl child involved, not to say that the boy child would not be stigmatized. In Africa, specifically because of the discriminative customs and norms of what is right and wrong in the eyes of a people, a girl child will tend to suffer in silence all the abuse and humiliation meted at them in times of war. This is so because society expects them to bear their burdens stay silent and keep shame out. It is saddening and I believe it is one of the many signs that reveal the level and extent of gender inequality in the African society. An injustice due to gender! What a tragedy! Why allow such a continuing pattern of inequality, as grave as to allow a generation of children and or 'mothers' go to waste?

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[27] I read several medical reports on the cause Raptured Virginal tissues, many came up with the same conclusion.

[28] Despite an overwhelming need for Fistula repair in Africa, there is currently only one Hospital in Addis Ababa solely dedicated to fistula repair. There are however some Fistula centres attached to larger Hospitals in Nigeria, others in Democratic Republic of Congo while a hospital is under construction in Ghana and Women's Dignity Project is working with the government of Tanzania to set up Fistula Treatment programmes countrywide.

[29] Marie Claire International Report, op. cit., p.45.

[30] Meera Silva, Children of War in Africa http://jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/13829.htm accessed on 12th December 2004.

The girl child's acute vulnerability in times of war is not something that happened overnight. What should shock us into sense is how long it took us to notice it, yet even when noticed, how long it is taking us to enable change. Even after the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSC 1325), still today the same patterns of sexual cruelty and mutilation are occurring, in Northern Uganda, Eastern Congo, Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi the list is endless. Girls are still being forcefully engaged at war. Whenever there's war, they are victimized and used as weapons. Amidst all, repeatedly we deplore these patterns of sexual violence against the girl child but it took until January 2002 for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to bring into force the Optional Protocol that seeks to raise standards in protecting children from all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse. Why has it taken this long?

In not so many words we talk of protecting the girl child, preserving their lives and childhood because they are the mothers of tomorrow, but still there is little progress. There is no doubt that significant achievements have been made in regard voicing out loud the tragedy of gender inequality, yet still, to date in many parts of Africa and beyond wars still severely, directly and deliberately target the girl child. This is gender inequality. In places where we are finally starting to get agitated, little is changing. Gender inequality is soaring to greater heights. Girls still serve as sexual slaves, and even when there is opportunity for reintegration and resettlement, they are secondary, considered as an after thought unlike their counterparts the boy child.

When carrying out my research not long ago about child solider reintegration, I tried to hide from the actuality that there was no gender issue in conflict or even post conflict situations, but still, it stared right at me. Never had I felt the realism of gender inequality more than then. The girl child in Africa bears the burden of bearing unwanted children, thus, becoming a child mother as a result of the epitome of the human tragedy of war. Unlike other mothers all over the world, they have no hope and dreams for their children. Instead of identifying with them or offering a shoulder for them to lean on, communities reward them with rejection. They are disowned by their families, their honor lost, and raising their own children who will never belong, or even have a name. Mazurana, who has written extensively about girl soldiering, substantiates "Girl soldiers have the highest levels of rejection yet also the fewest resources".

There is certainly a crucial link between gender inequality and the recurring civil wars in Africa. From the foregoing discussions, it is an actuality that the girl child and war and two entities that are concomitant, that is wherever there is war, a girl child is abused. Sexual assault, the use of rape as a mechanism of war, the cultural view of girls as a weaker sex and therefore less able, and the belief that girls are sex objects have kept them at the mercy of men's brutality. Exposing them not only to deadly sexually transmitted diseases, like HIV/AIDS, but even worse, scarring them for life. Girls in Africa die by the millions, partly because of their second-class status, which

makes them vulnerable to any kind of violence. Unreservedly said this subordination of the girl child in Africa has played a big role in the continuum of civil wars in the continent.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENDING THE USE OF GIRLS AS TOOLS OF WAR

Ending the use of girls as a tool of war is much more difficult than taking away AK-47s, grenades, and signing a peace agreement. In order to disarm this weapon, many underlying social assumptions must be challenged. Rectifying gender inequality is crucial toward this end, and needs a united front. However it cannot be realised if conflicts are still at large. Violence, as discussed, fuels inequality. As a matter of priority then, governments who are plunged into conflict and civil wars, characterized by deliberate violence against children on whatever scale should look for peaceful alternatives of settling scores. In Kofi Anan's words "With peace would come an end to the economic and social dislocation of conflicts, reduced military budgets and greater resources to invest in children'. Preciously, a peaceful environment lessens violence against children and in its own way creates serenity and a platform where activism on gender equality can start.

Once the stage is set with grassroots moving toward righting gender equality, governments must begin to support the necessary changes through law and policy. Governments that may not have ministries dedicated to gender issues must create them as a matter of urgency. There will also be an urgent need for gender experts and international organisations like United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), governmental ministries of gender and Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) entrusted with the duty of mainstreaming gender to revisit their mandate and single out the loopholes, to enable rectification. It could be that the policy makers are still unaware of the necessity of righting gender inequality and building a future work force and a generation of compassionate human beings.

One of the aims of these organisations would be to look for areas of policy where Gender mainstreaming should be considered: Thus, as a priority, there will be the need to mobilise and challenge the structures that violate and increase the girl child's vulnerability. Precise and planned movements against this 'war' need to be formed and the already established ones need to be strengthened so that the 'battle' of gender inequality can be intensified. Creation of more movements advocating for gender equality are crucial, for as long as there is silence and non-activism prevails, the suffering of the girl child will continue unabated.

It is also essential that the movements and organisations that were set up to monitor the progress of women and girls in a given society document all instances of inequality and follow it up with legal instruments. This, however, might mean directing funds from current militarisation priorities to those of peaceful conflict

resolution. It is then the responsibility of all African states and civil society to enable the achievement of gender equality. Governments must get pragmatic and go beyond the theoretic wish. The cognizance that girls are tools of war is not enough, there is need to move forward and voice out ways of rectifying this wrong, as it is grave and catastrophic.

CONCLUSION: MAKING AFRICA SAFE FOR THE GIRL CHILD

The gender inequality issue has received a lot of lip service in Africa, but not enough careful and serious action, yet righting it is crucial. In Joanne Csete's, words it is as critical as "keeping the blood supply clean."[31] The madness of under attending to the girl child in times of war is so unnecessary, and must end. Still, nonetheless, few political leaders will overtly deny the importance of gender equity, yet many deny the significance of gender equity by not giving the matter the attention it deserves.

It is a shame that to date in times of war, gender based violence still skyrockets and the impunity of perpetrators prevails while the victims do not see the light of the day. African governments must, as a matter of urgency, focus their attention on these gross abuses and begin the protection of the future mothers. This means that more than occasional gender issues must be top on national agendas. Rhetoric must be turned into practicality, governments should employ affirmative action, which I believe will lessen exposure of the girl child to violence. Without these provisions and activism, the madness of gender inequality and the horrific brutalities meted out to a particular sex in wars of Africa will win the day.

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[31] Director of the HIV/AIDS Programme Human Rights Watch.

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The Invincible Invisibles:
Ethiopian Women in Conflict and Peace Making

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INTRODUCTION

Women's position in relation to conflict is widely varied and very complex. They could be the most vulnerable and victimized group along with children and the elderly. They could also play central roles in the process of conflict. However, the most dominant image in relation to women and conflict is that of vulnerability and victimization; the contribution they make in resisting invading forces and maintaining the society during conflicts is ignored. In contrast to this involvement in conflict, women's role in formal and traditional peace negotiation is not sufficiently recognized. In the light of this contradictory situation, the current paper attempts to highlight the role of women in conflict both historically and in recent conflicts in Ethiopia. It also investigates the role of women in peace negotiations both in the formal as well as the traditional structures.

WOMEN AS PARTICIPANTS IN ARMED CONFLICT

An armed conflict, as explained by Adey[1], is the use of force to resolve conflicts arising over the control or use of resources or to solve unresolved conflicts.

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[1] Adey, I. M. (2001). *Gender and Conflict.* Reflections, Number 5, pp 52-68.

She further explains that the proliferation of wars is a clear indication that armed conflicts are still considered alternatives to settle disputes. Though the cold war era is over and relationships among countries and continents are strengthening due to globalization, the threat of wars of aggression, civil wars, and terrorism have become increasingly worrisome.

Looking at the history of Ethiopia, it is very obvious that wars have been common occurrences. As Minale explained internal wars were fought mainly for territorial expansion, political supremacy, and because of tribal feuds of one sort or another. Ethiopians were also involved in external wars in their attempt to defend the country's territory and to protect its independence[2].

Historically women have been involved in conflicts, especially conflicts that arose because of attempts made by Europeans, specifically Italy, to invade and colonize Ethiopia. However, these contributions of women have always been invisible in major books of history. Recent studies show that as early as the 14th century women were taking up high positions and advising the kings on various important issues. It is also explained that some prominent women even sent for assistance in different foreign countries to avert various conflicts that arose to attack the country. However, whatever deeds undertaken by these women were always presented as deeds done by either their husbands or their sons, and according to this author that is why performance of women does not occupy much space in history records.[3] He further argues that the talent and wisdom of women was accepted so long as it was an indispensable means to solve a major political crisis. But soon after the conflict is over, men were reluctant to give due recognition to women and their deeds because a prolonged period of acknowledgement could have meant giving women either their 'proper' place in society or undermining the domination of men, which, in any case, was unacceptable to the male.

The role of women in conflict was especially apparent and well coordinated during the Italian invasion (1936-1941) that lasted for 5 years. During this time Emperor Haile Selassie I had specifically requested the support of women saying that following the tradition women needed to struggle for their country by encouraging soldiers and by taking care of the wounded. It was in response to the threat of Italian invasion and the appeal by the Emperor that women were formally organized for the first time in August 1935 under the name 'Ethiopian Women Welfare Association' (EWWA).

The association was established by 54 women founding members from the royal and the upper class families. The president of the association was the then Princess

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[2] Minale, A. (2001). Women and Warfare in Ethiopia: A Case Study of their Roles During the Campaign of Adwa, 1895/96, and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-41. Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

[3] Seltene S. (December, 1994). A History of Ethiopian Women and the Resistance: 1935-1941. Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Tsehay and it was under the matronage of the then Empress Menen. However, the membership and coverage of the association was limited to Addis Ababa, the capital.[4]

Initially, not much was done since members of the executive committee were inexperienced and there were no systematic and strategic approaches to the activities the association undertook. Parallel to EWWA, another organization was established under the name Ethiopian Women's Volunteer Service Association (EWVSA). This organization was also known as Ethiopian Patriots Women Association. At the beginning, there was a strong competition between these organizations. However, when the Italians crossed the Mereb River and when the realization that the war was getting serious hit home, the two organizations came together to collaborate in their efforts to support the military at the warfront. They worked together in mobilizing the women in Addis Ababa to raise money and get them involved in voluntary services. EWWA's attention was more on the preparation of medical supplies, bandages, clothes and gas masks for the military, while EWVSA focused on the preparation of food items for the army. Though the leadership in these associations was held by women of the royal families and the upper class, significant contribution was made by female slaves and domestic servants in the preparation of food.[5] In addition to these women's associations, other prominent women were also encouraging women to go to the war front accompanying men as cooks, nurses and soldiers.

Ethiopian women's involvement during the resistance, from 1936-1941, took on various forms: cooks, nurses, intelligence officers, and some as soldiers or a combination of the two or three depending on the war circumstances. The espionage work done by women patriots was very much significant. For example, it was a woman who was instrumental in the formation and operation of an intelligence system between Addis Ababa and outside the capital where the guerillas were operating when Italy managed to occupy Ethiopia.

Minale also argues that historically women have played quite significant roles in armed conflicts.[6] One important area of their contribution was in the mobilization of men for wars. This task was not limited to war times, but even in peace times women using their heroic songs, created and aroused patriotic feelings in men that helped easy and fast mobilization in the event of wars. These songs reflected the attitude that society had towards patriotism, valor, and ownership of arms, which briefly could be described as 'reverence for bravery'.

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[4]Makda, T. (2000). Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association: A History. Unpublished senior paper. Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

[5] Makda, T. (2000). Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association: A History. Unpublished senior paper. Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

[6] Minale, A. (2001). Women and Warfare in Ethiopia: A Case Study of their Roles During the Campaign of Adwa, 1895/96, and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-41. Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Women's role in mobilization of combatants during war started with encouragement of men to join the military expedition. This was done through songs that praise the brave and belittle the coward. They also prepared provisions and supplies following the mobilization order.

At the battlefield women guarded the camp from the enemy's attack; did intelligence work; collected booties from captives, wounded, and dead; and quite a large number picked up the wounded and the dead. They also supplied food, water, and ammunition. In addition to these types of services, women, especially those from the aristocracy and the upper class directly participated in armed conflicts by fighting on the battlefield. Such women included Yodit, Queen Mother Elleni, Empress Seble Wongel, and Etege Mintwab[7].

Ethiopia's recent experience in terms of women's involvement in armed conflicts is during the armed resistance the Tigrean People Liberation Front (TPLF) waged against the Dergue (the government that was in power from 1974 to 1991). Women were involved in the war directly by fighting in the battle field and indirectly by providing supplies for the combatants, by singing heroic songs to motivate the combatants, by giving intelligence services, and by serving as messengers between the combatants and the political elite in the city.

As combatants women were thought to have become equally aggressive, violent, and reckless.[8] The involvement of women in armed conflicts has impacted their lives in different ways.

WOMEN AS VICTIMS OF ARMED CONFLICTS

The wars had serious impacts on the lives of women both during the internal conflicts and wars waged by foreign invaders. Women lost their fathers, husbands, brothers, and other relatives. Women, on top of losing their husbands, also lost their holdings, which left them in extreme poverty.[9] During the Italian invasion, especially during the air raid, many women and children who could not manage to find a place to hide died in great numbers (Mockler, 1985, as quoted in Minale.[10] Another serious social repercussion of the Italian invasion (1935-41) was the expansion of prostitution in major urban towns along with its social consequences.

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[7] Minale, A. (2001). Women and Warfare in Ethiopia: A Case Study of their Roles During the Campaign of Adwa, 1895/96, and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-41. Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

[8] Tsegaye, B. (May, 1999). The Tigrean Women in the Liberation Struggle and its Aftermath, 1975-1996. OSSREA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

[9] Bahiru, Z. (1991). A History of Modern Ethiopia. London: James Curry.

[10] Minale, A. (2001). Women and Warfare in Ethiopia: A Case Study of their Roles During the Campaign of Adwa, 1895/96, and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-41. Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

During conflicts women shoulder the responsibility of taking care of the family and attempting to keep it together, while and at the same time trying to earn a living for its sustenance. Women are also likely to be victims of intimidation, harassment, beatings, and rape. When conflicts reach villages, combatants from the other side loot the village, ask the women about the whereabouts of their partners, threaten them, and in some cases they rape the women, which sometimes results in unwanted pregnancy.

Forced migration and prostitution could also be the outcome of armed conflicts. When women are not able to sustain themselves and their families in their areas of origin they migrate to the cities, usually along with their children, in search of other opportunities, hence getting displaced. According to several studies, some of the consequences of displacement in urban areas include lack of shelter, lack of food, unemployment, high cost of living, poor sanitary conditions, lack of clothing, lack of vocational skills, lack of working capital, crowdedness, various social evils such as prostitution, streetism, and poverty in general.[11]

Both internal displacement and migration into neighboring countries are other consequence of armed conflicts. For example, during the recent Ethio-Eriterean war, displacement caused a large amount of losses to families. Families left behind their farms, livestock, as well as personal belongings. Because they were no longer able to be engaged in cross-border petty trade, especially women lost a major source of income from petty trade. In addition to loss of income, women and girls were exposed to violence and sexual abuse. With the disruption of the social fabric and disintegration of families and set of values and the economic stress caused by the conflict, women started selling sex, which increased the hastening of the AIDS epidemic.[12] In relation to this, Trhas observed that women displaced due to the Ethio-Ertierean war have become destitute. She explains that the displacement has left these women unemployed with no education and employment opportunities, which forced these women to turn to prostitution.[13] With many displaced women separated, divorced and having lost touch with their partners, the entire responsibility of taking care of the children and sustaining the family has fallen on them.

In addition to the wars against foreign invaders, Ethiopia experiences conflicts arising between and among various ethnic groups. The most frequent conflicts are those erupting between and among the pastoralist communities. In most pastoralist

[11] Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. (1995). A Survey/Sample Study to Rehabilitate the Displaced Families in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

[12] Ayalew, G. (2003). Armed Conflicts in Tigrai National Regional State: Their Impacts on Women, Children, and the Elderly. ICRC. Addis Ababa. (Draft report).

[13] Trahs, R. (Jun3, 2003). The Assessment of Socio-Economic Conditions of Ethio-Eriterean War Deprted/Displaced Women, with Particular Reference to Eastern Tigray Zone Kerseber Area. Unpublished senior paper, Department of Sociology and Social.

communities, women were culturally forbidden from playing combat roles in enter-ethnic conflicts.[14] However, women are involved by initiating and encouraging men through songs that praise warriors, carrying supplies to the battle field, feeding the fighting men, taking care of the wounded and offering intelligence services. In spite of these cultural restrictions, recent conflicts show that women have started participating in the actual fights in many of these communities.

Explaining the problems women face during inter ethnic conflicts, Getachew indicates that according to women interviewed in the study, during conflicts a large number of women and children become victims and their human, social and cultural rights are violated.[15] Summarizing the types of violations, Getachew mentions torture, sexual exploitation, rape, abduction, extra judicial killings, denial of social and cultural rights, and sometimes ethnic cleansing to be some of them.[16]

In terms of displacement and the consequent social problems, a similar observation is made in relation to the effect of enter-ethnic conflicts. Getachew explains that women from war displaced families engage in commercial sex and usually stay in unsafe places where they could be exposed to rape and the resultant STIs including HIV/AIDS.[17] In addition to these physical hazards, displaced women also lose their social support systems and encounter a lot of difficulties in their attempt to sustain their families in a new social environment.

During inter-ethnic conflicts, there are circumstances where women are targeted for violence. For example, Yakob explains that in Gambella, one of the regions, the culturally accepted practice during conflict is that killing of women and children, the rationale being that children are future combatants while women are the mothers of present combatants and bearers of future combatants.[18] He further states that in cases where abduction is used to settle one's scores during war, abducted women are abused and killed mercilessly.

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[14] Getachew, K. (2003). The Impact of Intergroup Conflict on Women, Children, and the Elderly in the Boran Region-Examples from the Boran-Gerri Conflict. ICRC. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. (Draft report). Yakob, A. (2003). Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Gambella Region: Effects on Women and Family. ICRC, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. (Draft report).

[15] Getachew, K. (2003). The Impact of Intergroup Conflict on Women, Children, and the Elderly in the Boran Region-Examples from the Boran-Gerri Conflict. ICRC. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. (Draft report).

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Yakob, A. (2003). Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Gambella Region: Effects on Women and Family. ICRC, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. (Draft report).

Women in Peace Making

Peace making in this context is broadly defined to include actions taken to avert invasion by foreign forces for various political, economic reasons including efforts aimed at colonization and this need for sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries is also one of the principles of OAU Charter.[19] Therefore, involvement in wars that are waged to protect one's country from invasion and occupation is considered as contributing to peace. Similarly, overthrowing a system that is suppressing and bringing conflict and suffering to its people is taken as contributing to the peace making process. In addition, getting involved in the efforts that are made to prevent and resolve conflicts that are likely to arise, or have arisen, between and among different groups is also contributing to the peace making process. It is in the light of these different perspectives that the role of Ethiopian women in peace making is looked at.

As mentioned above one way of women's contribution in peace is through their involvement in fighting invaders that threaten the independence and integrity of the country and the peaceful life of people. Three examples, two historical and one recent, examples could be cited to elaborate this contention. The first is the role of women at the Battle of Adawa where Ethiopians defeated the Italian army that attempted to colonize the country. Empress Taitu, the wife of Emperor Menilik, has herself gone to the war front leading her own army, made of 500 infantry and 600 cavalrymen.[20] Besides her troops the Empress was accompanied by thousands of women who are armed with spears, shields, and swords to participate in the actual fight in time of need. With the exceptions of the women from the royal family, all the others performed various kinds of activities. They prepared food and drinks. They also participated in clearing roads, digging trenches and building fortifications. In addition, the Empress made strategic suggestions that led the surrender of one of the strongest fortifications by the Italian army.[21] Some women had actually participated in the actual fighting taking away the rifle of the dead soldiers. It was also documented that the Empress and her women followers were engaged in gathering intelligence information from local people and enemy camps.

The second example of women's involvement to maintain peace in Ethiopia is their participation in the resistance of the Italian invasion that took place between 1936 and 1941. As mentioned earlier, two major women organizations, the EWWA and EWVSA played a significant role in mobilizing women to support the military that

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[19] Aning, et al. (August 2004). African Commitments to Conflict Prevention and Peace Making: A Review of Eight NEPAD Countries. AHSI Paper 5.

[20] Minale, A. (2001). Women and Warfare in Ethiopia: A Case Study of their Roles During the Campaign of Adwa, 1895/96, and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-41. Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. P. 13.

[21] Ibid.

had gone to the war front through the preparation and supplies of food, clothes, gas masks, bandages, and other necessary supplies. The Empress Menen herself including Princess Tsehai were involved in various diplomatic activities requesting various government to intervene and stop the aggression started by the Italian government.

In addition, there were thousands of women camp followers who were engaged in transportation and preparation of food and drinks, who were nursing the wounded using traditional herbal medicines, and who also boosted the morale of the fighters using various heroic songs. Furthermore, very few numbers of educated women mainly from the upper class were providing modern nursing services in various places where resistance movement was taking place. Some women war leaders were also reported to have been involved in the actual battle.[22] All these women were involved in supporting wars and in fighting in order to protect the peace that was reigning in the country before the invasion and therefore, their efforts could be considered as a contribution to the peace making process.

As indicated earlier, the TPLF was engaged in armed resistance to overthrow the government led by the Dergue (1974-1991). Women were involved in this resistance movement in various ways. They were the sustainers of the family system and rural production, which provided the economic basis for the liberation struggle.[23] They also participated in the provision of intelligence services, in serving as messengers between the combatants and the political elite in the city, and in the provision of health services such as the preparation of bandages, field dressing and treating the wounded and other sick members of the rural community. They also established Democratic Association of Tigrean Women who did a significant amount of advocacy and mobilization work in order to convince the masses of the Tigrean women to join the struggle and provided various needed supports. As indicated earlier, Tigrean women were also directly involved in the armed struggle at the battlefield.

However, once the conflict is over many of the women who have been active participants in the war and who had contributed significantly to the peace that resulted from the struggle are ignored during the rehabilitation and stabilization process. In fact many of them ended up in a worse situation than they had been in before they joined the struggle. Due to spending much of their time working for the army, many had their marriages dissolved, and as a result the number of female-headed households dramatically increased, which made women highly vulnerable to

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[22] Seltene S. (December, 1994). A History of Ethiopian Women and the Resistance: 1935-1941. Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Minale, A. (2001). Women and Warfare in Ethiopia: A Case Study of their Roles During the Campaign of Adwa, 1895/96, and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-41. Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

[23] Tsegaye, B. (May, 1999). *The Tigrean Women in the Liberation Struggle and its Aftermath,* 1975-1996. OSSREA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

poverty. During demobilization women could not be equal beneficiaries of the 'fruits of victory', due to their poor educational background and other socio-cultural factors; many had difficulties adjusting to the patriarchal way of life in the community after experiencing equality with men during the wartime, and many felt depressed due to the realization that their chances of marriage and motherhood had been lost while they were in the war.[24]

Women have also been involved in prevention of conflicts in various ways. For example, some historians explain that women mourners and minstrels were influential in intervening in wars to avoid or minimize bloodsheds, and one such incident was when a prominent mourner averted the war waged against Emperor Menelik in 1865.

Women's role in inculcating values in their children and families that promote peace and peaceful negotiations is also highlighted. For example, Getachew states that in Garri and Boran (two pastoralist communities) women contribute to peace by teaching positive values concerning the importance of peaceful coexistence to their children and giving wise counsel to their husbands.[25] There are also cultures where women intervene to prevent conflicts that are to arise among different groups of the community. For example, in Arsi and Sidama, when women come to know that men from different ethnic groups are prepared to fight they untie their waist band and tie them together into long strips and hold the ends to a make a line. As soon as men see that line they retreat to their respective regions.[26]

In some cultures women have also been used an instruments of peace making. For example, women are given as wives to one of the disputing groups in order to prevent further conflicts and ensure sustained peace between the conflicting groups. This practice is widely prevalent in both Amhara and Tigrai culture. Historically, this tradition has also been widely used by emperors/empresses and the upper class to settle disputes and to make peace between different warring groups.

The role of women in peace making at community/village level is also highly prominent. In many communities in Ethiopia, it is elderly women who usually settle disputes and reconcile individuals or groups when they get into conflicts. They usually consult the concerned individuals and bring them together to resolve conflicts and make peace among themselves.

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[24] Tsegaye, B. (May, 1999). *The Tigrean Women in the Liberation Struggle and its Aftermath,* 1975-1996. OSSREA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

[25] Getachew, K. (2003). The Impact of Intergroup Conflict on Women, Children, and the Elderly in the Boran Region-Examples from the Boran-Gerri Conflict. ICRC. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. (Draft report).

[26] Zenebework, B. (September, 1992). Ethiopian Women's Efforts in Reconciliation for Peace and Development. A paper presented at the Peace and Development Conference.

Another way of contributing to peace and contributing to the maintenance of the family system and the community at large is through the provision of various social services both during the war and post-war periods. This was one of the tasks of Ethiopian women during the resistance of the Italian invasion. For example, EWWA was helping the civilian population in Addis Ababa, the capital, by giving first aid services while the war was taking place at the periphery.[27] Even outside of the capital those women who accompanied their husbands or relatives were providing health care services to civilians who suffered from bullets, burns, and poisonous gas.[28]

Similarly, the Democratic Association of Tigrean Women formed during the TPLF war, in addition to mobilizing women carried out a lot of social and development work, such as gender sensitization, teaching about and demonstration of improved technologies such as improved stoves and other farm inputs to increase local production and sustain the war economy. They were also teaching people important security measures to hide wounded fighters, thereby contributing to sustaining the war affected community. The efforts made by the women's association to rehabilitate the war-affected community and the economy in general has continued.

The efforts of EWWA to contribute to peaceful and settled life continued after the conflict or the liberation. Members of the association who were in exile came back and re-established EWWA by uniting the two women's associations (EWWA and the Ethiopian Patriots Women's Association). Primarily, the association's focus was dealing with the consequences of the war by providing food and temporary shelter for orphans and widows, who happened to be homeless. In addition, Princess Tsehay who came back as a trained nurse gave medical services through the association to people living in the capital.[29]

In relation to the social sector, the association was engaged mainly in education and health activities. Under education, there was an orphanage that housed children who lost one or both parents during the war; an adult women's school where women learned language and mathematics and trained in various vocations such as garment making, home economics, or commerce. Under the same program, there were also primary schools opened in many districts of Addis Ababa. Integrated Family Life Education was another component under education, which included subjects such as functional literacy, family planning, nutrition and health. The other activity was health services, which included MCH clinics and retraining of traditional birth attendants.

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[27] Makda, T. (2000). Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association: A History. Unpublished senior paper. Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

[28] Minale, A. (2001). Women and Warfare in Ethiopia: A Case Study of their Roles During the Campaign of Adwa, 1895/96, and the Italo-Ethiopian War, 1935-41. Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

[29] Makda, T. (2000). Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association: A History. Unpublished senior paper. Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

In spite of the various ways in which women contribute to the peace process, both formal peace negotiations and traditional institutions exclude women from the peace process. For example, in many communities in Ethiopia women do not occupy positions in traditional decision-making structure. In pastoralist communities where conflicts are common problems women are not allowed to get into positions of politics and religion; they do not participate in Gadda meetings. They are not involved in the arbitration of conflicts and other problems from which they are most affected.

Similarly in formal peace negotiations women are not represented to air out their opinion about either the prevention or the resolution of conflict. A study conducted to develop an African Gender and Development Index found that in Ethiopia no group has been working on the inclusion of women in peace negotiation and peace making in spite of the many conflicts Ethiopia has gone through and the many negative impacts women suffered from these conflicts.[30] Zenebework explains that one of the reasons why Ethiopian women have not been able to create a peace negotiation forum where they could voice their views is lack of strong independent organizations that promotes the role of women in peace.[31]

CONCLUSION

The current review shows that Ethiopian women have been both participants and victims for several decades in the various conflicts Ethiopia experienced. Literature shows that in all the wars fought to protect the country from foreign invasion and attempts for colonization, women have participated in all activities including mobilization, preparation of food and supplies, nursing the wounded and actually participating in armed conflicts in the various battlefields. This, in some ways, shows the contributions they made in making peace.

Ethiopian women have also been participating in sustaining the society during wartime by involving themselves in all productive, reproductive and community activities. In terms of conflict prevention, history shows their roles in raising peace loving children and in averting conflicts that were to be launched using songs and other oral traditions. The contribution of women in post-conflict rehabilitation is also very obvious from the activities of various women's associations. However, in spite of all these efforts made by women both formal and traditional peace negotiation processes exclude women. This requires a serious investigation of the problems to put measure to mainstream gender in all attempts at peace making.

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[30] African Center for Gender and Development (ACGD). July 2004. African Gender and Development Index (AGDI): The Ethiopian Trial. A draft report. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

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The Contribution of Religion Towards the Promotion of Gender and Peace Building: Case Study, Christianity

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INTRODUCTION

Among the nations of the world, Africa has become synonymous with poverty, political chaos, social disorder and general backwardness. But I believe that we can overcome our problems and promote peace building in this continent. There is need to catch the vision for a better Africa and act to bring about its material, social and moral and spiritual well being.

We live in a world, which is never completely peaceful. However, peace is necessary and desirable if our countries are to develop and improve. Peace allows and encourages cooperation amongst members of different communities. It is therefore important to expound some of the key terms in this article: peace, peace building and gender. This article seeks to highlight some of the ways in which gender and peace building can be promoted for the betterment of Africa.

This article will be composed of three sections. The first one will attempt to define and expound some of the key concepts while the second will objectively expose the Christian teachings (Bible based) about peace building and gender issues and the challenges therein. The third section will be composed of recommendations.

PEACE

Various scholars have attempted to define peace but for some it is the realization of all the aspirations of life and it should be experienced as harmony including inner-harmony and harmony between others, tranquility, stability, happiness, love, a state of balance or equilibrium, agreement and justice. Some people understand peace to mean simply an absence of violence. This means an absence of overt physical harm to persons and property which emanates from wars, riots, crime and vandalism, etc, is seen as a state of peace. Below, are some of the definitions/discussion on what peace is.

Martin Luther King, a famous leader of the civil rights movement in the United States once said *that peace is not the absence of tension, but the presence of justice.*[1] In this understanding, peace and justice go hand in hand: there can be no peace without justice. Likewise if gender is not incorporated in the pursuit of peace in Africa, then it is injustice since peace should be the concern of all men and women. Both men and women need to work together to promote peace. If women are left behind or not involved in peace building then it becomes an unjust treatment that does not promote the peace the continent is yearning for. Raul Laconism, President of the Argentine Republic addressed the IFAD, Paris, October 1984 in the following:

> "Peace is not merely an absence of war. Its content is positive- the need
> for justice in relations between societies, and the acknowledgment that
> all peoples are of equal worth." [2] *(Both men and women-emphasize mine).*

Peace should be holistic but not for some sectors of the society in socio-economic, political or culturally. Africans need to work together towards the promotion of gender and peace building to develop holistically.

But it should be borne in mind that perfect peace cannot be obtained or maintained on this planet earth. However, it should also be stressed that maintaining the peace does not mean that there will be a complete absence of conflict-non-antagonistic disagreements - and reasonable conflicts are part of our everyday lives. In simple terms, peace entails that we understand that we are all interdependent and related to one another: We are individually and collectively responsible for the common good including the well being of future generations.[3] Peace is a journey- a never-ending process where no one individual, country or continent graduates or celebrates its completion. In the process to promote peace and peace building, one can easily comment that it is a learning process.

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[1] Karen Morrison: *Education for Human Rights,* Longman Namibia 1990. P.3

[2] Ibid. P. 6

[3] Current Dialogue-World Council of Churches (1994) P. 7

GENDER

This concept is not easy to define to the satisfaction of people especially in the academic world, but also amongst peoples in various African countries learned and unlearned. Whenever that word is used many say that it concerns "women affairs" and to a greater extent it has been abused, misunderstood and misinterpreted. However, one can easily say that Gender is broader than sex or biological difference between men and women. It refers to the social and cultural way in which men and women are portrayed, which diminish their status and effective participation in the economic and political life of society. The bias has been against women and therefore many gender issues and concerns focus on them.

On the other hand, Marguerite Apple and Magistrate Mukhopadyay agree that there are contentious issues over the term gender:

> While there is some consensus that the term refers to the social rather than the biological meaning given to being a man or woman in any given society, there is less acceptance and acknowledgment that the social differences between men and women, context-specific as they are, signify inequalities of power and privilege. Many institutions of government, non-government, multilateral and bilateral donors express real discomfort in addressing issues of power in gender relations for fear that this might alienate men.[4]

The term gender, therefore is often used as a descriptive one to delineate the different roles and responsibilities of men and women and the resources that each has access to.[5] There is need to sensitize people about the real meaning of gender and also to incorporate it in the curriculum of academic institutions effectively. Not only that, but even the local people should be constantly sensitized about the meaning of gender and its significance especially in the promotion of peace and peace building in Africa. Gender should not be interpreted to mean that men and women are equal to the extent of women abandoning their natural roles and responsibilities, or interpreted to mean that a man has been deprived or denied his natural roles, rights and responsibilities in society. It is high time African; men and women left attitudes, biases and stereotype in gender issues for the purposes of peace building and development.

The promotion of gender issues in Africa will to a great extent lead to development and peace. God gave various talents to different people, both men and women and they need to work together all the time for he common good of the society.

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[4] Marguerite and Maitrayee in Gender Training: The source Book KIT Publishers, Amsterdam 1998. P. 13.

[5] Ibid P. 14

RELIGION

Religion is very important in peace building, it has got many functions in society as far as peace building is concerned. Byaruhanga-Akiiki notes that *"There is no one word for this reality (religion) in the African languages nor in the Bible. The borrowed term "EL Din" is Arabic and simply means a way of life. Religion in Africa means life*[6]. In other words religion means many things to many people. It is therefore a system of beliefs and practices (the values, norms and roles) by which people recognize the existence of one or more supernatural beings. What is of great value ias one defines religion is the assertion that there are two manyin aspects of religion: religious beliefs and religious practices. Religious beliefs can be defined as strong convictions that people have about matters they consider beyond the realm of ordinary understanding. On the other hand religious practices are ways in which people express their religious beliefs. Religious beliefs cause people to carry out such practices as prayer, mediation and religious ceremonies. In this paper the religious beliefs and practices of Christianity will be used as is a case study and most of the references will be from the same.

GENDER EQUALITY

In discussing this work about Religion and gender in relation to peace building in Africa, gender equality needs to be defined. It does not simply or necessarily mean equal members of men and women or boys and girls in all activities, nor does it necessarily mean treating men and women exactly the same. It refers to the equal rights and opportunities of women and men. Equality is not a "women's issue" but should concern and engage men as well. Equality does not mean that men and women will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. How this equality has been realized will be given a fair discussion and some recommendations will be given thereafter.

PEACE BUILDING

Like any other concept, peace building has various definitions according to different people in various situations and places. However, one can borrow this broad definition:

> Peace building refers to those initiatives which foster and support
> sustainable structures and processes which strengthen and prospects
> for peaceful co-existence and decrease the likelihood of the outbreak,

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[6] Byaruhanga-Akiiki: African World Religion p. 3

re-occurrence or continuation of violent conflict. This process typically contains both immediate and longer term objectives and peace building is a two fold process requiring both the deconstruction of the structures of violence and the construction of the structures of peace.[7]

Africa is one of the poorest continents in the world and one of part of the causes beingof this poverty has been a cycle of unending civil wars and conflicts. Therefore, the given definition of peace building suits such circumstance. As will be seen, Religion- in this case Christianity - has much it can contribute towards the realization of peace and peace building.

The Biblical view of gender and peace building

In the Bible, most of the examples about the life of men and women and other experiences, are drawn from the Jewish culture, especially in the Old Testament, of the Bible.[8] According to Old Testament accounts, God's original plan was that man and woman should live in peace forever, however the original plan was compromised when the first man and woman made choices which precipitated their fall from this state of grace- that is, before the fall. The Bible says; 'So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he create them'.[9] This statement shows us that when God created human beings, there were no differences in importance or value between men and women.

The same idea is echoed in the New Testament by St. Paul who underlines the place of both men and women in the Church of Christ. He writes: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all in one in Christ Jesus'.[10] He continues and notes: 'In the Lord however, a woman is not independent of man or is man independent of woman. But everything comes from God'.[11] It is also very clear in the New Testament that Jesus came to earth to suffer and die for the sins of all human beings, both men and women.[12] Wilbur O'Donovan notes that both man and women are of precisely equal importance and value to God,

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[7] Luc and Thania Paffenbholz: Peace building, Lynne Rienner Publishers 2001 P. 62.

[8] The Bible is the primary holy book of the Christian faith. There are many different translations and interpretations of the Bible. For the purposes of this paper, The African Bible (Zinkuratire, Victor and Colacrai, Angelo (Eds.), Paulines Publications   Africa, Nairobi 1999) will be the translation used. The Christian Bible has two main parts, the Old Testament (a chronicle of God's covenant with the ancient Jewish people) and the New Testament (a chronicle of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ). The Old Testament and New Testament are comprised of books written by different prophets and disciples. These books contain the stories, parables and teachings which form the theological basis for the Christian faith.

[9] Zinkuratire, Victor and Colacrai, Angelo (Eds.), *The African Bible,* Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi 1999, Genesis 1: 27.

[10] Ibid., Galatians 3: 28.

[11] Ibid., I Corinthians 11: 11-12.

[12] Ibid. John 3: 16, I Peter 2: 24.

not because they are male or female, but because they human beings. If we place a great importance on either men or women we are challenging the truth of God.[13]

But it must be noted that the ancient Jewish people had a different view altogether. They did not value women as equal beings, yet they were religious, following their creator God who created man and woman. Pat Alexander has this to say:

> "The woman was owned by her husband and looked up to him as
> her maker…though women did much of the hard work, they had a
> low position both in society and in the family." [14]

In other words, at that time, a woman was counted amongst the property a man had. The old testament even observes that Jewish men in that age would pray, thanking God that they were neither created women nor gentiles (non-Jews)! This was an unfortunate!

In his immense work about the 'Faces of Jesus in Africa', Report Schreiter mentions some of the negative ways in which the women issue was handled in the Jewish culture at that time.

In the ancient Jewish world view, a woman was considered a constant danger to the man. Therefore, women were kept away from the public eye in order to protect them from this danger. It was believed that if women and men came into social contact, lust was unavoidable… and adultery in the Jewish laws was always a sin against the husband's property.[15] All such citations simply convey a message to us that a woman whas considered so inferior in the sigh to a man.

On peace building, the Bible spells but offers the general topic of love as the building block for peace. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ observes that the greatest of the summed up in the tTen Ccommandments given to the prophet Moses in the Old Testament is . (Mark 12: 29-31)… "you shall love you neighbour as yourself."[16] If this type of selfless the love that Jesus Christ is talking about iswere to be put into practice, then wars, prejudice, discrimination, and marginalization and other gender related problems would be no more! Christianity views this It is lack of love amongst the God's created beings as the reason that brings out injustices and wars is prevalent in the world. In the Bible, those who adhere to this teaching of selfless love are hailed as the Since it promotes love those who adhere to such a

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[13] Wilbur O'Donovan: Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa P. 19[8] Julian Joseph: Social Problems Prentice Hall Inc. New Jersey 1983. p. 33.

[14] Pat Alexander Lion Encyclopedia 1986 p.152

[15] Pat Alexander Lion Encyclopedia 1986 p.152

[16] Zinkuratire, Victor and Colacrai, Angelo (Eds.), *The African Bible,* Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi 1999, Mark 12: 29-31

teaching have therefore become "salt and light" of the world. This imagery signifies the role that these individuals play as ey have become agents of social and religious change in relation to the promotion of gender and peace building in the world.

The Bible also talks of a possible world of peace. Christianity aims to It instills in its faithful a spirit of working towards the eradication of injustices in today's world. The Old Testament Book of (Isaiah gives a Christian vision of what such a world would look like, 11: 5-6) showing us the most profound truth about a peace where enemies will sit and work together for the development of the society... "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat" (Isaiah 11:6).[17] This passage sheds light on the situation in today's Africa. Although the passage stresses harmony and peace (and is, in essence, the call to every Christian to establish harmony and to make peace), it could also be interpreted as a special call to African leaders to be peace makers, to rule with justice and wisdom. The obvious collapse of Africa is due not only to exploitation by western economic and political powers, but also to our own inadequate leadership. The Church should be a model to civic leaders, showing governance which is not wealth oriented but service oriented. Governance which is especially concerned with the poor and oppressed. In this manner, Christianity lays out guidelines for how people should live together in harmony and peace.

The sacred literature Christianity also promotes peace building. According to the Christian scriptures, a crucial tenet of peace building, particularly for the afflicted and marginalized, is the idea of living in hope:

> He shall judge between the nations and rebuke many people. They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.[18]

The above promise of the universal reign of peace is seen as a central hope for Christians. Christians believe that the realization of this prophecy of Isaiah came in the person of Jesus Christ. The movement of Jesus Christ's coming into the world, Christians believe, marked the beginning of this era of universal peace. Clearly, not all Christians live by this teaching. Christians also believe that God granted each human being with free will, or the power of choice. Thus, individuals can either choose to act as if the reign of peace is at hand or choose otherwise.

Christianity further teaches that its adherents should follow the example of Jesus Christ in the establishment of peace and the eradication of any injustice in the world.

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[17] Ibid., Isaiah 11:6

[18] Ibid., Isaiah 2: 2-4

The liberation theologies also base themselves on such premises:

> The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, To proclaim liberty to those who are opposed, To proclaim the acceptable, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord[19]

The above text is a foundational teaching and inspiration for the socially religiously and economically oppressed and marginalized. The same text also "liberates" those marginalized in the gender related aspects. Whoever is oppressed, finds solace and a justification to "fight" for his or her right in society. Indeed, Christian teachings can be a base for the advancement of equality, peace building and gender issues.

BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN RELIGIOUS ROLES

It is unfortunate that in the mainstream Christian churches in Africa, namely the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches, women are not given real positions of leadership and decisions making. The hierarchies of these denominations consider women as almost secondary. Julian Joseph observes:

> In their theological doctrines and religious hierarchies, Churches tend to reinforce women's subordinate role. It has tended towards the traditional view that men are primary and women secondary and that a woman's most important role is procreative.[20]

Another example can be found in the Roman Catholic Church:

> In 1976 the Roman Catholic Church outlined the opposition to the ordination of women that Christianity has always held to the traditions first established by Christ and his apostles that only men should belong to the priests gain their authority from the apostles…and they asserted that the holy scriptures and the tradition of the church are both clear in their teaching that women cannot be ordained… to deny this would be to undermine the whole authority of the church.[21]

The above text confirms that the Catholic church cannot allow women in ordained ministry, however, as seen in this paper, the same church allows them to participate in other religious activities, such as living as consecrated religious sisters, or serving

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[19] Zinkuratire, Victor and Colacrai, Angelo (Eds.), *The African Bible,* Paulines Publications Africa, Nairobi 1999, Luke 4: 18-19

[20] Wilbur O'Donovan: Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa P. 19[8] Julian Joseph: Social Problems. Prentice Hall Inc. New Jersey 1983 p. 33.

[21] Wilbur O'Donovan: Biblical Christianity in Modern Africa P. 198.

as lay ministers (non-ordained men and women who provide necessary care and services—such as music ministry or organizing prayer groups—for which one does not have to be an ordained priest). Apart from the Roman Catholic tradition, most of the other small churches in Christendom have involved women in the core areas of their worship and leadership. These models prove very relevant and inspiring for peace builders.

Although many Christian denominations have included women in their worship and leadership, Robert Schreiter identifies some problems women face in the African Church:

> The African Church has inherited the misinterpretation woman and her relation to God and Jesus from the European Church. Therefore the African woman, in addition to being under her cultural bondage and oppression, also experiences the socio-economic oppression of neo-colonialists in the Church. According to missionaries. African women were not to be trusted. It was assumed that people from hot countries are incapable of continence.[22]

Indeed the same misinterpretation has remained in various Christian circles where the male ideology is still in place. It is high time the African Church outgrew such beliefs and practices for the purposes of peace building promotion. Peace building cannot take place unless women in the African Church are very much trusted and involved in its programs and especially in the high positions where changes can be ably effected.

Like any other institution women in the African church are marginalized and most of the roles are taken by men. The traditional system of training the Church ministers favours men. In addition in the African context socio-cultural religious traditions tend to assume that:

> Women's pubic roles are secondary and are just an additional activity to their primary/domestic roles… even when women have been able to achieve high-pay, high prestige positions within their professions; the costs of such success have been high. Many have to give up or delay marriage, family and significant relationship. Those who have not given up family have had to add to their demanding career commitments the major responsibilities of managing home and child-care tasks.[23]

Indeed this has occurred on many occasions especially in the Anglican Church where women ministers do not have ample time to do all the Church duties. In this case, female Anglican ministers also have domestic roles to play, unlike their male

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[22] Robert Shreiter 1992.p77.

[23] Kabiru 1994.p.205.

counterparts, leaving female ministers with very little time to visit the sick, pray for various groups of people and return home at their own appointed time without any domestic worries such as cleaning the utensils, washing, and cooking. When women are excluded from leadership positions either by policy or by cultural expectations, it becomes difficult for Churches to provide a good and conducive atmosphere for peace building since most of the contributions and efforts of women have been swatted by males.

Related to the above, are the general beliefs and stereotypes in the average Christian. It is quite surprising that due to the deep rooted traditional beliefs about the subordinate role of women in society, both men and women may find it difficult to accord the top female public decision maker the respect and cooperation she requires in order to be effective."[24]   In other words, even women ministers in the African Church, to a great extent, do not support a female boss or give her the respect she deserves. Even through, there are barriers to their full participation, their fellow female workers may prove to be a real hindrance, hence indirectly promoting the male ideology.

It has also been found that in the African Church some of the few women who ascend to high positions end up absorbing the culture of their male counterparts. Maria Nzomo has this to say:

> Minorities such as women who are successful in a male world absorb the dominant culture to such an extent that they tend to disassociate themselves from other women, to under rate their success and to perceive any discrimination they meet as a result of their non short comings. A lone woman in a high distinctly female values o her office.[25]

Thus, in many circles of leadership males have taken an upper hand and the few women who take up the same offices unfortunately bar other women from coming near them. In this respect, I can ably conclude that most of the women in the African Church prefer men to women Church ministers.

Yet another barrier to women's participation in religious structures of peace building is the religious system/structure itself. The Christian Church all over the world, especially the traditional denominations like Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism, promote patriarchy. Thus, the system itself can promote or hinder women's active and effective participation in peace building efforts. Patriarchy can reinforce the traditional division of work by gender and end up favouring men. (Yet the spirit of God does not discriminate.) It is also generally believed among members of the Christian Church hierarchy that women are the weaker sex best suited for the domestic roles of motherhood and housewife. In such situations, any attempts to

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[24] Kabiru 1994.p.205.

[25] Ibid

build peace and to incorporate female efforts and contributions cannot be very well realized.

Praise be to God that a few African women are awaking to their dignity as human person. This awakening brings them to the harsh reality that for centuries they have been excluded from the full dignity of human persons by their culture and by the patriarchal Church. Their eyes are being opened to their societies' discrimination against women under the pretext of respect for traditions and culture, and their eyes are being opened to the patriarchal structure in the Church which hinders the application of equal person hood and equal discipleship to women and men.

In the same vein, Christian theologies taught in most of the world's theological institutions aim at the liberation of both man and woman. There is even a branch of Christian theology called feminist theology. This branch of theology aims to understand the bible and teachings of Jesus Christ through the understandings and experiences of women. It is a real break from the traditional patriarchal methods of theology. And its implication for peace building are great as peace cannot be enhanced when women are marginalized in various circles of society.

It is time for African women to seek ways in which they can transform their numbness into a search to understand the world and the people God has created and to take time to talk about God. Feminist theology, like any other liberation theology, is a protest theology. It is a theology which seeks to find the link between the level of grace, where men and women are considered equal before God.

The study of such theology challenges cultural socialization by rejecting the assumption that the roles of men and women have been fixed by God, the creator of culture. If theologians disseminate such information of liberation with love and justice, then most of the faithful in Christianity would clearly understand how gender issues should be addressed.

Various organization and groups of women theologians have already been able to advance their cause-to raise a new consciousness among those working for peace in the Christian Church:

> "They find that ideas of the silent, receptive, passive conservative and self sacrificing women must go. They complain that the church and theology also are full of male paternalism and hierarchies… should not the church be that family in which the old order to creation is transformed into the new order to salvation? Cannot the church become an agent of liberation instead of supporting the conservative and consultative powers?... It is should be realized that the gospel not only offers liberation but also reconciliation."[26]

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[26] Hanselbarth 1975 p.76.

Indeed most of the women have been admitted into the ordained ministry to serve in the Christian countries and the church in general, most of the traditional barriers are being done away with. On another note it needs to be underlined that the bishops are the custodians of the Church in nearly every aspect of its life. Therefore it is important to read some of the views/voices of African Bishops on the issue of women in the Church:

For the bishops of Kenya they had the following views:

> Any custom or laws which are degrading to women or which deny the girls these rights are contrary the will of God, are a real threat to a happy family life and a serious hindrance to the cultural progress of the community.[27]

In Malawi the bishops affirmed that:

> We strongly urge Christian men to change their attitudes towards women. Women too have to transform their attitudes towards each other and towards men. Furthermore men have to rid themselves of their traditional superiority complex. We ask that women be given adequate education and formation to prepare them top carry out their social responsibilities and careers which traditional and modern society tend to exclude without just reasons.[28]

In Zambia the bishops also confirmed that:

> Zambian women are the backbone of our families and play major roles in our economy, especially in rural areas… the oppression of women in the family, injustices done to the widow, the high incidence of female illiteracy, the exploitation of women for sexual favours, the violence done to women; all these are signs of denial of basic human rights, an injustice which cries out to our creator.[29]

It is of great value for the Church to continue the work it is doing, namely, to do away with anything that does not promote equality, justice and peace in the area of gender. Actions are louder than words. It is high time the Christian Church actually implemented what has been theologically advanced for the betterment of the entire community.

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[27] Ibid

[28] Ibid.

[29] Hanselbarth 1975 p.76.

CONCLUSION

Christianity should be a religion that promotes gender equity and peace building. Since religion stands for peace and justice, it should deal with anything that hinders peace building and gender issues. Women should be fully involved in decision making and also in other areas of leadership commonly occupied by men. What has been done is good but there is need to improve. It is high time the Africans did away with any stereotypes, beliefs and traditions, which hinder the progress of men and women's relationship for the betterment of its development. They should realize that God needs a modern way of doing things, but has already given us the guidance to do so in the sacred scriptures of Christianity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the view of the aforegoing discussions the author therefore proposes the following recommendations:

- The Church leaders should do more sensitization on the issues of gender in their Christian communities. Working with other religious groups is encouraged

- Women should also be considered for high posts in religious institutions. They should also be allowed to take part in decision making, planning and implementation of various issues.

- Religious institutions should seriously condemn anything that downgrades women and girls because they were also created in the image of God. They are also God's children.

- There is need to reaffirm that both men and women are equal in God's sight. They are all one in union with Christ.

- Religious institutions should encourage and promote the education of the girl child.

- The church should pragmatically recognize women as human beings created like men in the image and likeness of God and thus grant them their rightful status in ecclesial life for the promotion of peace building and gender.

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The Gendered Dimensions of HIV/AIDS in South Africa: The Relationship between Gender Based Violence, HIV/AIDS and Peace Building

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INTRODUCTION

This article draws from various extracts of a longer thesis, where I sought to explore the gendered dimensions of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, particularly with regards to the increasing feminization of AIDS. I explored the relationship between apartheid, violence, masculinities, and contemporary gender-based violence, so as to understand how these different aspects interweave with one another. I then explored the relationship between gender based violence and HIV/AIDS and the increasing levels of infection amongst women.

I unpacked the cultural and social constructions (stigmas, myths and metaphors) that lead to increased risks of infection, so as to understand how these social and cultural constructions relate to sexual behaviors, particularly amongst young South Africans, amongst whom the rate of infection is the highest, as well as understanding the extent to which media education does or does not have a stronger impact than social and cultural constructions on determining sexual behavior. I explored the reasons why despite an increase of the knowledge of HIV/AIDS, infection rates remain the same, or is in fact increasing, particularly within the 20 – 29 years age group (see diagram on next page).

Agegroup 2000 (years)	prevalence 2001 %	prevalence 2002 %	prevalence 2003 %	prevalence %
<20	16.1	15.4	14.8	15.8
20-24	29.1	28.4	29.1	30.3
25-29	30.6	31.4	34.5	35.4
30-34	23.3	25.6	29.5	30.9
35-39	15.8	9.8	17.2	15.8
40+	11.0			

A three-year study undertaken by Lovelife – an HIV/AIDS campaign network that targets young people – and published in 2004, shows that young adults, particularly amongst the age range of 15 to 24, rate among the highest in levels of infection. This is also upheld and further elucidated by the following points that emerged from a study undertaken in 2004[2] and which further reinforced my desire to understand the reasoning and complexities behind such continual and constant levels of infection within this age group, despite the fact that this is the highest target group for education on HIV/AIDS.

- One in ten young South African's (10.2%) between the ages of 15 and 24 is HIV positive.

- HIV prevalence among 15 to 18 year olds is relatively low with a sudden increase in the 19 – 24 age groups.

- Women are bearing the brunt of the epidemic with one in four between the ages of 20 and 24 testing positive compared with one in 14 men of the same age.

- Of the 10 percent of South African youth who are positive 77% are women.

- Almost one third of sexually experienced women (31%) reported that their first sexual encounter had been unwanted and that they had been coerced by their partner into having sex.

- Male partners were on average four years older making it difficult for younger women to refuse sex or to negotiate condom use.

- Six percent of young people said that they had been physically forced to have sex.

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[1] "The Nelson Mandela Study", cited in *South Africa HIV/AIDS Statistics, Avert.org*
http://www.avert.org/safricastats.htm (Accessed 20 April 2005)

[2] "HIV and Sexual Behavior among Young South Africans: A National Survey of 15 – 24 Year Olds". Reproductive Health Research Unit of the University of Witswaterstrand, South Africa. http://www.lovelife.org.za/kids/Leaflet.pdf (Accessed 12 January 2005)

- Sexually active young women are having more sex than their male counterparts placing them at great risk to HIV exposure.

- These women are less likely to report having used a condom during their last sexual encounter.

- Although 38 percent of youth who had had sex in the last 12 months reported always using a condom with their most recent partner, 67% were still not using condoms consistently.

- 94% of young people said they knew how to avoid HIV infection, but there was no corresponding change in sexual behavior.

- 62% of youth who tested HIV positive in the study thought they were at no risk at all or had a small chance of getting HIV.

- Of the 63% who reported that they had changed their sexual behavior because of HIV/AIDS, about one third had said they used condoms and fewer reported that they had reduced partner numbers.[3]

In light of these facts, and within the context of the various dimensions of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, I began to question why, despite such intensive campaigning by so many HIV/AIDS groups, and particularly media advertisements, there continues to be no significant decrease in the level of infections amongst youth.

All of these aspects were further explored within the context of the *Beat It!* series, one of the first set of educational films made in South Africa for those infected and affected by the disease, particularly targeting men and women in the age group 20 – 29 years, the age group within which my research falls in, and currently one of the groups that has the highest rate of infection. I explored how differentiated the impact of the disease is with regards to gender, and how adequately the film series takes these differences into consideration and/or addresses them. I explored the gender perspectives within the series and also the extent to which gender constructions that perpetuate the disease are or are not being challenged, and how effectively and consciously the gendered dimensions of the pandemic are recognized and dealt with. I also sought to understand to what extent these films challenge the current sexual practices and behaviors, particularly amongst their target group, that lead to an increase of infection.

My objective, as previously stated, was to understand some of the reasons why despite the increasing levels of media education of HIV/AIDS, the infection rate has not significantly decreased, particularly amongst young males and females, and to explore what the factors are, and what the specifically gendered dimensions of these factors are, that cause people to act in such ways that increase their susceptibility to infection despite their increasing knowledge of the disease. Consequently, I wanted

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[3] Lovelife. *HIV and Sexual Behavior Among Youth South African: A national survey of 15 – 24 years old.*
http://www.lovelife.org.za/corporate/news/article.php?iud=448 (accessed on 26 March 2005)

to explore how the media has the power to both reinforce as well as break the socially constructed aspects surrounding HIV/AIDS that potentially lead to its spread, and ultimately how the media can be used as a positive tool with the context of HIV/AIDS.

The basis upon which this paper was written was that the spread of HIV/AIDS has a direct correlation with gender inequality, and thus inevitably, peace building in Africa. For the purposes of this paper however, I have only included the sections that directly relate to issues of gender based violence as a form of gender inequality and its relationship with the spread of the disease, specifically within the context of peace building in Africa.

The Gendered Dimensions of HIV/AIDS in South Africa

The social, cultural, economic and even political aspects which compromise the HIV/AIDS pandemic make it one of humanity's greatest challenges at the beginning of the 21st century. HIV transmission has exposed yet again the persistent inequality which dominates gender relations, the unequal access of women to resources and social participation in comparison with men, and the imbalance of power and control over decisions regarding sexuality and reproduction.[4]

In the evolution of the AIDS pandemic, sub-Saharan Africa has come to be known as the "global epicenter". Home to only one tenth of the world's population, sub-Saharan Africa totals more than 70% of the world's infected. More than 55% of these 28.5 million people are women. Similarly, with more than 4.8 million people infected, South Africa has the largest population of individuals in Africa infected with HIV and an estimated six hundred people die per day from HIV/AIDS related illnesses.[5] By the year 2010, HIV prevalence could reach up to 25%, and by 2015, up to 5.7 million children could lose one or both parents from HIV/AIDS, increasing the numbers of child led households, children without caregivers, life on the streets, and consequently higher risks of rape and sex work. AIDS will reduce the economy by 0.3-0.4 % annually, and by the year 2010, AIDS will have reduced the South African gross domestic product by 17%, eliminating $20 million of the country's economy.[6]

Within the context of South Africa, it is inevitable that HIV/AIDS is distinctly differentiated with regards to race and gender. The Nelson Mandela HIV/AIDS

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[4] "Gender and the HIV/AIDS Pandemic". *Women's Health Journal:* 40, July 2002

[5] Centers for Disease Control cited in Meier, Eileen. *Child Rape in South Africa: Legislative and Policy Update.* Pediatric Nursing, 28 (5): 532 (4), September 2002:3

[6] Ibid.

Study[7] undertaken in 2002 came up with the following statistics:

ESTIMATED HIV PREVALENCE AMONG ALL SOUTH AFRICANS BY RACE AND SEX

Sex and Race	Number surveyed	Prevalence %
Male	3,772	9.5
Female	4,656	12.8
African	5,056	12.9
White	701	6.2
Colored	1,775	6.1
Indian	896	1.6
National	8,428	11.4

ESTIMATED HIV PREVALENCE AMONG ALL SOUTH AFRICANS BY AGE

Age (years)	Male prevalence %	Female prevalence %
2-14	5	6
15-19	4	7
20-24	8	17
25-29	22	32
30-34	24	24
35-39	18	14
40-44	12	19
45-49	12	11
50-55	5	8
55+	7	7
Total	9.5	12.8

Although these statistics are somewhat problematic in that they not clearly show the gendered dimensions of infection with regards to race, they do show that in general, women have a much higher rate of infection than men, and that black African women have the highest rate of infection amongst the racial groups. The infection rates amongst age groups are also highly significant in that men and women are affected disproportionately. The most drastic differentiation in infection rates with regards to gender and age are in the 20 – 29 year age group, where, in the 20 – 24 age group, the infection rate of women is nearly twice that of men, and in the 25 – 29 age group, there is a 30 percent increase in the level of women infected over that of men.

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[7] "The Nelson Mandela Study", cited in *South Africa HIV/AIDS Statistics, Avert.org* http://www.avert.org/safricastats.htm (Accessed 20 April 2005)

Gender inequality is evident at all stages of the prevention-care continuum. Gender inequalities affect, amongst other things, the possibilities of prevention, access to appropriate materials, information and resources, the quality of care received, and survival chances.[8] These gendered consequences of HIV/AIDS will be explored further within this paper, particularly with regards to how they impact women. Without understanding the implications of gender in all the areas surrounding HIV/AIDS, an intrinsically adequate approach cannot be taken so as to deal with the pandemic effectively.

STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE

What is certain…is that South African women, living in one of the most violent countries in the world, are disproportionately likely to be victims of that violence.[9]

The complexities of the natures and structures of gender based violence in South Africa can only begin to be understood if explored within the context of the legacy of structural violence within which it is deeply rooted. Galtung, in his explanations of structural violence, discusses the notion of the Self-Other gradient wherein the Other "is not only dehumanized but has been successfully converted into an 'it', deprived of human hood, [and thus] the stage is set for violence…for any Self-Other gradient can be used to justify violence against those lower down on the scale of unworthiness"[10]. These justifications were seen not only during the regime of apartheid, where an ideology of superiority was legitimized through racial difference, but are also seen in contemporary South Africa where the 'Other' is defined not only through race, but also through class and more specifically gender.

The implicit implications of the structures of violence during apartheid have become more apparent in the contemporary context of South Africa today. Perhaps what is most intrinsic to the conflict is the deeply embedded mentality of the dependency and socialized acceptance of violence as a way to solve problems and the fact that violence has become so prevalent and widely tolerated that it has come to be perceived almost as normative and to large extent accepted rather than challenged. Galtung explains structural violence as "another way of making violence opaque, so we do not see the violent act of fact, or at least not as violent"[11], and this attitude of reducing violence and violent acts to a level of acceptability that is tolerated is seen specifically with regards to sexual violence. As one woman

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[8] Tallis (2000) cited in "Gender and the HIV/AIDS Pandemic". *Women's Health Journal:* 40, July 2002

[9] Human Rights Watch cited in Pendry, Betsi. Undated. *The Links Between Gender Violence and HIV/AIDS.* Internet Source. 1995: 44

[10] Galtung, Johan. "Cultural Violence". Journal of Peace Research, vol. 27, no. 38-302. 1990:294

[11] Ibid.

participant of a group study explained, "In my culture, it is not anything strange when a man beats his wife. We grew up seeing our mothers being beaten, and no one ever reported these men to the police".[12]

Women's vulnerability derives not only from a threat of direct violence[13]. Rather, they are part of the historic continuum where they have been denied access to social, economic and political power structures. It is also impossible to understand gender-based violence outside of the framework of race and class in South Africa. The relationship of race to subordination and marginalization is central to the understanding of gender. Consequently, race is inextricable from not only the historical and political structures of the country, but also the economic structures, where a hierarchy exists, placing black women at the bottom of the scale, both in economic and in patriarchal terms. Studies show that black women are ten times more likely to experience violence then are white women. Violence against women and poverty literally go hand in hand[14] and the economic exploitation and segregation within apartheid South Africa ensured in much higher levels of poverty for black South Africans, and significantly, black women.

According to recent statistics, the black population of South Africa (75%) receives only 35% of the national income and 57% of black people live below the poverty line, in relation to 2.1% of white people. Unemployment amongst the black population is estimated at being 50%, with 9 million people earning less than US$1 a day. According to recent statistics published by the South African Police Information Services, 88.9% of violent crimes committed involve the black population group.[15] Lack of economic empowerment and viable alternatives lead to violent situations. Women's limited economic situations and the "feminization of poverty"[16] may also increase their engagement in employment such as commercial sex work, survival sex or transactional sex.

METAPHORS AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF HIV/AIDS DURING APARTHEID

It is an invasive virus that must be combated. It is an alien that victims harbor in their bodies, and it is a contaminant – in other words, spreading an evil.[17]

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[12] "Women's Health Project SA", *Women's Health Collection,* No. 5, 2000:8

[13] Callaghan, Hamber and Takura. *A Triad of Oppression: Violence, Women and Poverty.* Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation. Undated.

[14] Ibid.

[15] *Women Making Peace in Africa: Peace Through a Gendered Lens.* Department of Defense. Pretoria. 2000

[16] *Gender Mainstreaming in HIV/AIDS: Using a Multisectoral Approach.* Commonwealth Secretariat. Maritime Center of Excellence for Women's Health. 2002: xii

[17] Rollyson, Carl. *Reading Susan Sontag: A Critical Introduction to her Work.* Ivan R. Dee: Chicago. 2001:151

Karen Jochelson, in her study of a Transvaal township, describes how AIDS proved a powerful image for social disorder in the 1980's, metaphorically evoking white fears about escalating black political protest and the disintegration of apartheid. Smear pamphlets were spread in the late 1980's with the warning: "Socialize with ANC freedom fighters and cry and die from AIDS", claiming that all black people would be infected with AIDS by 1992 and that the disease was spread by social contact. The pamphlets also warned that to "save" the white race from extinction; "Whites should avoid visiting multiracial hostels, restaurants and churches, and should regularly test their black domestic servants so as to safeguard your family".[18]

Similarly, Susan Sontag discusses how as a sexually transmitted disease, AIDS has been subject to the vehement use of metaphors: "It is an invasive virus that must be combated. It is an alien that victims harbor in their bodies, and it is a contaminant – in other words, spreading an evil. In the first phase of awareness of the disease, AIDS patients were thought of as guilty parties punished for their sexual deviancy – especially since the first cases were discovered in homosexuals."[19] As discussed later, it is also significant to note that women are more often labeled as 'guilty' parties, particularly due to the fact that it is more often women who first discover (usually when pregnant) that they are infected, rather than men.

During apartheid, the government also embarked on HIV/AIDS education programs, but these too were limited in their outreach and impact, as well as the very selective information distributed. Educational material that was made available for the public differed distinctively based on the race of the target groups. Material aimed at the white population placed emphasis on long-term monogamous relationships, as opposed to 'promiscuity', whilst the programs targeting the black population focused on debilitation and death. The government was also reluctant to promote condom use and accessibility, due to the belief that this would further encourage multiple partners, and only in 1993 was limited advertisement allowed on late night television for promotion of condom use. [20] This selective availability of information is ironically still somewhat echoed in contemporary South Africa and will be explored later.

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[18] Jochelson, Karen. 'Sexually Transmitted Diseases in 19th and 20th Century South Africa.' In (Eds.) Philip W. Setel, Milton Lewis and Maryinez Lyons. *Histories of Sexually Transmitted Disease and HIV/AIDS in Sub Saharan Africa.* Contribution in Medical Studies No. 44 Greenwood Press: Westport, Connecticut, London. 1999:233

[19] Rollyson, Carl. *Reading Susan Sontag: A Critical Introduction to her Work.* Ivan R. Dee: Chicago. 2001:151

[20] Jochelson, Karen. 'Sexually Transmitted Diseases in 19th and 20th Century South Africa.' In (Eds.) Philip W. Setel, Milton Lewis and Maryinez Lyons. *Histories of Sexually Transmitted Disease and HIV/AIDS in Sub Saharan Africa.* Contribution in Medical Studies No. 44 Greenwood Press: Westport, Connecticut, London. 1999:233

A CONTINUATION OF THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT AND THE
"NEW APARTHEID"

"It all began on a Sunday evening in Johannesburg when I sat on a hillock with another gentleman called Hemchandra."[21]

These were the words of Mahatma Gandhi describing how the conceptualization of 'satyagraha'[22] came into being. Perhaps it was not by chance that the contemporary ideology of nonviolent resistance was born in a country that changed its own history by adopting, adapting and embodying such forms of protest. The struggle against apartheid in South Africa incorporated nonviolent struggle, or civil disobedience, as one its most prevalent and effective forms of resistance. Drawing on the teachings and practices of Gandhi, thousands of South African men and women actively protested against the unjust laws of apartheid through, amongst many, public protests, boycotts, demonstrations, and perhaps most significantly remembered, the burning of the pass laws.

In contemporary South Africa, HIV/AIDS has metaphorically become the 'new apartheid' that thousands of activists are protesting against in response to the paradoxical approaches taken by the government with regard to HIV/AIDS policies. In 2000, the president, Thabo Mbeki, made a statement claiming that HIV did not in fact cause AIDS. Despite the somewhat legitimate reasoning behind his desire to emphasize the role that poverty plays in the causation of HIV/AIDS, such a statement created much confusion and havoc in the minds and beliefs of many South Africans, leading the president to be dubbed as an "HIV denialist". This was further reinforced by the Minister of Health's claims that nutrition was more important that treatment, and that olive oil, garlic and the African potato should be used in order to combat the pandemic, as opposed to antiretrovirals. Overall, the policy of "prevention rather than treatment" created a lapse in any form of state treatment, and until late 2004, due to much protest and lobbying by activist groups, there was no treatment policy plan. The only access to antiretrovirals were in private hospitals and pharmacies, where the average monthly cost of drugs was approximately 500 rands, a huge amount when taking into consideration the fact that some domestic workers get paid as little as three to four hundred rands a month. Similarly, access to neviropene, the drug used in reducing the risk of mother to child transmission was also a highly controversial issue, particularly due to the government's stance based on the much contested theory that the drug should not be administered due to the possible side effects it might have, as well as the cost implications, and only after much lobbying was the drug made available at selected clinics country wide.[23]

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[21] Gandhi, Mahatma, in "Ranchandra Verma", cited in King, Mary. *Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr: The power of nonviolent action.* UNESCO Publishing. 1999:264.

[22] Satyagraha literally means insistence on truth, or the power of truth as a force equivalent to nonviolent resistance.

[23] For more information see Killing Time.

Thus, millions across South Africa, mostly black, poor and female, were being denied access to feasible treatment, thus invoking the ideological framework of apartheid. As one activists pointed out, "There is nothing new in what we are doing [for] we are a people of campaigns; it is who we are".[24] The imagery and symbolism that has been correlated between the two struggles can most explicitly be seen in the famous photograph of Hector Peterson, the child casualty of the Soweto Uprising, that has been recreated and replaced by the personage of Nkosi Johnson, the HIV positive child activist who also lost his life to 'the new struggle'.

MASCULINITIES, SEXUALITIES AND VIOLENCE

"The HIV epidemic is driven by men."[25]

Robert Morrell, in his analysis of South African masculinities, discusses the paradox of violence as being "noble and necessary"[26] in the liberation struggle, whilst "in the new South Africa it is criminal and destructive [and] the changing political landscape has led young African men to choose crime and violence, and they have been transformed in the public mind from heroes to villains"[27]. Thus, he concludes, "the appalling rise in the incidents of rape in South Africa can also be considered as a masculinist response to transition"[28]. I personally find this theory somewhat problematic as it removes any sense of personal responsibility and choice from the actions that are being committed and makes them somewhat justifiable. Hannah Arendt, however, also discusses the notion of violence as being the ultimate form of powerlessness, for "rule by sheer violence comes into play where power is being lost"[29], and such a notion does reinforce the theory that such high degrees of violence are to an extent reflective of levels of the social, economic and political powerlessness that have come with the transition. However, it does go much deeper than this, for such powerlessness can also be based within the structures of patriarchy, as black women too, can be deemed as 'powerless' within certain contexts, and yet they do not perpetrate the same levels of violence as do men. This leads to the question of the relationship between certain constructions of masculinity and their relationship to violence.

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[24] Tsele, Mole cited in *The Treatment Action Campaign. Message for the South African Minister of Health Mantombazana Tshabalala-Msimang.* South Africa. 2003

[25] Cal Almedal (UNAIDS) cited in Foreman, Martin. *AIDS and Men: Taking Risks or Taking Responsibility?* Panos/Zed Books 1999:vii

[26] Morrell, Robert. *Changing Men in Southern Africa.* University of Natal Press: Pietermaritzburg Zed Books Ltd. London & New York. 1999:21

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid: 28

[29] Arendt, Hannah. *On Violence.* Harcourt, Brace and World Inc. 1970:133

Dominance is central to the concept of masculinity, and although gender itself is nothing but a social construction of difference, it is this very difference that allows for and "legitimizes… the illusion of a superior identity" [30]. Thus, violence becomes reinforced as a prerequisite to 'manhood', and an intrinsic aspect of masculinity. Notions of masculinities cannot exist except in relations to those of femininities. And, *real* men, can only be defined in relation to the conceptualization of *real* women. Thus, to be anything that even remotely deviates from the 'true' notion of masculinity is regarded as inferior (feminine) and rendered completely powerlessness. The recognition of the role that women play in constructing and also perpetuating masculine 'norms' is crucial and must also be deconstructed in order for change to take place. As one young woman in a workshop described; "I complained about my husband sometimes not sleeping at home. Instead of addressing the problem, my husband called his mother and other elderly women to teach me what is expected of a wife culturally. I was told to never again question my husband's whereabouts whenever he comes home late or sleeps out. Instead I should provide him with food and sex".[31]

Men's ownership of women's rights, particularly their sexual and reproductive rights, are thus reinforced by men and particularly older women alike. As another participant in the workshop study explained, "Our parents collude with our husbands to have our rights taken away from us. When a man pays dowry, he pays ten cows. Then he pays an eleventh cow to buy his rights to drink as much alcohol as he likes and to own his wife. In all this, we are not consulted. If the man abuses you, you cant go back to your father's house because he is doing exactly the same and because he already would have eaten the dowry anyway and not be in a position to pay it back".[32] Although such an example is likely to be context specific and the giving of lobola (bride money) in contemporary South Africa would usually take place within a rural setting and the symbolic acts within the practice of lobola might differ in an urban context, the attitude and meaning behind the dowry or giving of gifts would not necessarily be different.

Virility is proven by remaining in power.[33]

Wood and Jewkes, in their ethnographic research of Umtata Township, discuss how notions of 'successful' masculinity prevailing in the streets were partially constituted through sexual relationships with girls, and deployed in struggles for position and status among male peers. Thus, on one level, 'successful' masculinity was defined in dominant peer culture in terms of a young man's number of sexual partners,

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[30] Tilner, G. "The Identity of Dominance: Masculinity and Xenophobia" in Breines, I., Connell, R., and Eide, I. *Male Roles, Masculinities and Violence: A Culture of Peace Perspective.* UNESCO Publishing. 2000:55

[31] "Women's Health Project SA", *Women's Health Collection*, No. 5, 2000:8

[32] Ibid.

[33] General Manuel Noriega cited in Hartsock, "Masculinity, Heroism and the Making of War", in Harris, A, and Boulder, I. (Eds). *Rocking the Ship of State*. Boulder: West view Press, 1989:134

his choice of main partner (and related to this, the sexual desirability of his partners to other men) and his ability to 'control' his girlfriends[34]. He also describes how violence and sexual violence in particular, often occurred in contexts where the girlfriend was "perceived to be stepping out of line by behaving in ways which threatened men's authority in the relationship and undermined their public presentation of themselves as 'men in control' "[35], thus emphasizing the notion of power and dominance in the social context of masculinity, specifically in perceptual relations to other males.

We don't talk about sex. We just do it.[36]

Crucial to understanding women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS are the dynamics of communication within heterosexual relationships that are intricately linked to the power dynamics existing within the overlapping perceptions of sexuality and masculinity. Equally relevant is the understanding of the perceptions of rape and what constitutes 'real rape'. In a recent study, 39% of young women in South Africa between the ages of 12 and 17 stated that they had been forced to have sex. 71% had experienced sex against their will. 33% spoke of the *fear* they felt in saying 'no' to their partners. Perhaps most significant in showing the social constructions of what constitutes sexual violence was the fact that 27% of young women and 33% of young men stated that 'forcing sex with *someone you know* is never sexual violence"[37]. In another study published in South Africa's Sunday Times, it was reported that one in four South African men surveyed admitted to having committed rape before the age of eighteen, and yet eight out of ten surveyed stated that they believed that *women were responsible* for the fact that sexual violence took place.[38]

The insistence on sex, particularly penetrative sex, is synonymous with being male.[39] The refusal of sex by a female, calls into question the male's masculinity, and a highly socially constructed masculinity at that. Thus, social expectations, based on patriarchal relations, demand that a female's acceptance of a love proposition, and the giving of gifts, money and favors by the male, result in an entitlement of sex by the male. Thus the 'taking' of sex by force becomes legitimized. In many recent cases, the myth that having sex with a virgin can cure HIV/AIDS, has led to rapes and consequently the infection of many young girls and babies.

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[34] Wood and Jewkes. "'Dangerous Love': Reflections on Violence among Xhosa Township Youth" in (Ed.) Morrell, Robert. *Changing Men in Southern Africa.* University of Natal Press: Pietermaritzburg Zed Books Ltd. London & New York. 1999:319

[35] Ibid: 323-324

[36] Interviewee cited in "Women's Health Project SA", *Women's Health Collection,* No. 5, 2000:8

[37] *The Center for the Study of Violence & Reconciliation.* South Africa. 2001:12

[38] Interviewee cited in "Women's Health Project SA", *Women's Health Collection,* No. 5, 2000:10

[39] Meier, Eileen. "Child Rape in South Africa: Legislative and Policy Update". Pediatric Nursing, 28 (5) 532 (4). September 2002:2

A female born in South Africa has a greater chance of being raped in her lifetime than learning how to read.[40]

Despite the fact that South Africa boasts of having one of the most gender sensitive political constitutions in the world[41], the reality is that gender based violence statistics remain amongst the highest in the world. There are also many 'loopholes' in the translation of the constitution into practical reality[42] and the majority of women are not even aware of the rights that they have and the laws that exist to protect them. There is also a very distinctive divide between the public and the private spheres, generally referring to the dichotomous spaces occupied by men and women respectively, and thus the violence that takes place within the household is very often regarded as a private matter – the 'personal is not political' - outside of the jurisdiction of the state.

Seifert explains that rape is not primarily sexual, but rather, it is an act of aggression: "Rape is not an aggressive expression of sexuality, but a sexual expression of aggression. In the perpetrator's psyche, it does not fulfil sexual functions, but it is a manifestation of anger, violence and domination of a woman. The purpose is to degrade, humiliate and subjugate her".[43] Although currently an estimated 50, 000 rapes are reported each year in South Africa (in comparison to a report of 1,200 only two decades ago), researchers estimate that only one out of every 24 rapes is actually reported, suggesting that the real total approximates 1.6 million rapes a year.[44] This means that a rape takes place at least every 26 seconds. More than 41% of the reported rapes are in children under the age of 18, and more than 15% in children under the age of eleven.

The physiology of a woman already puts her at increased risk of HIV infection in comparison to that of a man. The estimated risk of transmission for a singe act of vaginal/penile intercourse is only 0.1%.[45] However, the greater surface area of the vagina allows for greater exposure to the virus and thus if a man is infected, he is more likely to infect the woman as opposed to if the woman is infected. Similarly, the risk of infection associated with rape is much higher, as there is often genital trauma and bleeding, exposure to multiple assailants, or exposure to multiple receptive sites.[46]

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[40] BBC news report cited in Meier, Eileen. "Child Rape in South Africa: Legislative and Policy Update". Pediatric Nursing, 28 (5) 532 (4). September 2002:1

[41] South Africa is the only country in Africa that recognizes marital rape as a crime and has a Domestic Violence Act.

[42] For example, until very recently, legally, rape excluded oral rape, rape of men and children and rape using objects.

[43] Seifert cited in Mertus, Julie. *War's Offensive on Women: The Humanitarian Challenge in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.* Kumarian Press. 2000:8

[44] "Gender and the HIV/AIDS Pandemic". *Women's Health Journal* 40 July 2002: 7

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

"Once you raise the issue of your husband using a condom, there no longer will be peace in the house." [47]

Equally important is the understanding of the politics that exist with regards to condom use, and the deeply gendered power dynamics involved in ensuring that safe sex is practiced. In my own studies done in South Africa, a popular response from males to the notion of condom use was the colloquial expression, "Would you eat a sweet with the wrapper still on?"[48] The negotiations regarding the use of the male condom also immediately puts the power within the hands of the male, and in many cases, the request that a condom be used is rejected as an affront to masculinity, and to male pleasure. Married women may also be accused of infidelity themselves, as well as implying that their husbands are being unfaithful[49]. In a focus group of adolescent males, the young men expressed unwillingness to use condoms, and free handouts were described as "factory seconds", and therefore likely to de defective anyways.[50] I came across similar attitudes at the University of Cape Town, where I often heard the argument that despite the fact that condoms were freely available in all the university restrooms, it was "useless" as these were condoms that were "American rejects" because they were somehow defective.

However, violence against women cannot only be described as a consequence of male dominance, as this reduces masculinities to a monolithic essentialism, where the construction of masculinity becomes radically oversimplified, and 'aggression' becomes synonymous with male. Thus, it is imperative that such constructions of masculinity be regarded as precisely that – constructions – and thus, there is not a denial of men's behavior, but it does not solely become attributed to their sex, but rather to the social process through which they have been gendered, and thus can become 'ungendered'.

The DOP System

Closely interlinked with violence is the legacy of the 'DOP' system employed in apartheid South Africa. This was a system where farm workers were paid in 'tots' of alcohol, so as to ensure their dependency on their employers and their continuous semi intoxicated and thus subservient state. Even in the absence of a DOP system in post 1994 South Africa, alcohol dependence among farm workers continues to play a major role in enmeshing farm workers in a cycle of poverty and violence from

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[47] Urban woman from Worcester cited in *The Center for the Study of Violence & Reconciliation,* South Africa. 200:10

[48] Taherzadeh, Y. *HIV/AIDS: The relationship between knowledge and behavior in university students.* Medical Anthropology Department, University of Cape Town. Unpublished, 2001:16

[49] Ibid.

[50] Urdang, Stephanie. "Gender Inequality if Fatal" in *Women's Health Journal,* Vol. 12. Latin American and Caribbean Women's Health Network. January 2001:4

which escape is extremely difficult[51]. This was explicitly clear in my own experiences in Wellington, a township on the peripheries of Cape Town, where I worked with young children. Not only did many of the children exhibit typical signs of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), upholding the fact that the Western Cape hold the highest levels of FAS in the world, but I was able to work with the children specifically on Saturday mornings due to the fact that the majority of adults were 'hung over' from their drinking the previous nights, and thus were not concerned of their children's whereabouts. Additionally, gender based violence and violence against women was a common occurrence. Once again, such a system is highly entrenched within the politics of race. Due to the Group Areas Act, only the 'colored' population (those who were of mixed descent or were Cape Malay) was allowed to work in Cape Town, and thus consequently, the effects and repercussions of the DOP system are presently seen mostly in colored townships.

THE MIGRANT WORKER SYSTEM

Another consequence of apartheid is the 'polygamy' that exists in many migrant labor families. Due to the structures set up in apartheid, migrant (particularly miners) laborers were separated from their wives and families and thus often set up second homes or had multiple sexual partners. In 1986, 2.6 million workers were officially registered as migrants from areas within South Africa. Thus, not only was the context created where it was acceptable for men to have multiple partners, but it also ensured the spread of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS back wives and original partners.

THE GENDERED CONSEQUENCES OF INFECTION AND THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON WOMEN

The consequences of HIV/AIDS are also deeply gendered, and it is women that are most likely to face discrimination once disclosing their statuses. Not only are women more susceptible to violence and blame after disclosing their status to their partners, but they are also left responsible for caring for those who are infected, as well as very often having no one to care for them if they are themselves infected. Due to the economic structures of the country, most women with HIV/AIDS cannot afford adequate health care or access to treatment. Most information about women's rights, particularly with regards to sexual rights, as well as information about HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, is written, not taking into consideration the fact that the majority of rural women are illiterate[52].

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[51] London, Leslie. *Addressing the legacy of the DOP system: Tackling alcohol abuse among South African farm workers.* University of Cape Town. 1999:3

[52] Ibid: 14

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Similarly, there is still a long way to go before the police system as well as the health system becomes fully gender sensitive in dealing with the aftermath of rape and sexual violence that leads to infection. Often, the ordeal of reliving the events of rape in the presence of a police officer (usually male) is just too traumatic to go through and thus neither the sexual assault is reported, nor is the woman tested. The government budget for such divisions within the police force and civil society is also very limited. In 2003, I visited the police station of the city of Rondebosch in Cape Town, where the unit dealing with rape had just shut down. I was there to report an armed robbery, and was made to sit in the waiting room for a few hours before the two male officers could see the 'case'. If I had been raped, I would have had to go through the same procedure. Although there are many rape centers set up throughout South Africa, many women and girl children are reluctant to report rape, and thus do not get tested for HIV/AIDS, due to fears of retaliation by the rapists.

The issue of mother to child transmission (MTCT), as well as access to basic treatment in South Africa is still a controversial issue. After years of lobbying from activist groups, the government finally began to set up clinics throughout the country where the MTCT drug neviropene was made available – although it is still only accessible in selected clinics. Similarly, the treatment program, allowing public access to affordable antiretrovirals, has only begun in the last year, and thus, it is still very difficult for the majority of South Africans to access affordable drugs.

There are also various other issues that that are specifically faced by women. For example, the question of breastfeeding once tested positive. Although the virus can be passed on to the child through breast milk, in many circumstances, breast milk is recommended over the formula milk which includes using water that is in many cases unsanitary, and could lead to other illnesses. Many women who have been tested positive have also been told by health professionals to not get pregnant, or if already pregnant, to abort, without even being given full access to information regarding transmission.

The stigmatization of those who are infected is also seen in both women and men, and yet, it is, as previously discussed, more likely to place blame on women as being 'guilty victims', and spreaders of the virus, ignoring the ironic reality that HIV/AIDS in South Africa is very determinately linked to social constructions of masculinity and masculine sexual behaviors.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER BASED VIOLENCE, HIV/AIDS AND PEACE BUILDING

The issue of HIV/AIDS is deeply entrenched within the discourse of power and of violence, as gender is a reflection of the "material interests of those who have power

and those who don't"[53]. Such a context, however bleak, also provides an incredible and extensive space for conflict resolution and the ultimately the opportunity for peace building.

"The process of creating a new society based on human rights and justice demands serious efforts to create a society where women are free from fear and are able to participate fully as citizens of the society."[54]   The prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS, intervention and treatment, and ultimately transformation of social behaviors that reflect the deeply embedded structures of gender inequality, as well as generate unsafe sexual behavior patterns, can only take place when we recognize the distinct socio-political and historical experiences of both South African women and men. Recognizing the fact that gender inequality is at the very root and basis of the spread of HIV/AIDS is paramount. Inequality is reflected in the social, cultural and economic interactions between men and women, and any imbalance of power in any of these spheres results in detrimental repercussions for women, and an increase in their susceptibility for infection. Understanding the experiences and perceptions of those who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS should be an essential step in making educational, media based and political policies that are aimed at promoting women's interests and this social reconstruction of society must go hand in hand with state action.

The assumptions made at the beginning of this paper, and consequently further elaborated, bring to conclusion the realities of HIV/AIDS in South Africa that need to be taken into consideration in order for change to take place. Thus, it is essential to recognize and understand the impact that the apartheid system continues to have in contemporary South Africa, and the contributions it makes to behaviors and practices that lead to and perpetuate gender based violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS. There needs to be a recognition of the relationship between the structures of apartheid and contemporary social constructions of masculinities, as well as the deeply embedded perception that normalizes violence as a legitimate expression of masculine behavior. Similarly, the whole discourse of rape needs to be deconstructed and 'de-tabooed', talked about openly and assertively challenge the role and responsibility men, women, and the wider community has in both the prevention of sexual violence as well as the response to its repercussions.

Perhaps what is most fundamental is the need for the shift of mental perception, for, as discussed earlier, in a society that normalizes violence, there is a tendency to undermine the gravity of gender based violence, and, the result is a silence and a dismissal of the reality of what many women face. Similarly, in the Peace and Conflict Ledger[55], South Africa is regarded as 'green', implying that there are no

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[53] Britten, (1997) as quoted in Squires, Judith. 1999:56 "Framing Gender" from *Gender in Political Theory.* Polity Press. p.113-114

[54] Goldblatt, Beth and Sheila Meintjes. Undated. Dealing with the Aftermath – sexual violence and the Reconciliation Commission. Website: http://www.agenda.org.za/beth.html (accessed 29 December 2004)

[55] Marshal, Monty G. and Ted Robert Gurr. Peace and Conflict 2003. CIDCM. 2003:4

'serious' conflicts within the country, thus dismissing the inordinate levels of gender based violence and the 'war' on AIDS. Including such definitions within the paradigm of conflict would allow us to see and recognize and *validate* that these 'other' forms of conflict connote much deeper levels of conflict within a society whose root causes must be addressed.

As seen throughout this study, the relationship between sexual violence against women and the increase of infection in women is undeniable. Gender, as part of the discourse of power, is, as previously discussed, often expressed in acts of violence, and more specifically, sexual violence against women. Such inordinate levels of violence lead to a massive increase in the susceptibility of women to infection. Once infected, there is also the possibility of an increase of violence due to blame and perceptions of women being 'guilty' as well as the shame and stigma attached to rape and sexual violence. Thus, the need to destigmatize women who are suffering from HIV/AIDS is also of paramount importance, so as to ensure community support and not alienation.

Effectively dealing with the effects of gender based violence must go hand in hand with prevention of violence in the first place and ultimately the transformation to a violence free society. If we regard violent conflict as "always conscious"[56] acts, we realize that conflict is a social construction - here one that is deeply influenced by the legacies of apartheid, as well as by contemporary definitions of masculinities - and thus we have the capacity to actively choose how we wish to engage with situations of conflict. Thus, once there is a conscious recognition that violence as an expression of masculinity is only a social construct, and can thus be deconstructed, it will become more readily asserted that violence against women is not 'natural' or unavoidable, and can in fact be changed. Similarly, once the relationship between gender based violence and HIV/AIDS is brought to the forefront, it will be even more explicitly obvious that in order for patterns of infection to change, there needs to be a change in perceptions of acceptable masculine behaviors that include violence.

My research has elaborated on the fact that the discourse of HIV/AIDS is one that is deeply embedded within various social and cultural constructions that are inherently gendered. The data obtained is to a large extent reflective of the fact that levels of knowledge of HIV/AIDS prevention and its translation into sexual behavior, do not necessarily correlate.

The media, despite increasing it's campaigning, is not adequately addressing the gendered, social and cultural dimensions of HIV/AIDS. Thus, to a large extent, they are ineffective in challenging the behavioral norms that perpetuate the disease. Similarly, by recognizing the specific needs and behavioral attitudes of their target

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[56] Kriesberg, Louis. "Chapter One: Varieties and Stages of Conflict" from *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution.* Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. 1998:2

population groups, the media has the power to not only perpetuate social beliefs and behaviors (that lead to dangerous sexual practices) but also has a potential positive influence in changing gender stereotypes and breaking cycles of behavior that lead to gender based violence and HIV infection. Although to some extent current media education campaigns have been somewhat effective in at least dispersing factual knowledge on the pandemic, they are not impacting the population as effectively as they could be, because they are assuming that an increase in knowledge and basic facts will be enough to transform behavioral practices, rather than realizing that behavior is deeply rooted in social and cultural beliefs and deeply embedded constructions, as well as the fact that much of the negative behavior is a reflection of gender inequality, and this only once the very basis of gender inequality is addressed, will there be visible and effective changes in social behavior patterns.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Thus, in order for effective and constructive acts of peace building to take place, I would suggest the following recommendations:

- There needs to be a conscious recognition that gender inequality and gender based violence are intrinsically linked to both the spread of HIV/AIDS as well as an obstruction to peace building efforts. Not only are women disproportionately affected by the pandemic, but they are also hindered from participating equally and effectively as peace builders.

- The starting point for any campaign that attempts to impact and impede the spread of HIV/AIDS is the recognition that the basis of the inordinate levels of infection between men and women is firmly based upon social, cultural and economic gender inequalities, and is thus reflected in sexual behavioral practices. Gender inequality as a root cause of the increasing levels of HIV has not been adequately recognized or emphasized sufficiently, and only once this is done, will campaigns begin to actually address the root causes of the disease, rather than merely its symptoms. The often implicit power relations between men and women due to gender inequality have to be addressed – power relations that are reflected in levels of sexual violence, the use and sale of sex as a commodity, and women's limited power in negotiating safe sex. Once these effects of gender inequality are recognized, they need to be openly discussed and brought into both people's consciousnesses as well as into the immediate public space so they can begin to be addressed and challenged.

- In order to be more fully effective, media education campaigns need to truly understand the specific context of their target audience, and recognize that differing cultural/racial/gendered and sexual groups have differing assumptions and perceptions that need to be challenged. Recognition of

the complex reality that HIV/AIDS is predominantly perceived as a disease of the 'other, needs to take place and be understood so as to be responded to adequately. This is one of the core reasons for which risk related sexual behavior in young people fails to change despite their increasing understanding and knowledge of the disease. This is reflected by the often subvert attitudes that still exist with regards to HIV/AIDS being a race/class/gender based disease (as seen amongst the interviewees), and the stigmas and behavioral responses that are attached to it. This is a somewhat complex aspect, for as previously discussed, the reality of the predominance of HIV/AIDS does in fact have a race/class and gender correlation in South Africa. Thus although there is a necessity to address this reality of the situation, so as to create programs that address those who are most infected, there is a simultaneous necessity to not exclude all those who do not fall into those specific categories that have greater susceptibility. Images used in media campaigns need to include all race groups, as well as economic groups, so as to break down the stereotype that only certain people are susceptible to the disease. The HIV/AIDS discourse needs to shift from being the disease of an abstract and distant 'other', to something that can and does affect everyone and thus there needs to be a diverse means of not only providing information, but clearly challenging beliefs, myths and stigmas that are made that lead to the assumption that "I" am not susceptible to infection.

- There is also the crucial need to clearly outline the realities of what unsafe sex means and what it constitutes. Many young people will continue to practice unsafe sex merely due to ignorance, and it is crucial that the means of transmission are clearly and openly discussed. The taboos surrounding sex and sexuality need to be broken, and campaigns need to openly discuss the relationship between sex and HIV/AIDS. Similarly, sex education in schools need to explicitly incorporate HIV/AIDS into their discourse, as well as include all aspects of sexualities – and not base their assumptions on heterosexuality. More of a participatory approach needs to be adopted with their target audience. This will not only increase levels of consciousness amongst the specific age group, but it will also allow campaigners to truly begin to understand the various perspectives of young people, and recognize the reasons why certain campaigns have not been effective. Once young people are actually involved themselves in creating awareness campaigns that are based upon their own understandings of the disease, they are more likely to change their behavior themselves.

- Media campaigns also need to admit the reality that is expressed by many young people, that abstinence is not a sufficient solution. This calls for a recognition by the government and by government policies who focus on abstinence as the main form of 'protection', that such an attitude is not

sufficient in ensuring that young people do not become infected. Similarly, testing needs to also be encouraged as part of the campaign – as once people are aware of their status, they is a possibility in an increase in more conscious levels of behavior.

- There needs to be a conscious campaign that gets rid of all images and posters that continue to perpetuate stereotypes of those who are infected – specifically miners, prostitutes, and black women. Within the context of South Africa, television campaigns needs to be aired in all the main languages, including English and Afrikaans, and not only in Xhosa and Zulu – explicitly showing that all language – and thus race – groups are susceptible to infection.

- Addressing the role of men and socially constructed masculine behaviors are crucial in campaigns. Many campaigns tend to focus on as well as target women – as they are most susceptible to infection. *However, it is men, and accepted male behavior that puts most women at risk.* Therefore, campaigns need to not only directly address men as a target group, but they also need to work in participation with men – in both workshops as well as in creating the actual campaigns, so as to be more effective (and perhaps less threatening). There also needs to be more emphasis put on women having more agency with regards to their sexual and reproductive rights, and the role that men play in ensuring their rights, so that violence and the power dynamics involved with the use of the male condom no longer needs to be the main obstacle to ensuring safe sex.

- The taboos surrounding rape and domestic violence, and the transmission of the virus through rape need to be challenged, as many women either do not report their rape, and/or do not get tested due to the repercussions they might face with regards to their partners, families, and the community at large. The entire system that exists to work with gender based violence in South Africa (the police, courts etc) needs to be re-evaluated and gender sensitized so as to be able to effectively respond to the needs of women.

- Preventing the spread of the disease by *infected* people needs to be openly discussed – that HIV positive people are at risk of infecting others – and there needs to be more conscious campaigns targeting the infected and emphasizing the need to practice safe sex.

- One of the reasons that so many young people seem to not be affected by HIV/AIDS campaigns may be the fact that paradoxically, they have almost become desensitized to the campaigns – due to the fact that there are just

so many campaigns everywhere within South Africa. Thus, there needs to be a recognition of this and an attempt to incorporate more creative ways in reaching target populations – probably most effective if done in conjunction and cooperation with young people themselves.

- Although, like this study, most studies done in South Africa seem to focus on the reasons behind the practice of unsafe sex and the consequences (seen in the rise of infection levels), there also needs to be studies made amongst young people who DO actually practice safe sex, so as to understand why positive and safe sexual behavior also takes place. I think that this is crucial – and yet to be done – in truly understanding what the various aspects are that can be adopted by campaigns and that have been proven to be successful in encouraging safe behavior.

- Ultimately, it is the increase of gender equality in ALL aspects in the lives of both women and men, and the increasing empowerment of women and girls with regards to their social, cultural, sexual and economic rights, and the recognition and understanding that the choices they make within each of these spheres directly impact not only their own lives, but those of their partners, children and the wider community, that will lead to a decrease in levels of HIV infection and ensure a decline in the AIDS pandemic.

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Assessing Accomplishments of Women's Nonviolent Direct Action in the Niger Delta

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INTRODUCTION

The main thrust of human-needs theory is the fact that frustration or denial of human needs leads to conflictual behaviours. In other words, if needs generally are not satisfied, then deep-rooted problems and protracted conflicts arise. Such conflicts are usually concerned with issues that are not negotiable, needs that cannot be compromised.

According to Gene Sharp, conflicts which, in one way or another, involve the fundamental principles of a society, of independence, of self-respect, or of a people's capacity to determine their own future, are some of the conflicts which do not yield to compromise and can be resolved only through struggle. Believing that in such circumstances only two choices – passive surrender and violence are available, people resort to the use of violence[1]. Gene Sharp reiterates however that this belief is erroneous, because an alternative does exist which does not kill or destroy – nonviolent action. The technique of non-violent action according to Sharp, "is not passive. It is not inaction. It is action that is nonviolent."[2] Nonviolence is used to control, combat and destroy the opponent through nonviolent means, which may entail acts of omission, commission or a combination of both.

Bronwen Manby, in her article, entitled "Shell in Nigeria: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Ogoni Crisis", observed that,

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[1] Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action, Vol.1: Power and Struggle* (Boston, Porter Sargent Press, 1973), p.1.

[2] ibid., p.64

> As in the case of many "petro-states", the windfall income from oil has proved in many ways to be a curse rather than a blessing. Instead of turning Nigeria into one of the most prosperous states on the African continent, its natural resources have enriched a small minority while the vast majority have become increasingly impoverished.[3]

Nigeria is a mono-cultural economy that relies on oil as the main source of its revenue. Nearly all of the nation's oil reserves are found in the Niger Delta or the South-South geopolitical zone,[4] which is primarily inhabited by ethnic minority communities of southern Nigeria, including, among others, the Ijaw, Ibibio, Efik, Bini, Urhobo, Itsekiri and Ogoni. Yet, decisions concerning ownership and/or allocation of the revenues derived from oil are made in a National Assembly where, together, the three major ethnic groups (Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba and Igbo) amongst Nigeria's approximately 350 ethnic nationalities form a collective majority. Since independence, agitations by the indigenes of the Niger Delta region have centred on guaranteeing fairness and equity in the distribution of political power and economic resources.

The activities of major oil companies, such as Shell, Chevron-Texaco, Elf, Agip and Mobil, in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria have severely damaged the environment on which the host communities depend for their livelihood. The oil extraction process has decimated the ecosystem and adversely affected the lives and livelihood of the people of the Niger Delta.[5] Lands and streams have been polluted by oil spills and well blowouts; nitrous oxide, sulphur oxide and other gases from gas flaring have poisoned the air. Flora and fauna have been destroyed, and the communities contend with endemic poverty, the absence of basic social amenities, and, at best, primitive health and educational facilities.

In spite of the unbearable hardship that the activities of the oil companies have visited on Niger Delta communities, neither the oil companies nor the Nigerian government appears keen to bring succour to them. On the contrary, efforts by the communities and their representatives to highlight their plight elicited gross repression, particularly during the military epoch. The November 10 1995 judicial murder of the writer, playwright and environmentalist, Ken Saro-Wiwa, who championed the cause of the Ogoni in the Niger Delta against Shell, is a very vivid case in point. Before Ken Saro-Wiwa, another prominent social critic from the Niger Delta, namely Isaac Adaka Boro, engaged in activism to sensitise the Nigerian

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[3] Browen Manby, "Shell in Nigeria: Corporate Social Responsibility and the Ogoni Crisis", Case Study for the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs. 2000 http://data.georgetown.edu.sfs/programs/isd/ accessed 12 November 2003.

[4] It is instructive to note that Nigeria is divided into the Federal Capital Territory and six geopolitical zones, namely the South-South, South-West, South-East, North-Central, North-West and North-East.

[5] Owens Wiwa, "Paradox of Poverty and Corporate Globalization" http://waado.org/Environment/Oil Companies/Globalization_OwensWiwa.html accessed12 November 2003.

state to the plight of the Niger Delta people. Both the struggle spearheaded by Ken Saro-Wiwa and the earlier one by Isaac Adaka Boro ended in violence.

In recent years, however, women have been at the forefront of peaceful protest in the Niger Delta. This new approach, wherein women engage in nonviolent protest, has added a complex dimension to peaceful demonstrations. Both the Nigerian government and the oil companies either seem unprepared or are caught unawares by this new dimension, as they seek to contain the yearnings of the people. In the meantime, the peaceful protests organised by women have received substantial media attention both within Nigeria and in the international community, and they appear to be making incremental gains.

Following from the foregoing, this article will examine nonviolent struggle undertaken by the women of the Niger Delta, its origins, forms, and how far it has been successful *vis-à-vis* violent and nonviolent male and youth-led activities. The potency of peaceful struggle as a new weapon to combat the insensitivities of oil companies (in collusion with the Nigerian state), where violent struggle has largely failed to achieve desired ends, will also be demonstrated.

THE NIGER DELTA

Oil in Nigeria is found largely in the Niger Delta, which extends over an area of about 70,000 square kilometres and accounts for 7.5 percent of Nigeria's land mass. Extending from Apoi to Bakassi and from Mashin creek to the Bight of Benin, it covers a coastline of 560 kilometres or about two-thirds of the entire coastline of Nigeria. The Niger Delta is the world's third largest wetland, after Holland and Mississippi.[6]

The Niger Delta is unique, as it is the only part of Nigeria that acts as a receptacle for different water types, including fresh water, white water and brackish water. The region possesses the largest mangrove forest in Africa, about 5000 kilometres in size and contains 60 to 80 percent of all Nigerian plant and animal species. The Niger Delta is home to 134 fresh water and brackish water fish species compared to 192 for the entire continent of Europe.[7]   In this sensitive environment, oil exploitation has negatively impacted the Niger Delta, damaged the ecosystem, and engendered deprivation and health problems. Oil resources and the controversial exploitation of those resources have made these and other issues confronting the Niger Delta quite topical and potentially explosive in contemporary Nigeria. According to Nick Ashton-Jones, an environmentalist, "no one can live in the Niger Delta without

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[6] http://www.nddconline.org accessed 14 April 2005

[7] Nick Ashton-Jones, Susie Arnott, and Oronto Douglas, *The Human Ecosystems of the Niger Delta – An ERA Handbook.* Environmental Rights Action (ERA) (1996) http://www.essentialaction.org/shell/era/eraReview.html, accessed 12 October 2004

becoming aware that oil is the political, economic and environmental issue that eclipses all others... It is because of oil and gas that the international community is interested in the Niger Delta."[8]

Successive governments and oil companies have long neglected the area, failed to promote human development and provide basic social services. There exists a paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty, with severe economic deprivation and exclusion coexisting with the enormous oil wealth of the area. According to a 1995 World Bank report, GNP per capita in the region is below the national average of US $280. Health indicators are also low, with disproportionately high fatality rates from water-borne diseases, malnutrition and poor sanitation, among others. A mere 20 to 24 percent of rural communities and less than 60 percent of urban communities in the region have access to safe drinking water. Transportation is usually difficult and expensive; less than 20 percent of the Niger Delta is accessible by good roads, even in the dry season.[9]

In Nigeria, the Niger Delta is the most conflict-prone zone of the six geo-political zones. "The people of the Niger Delta are among the poorest in Nigeria, despite living on the land that makes the country the world's sixth-largest oil exporter and the fifth-biggest supplier of American oil imports".[10] The Nigerian government and the oil companies have been sharing proceeds from oil, running into billions of dollars annually at the expense of the local communities. The people live in abject poverty; lacking basic services like electricity, clean water, roads and health services, in addition to the loss of their means of livelihood due to environmental pollution. It is this disconnect between the wealth springing from their land and the lack of local development, which has led to widespread frustration among the people of the Niger Delta. In turn, this has triggered incessant conflicts, both violent and nonviolent, amongst the people on one hand, and between the people versus oil companies and the Nigerian government on the other.

Attempts by government to develop the Niger Delta though largely unsuccessful, have been through the setting up of development agencies, the latest of which is the Niger Delta Development commission (NDDC). The NDDC was established under the Niger Delta Development Commission Act of 2000. The Commission replaced the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Commission (OMPADEC) and was charged with facilitating the rapid, even and sustainable development of the Niger Delta into a region that is economically prosperous, socially stable, ecologically regenerative and politically peaceful.[11]

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[8] Nick Ashton-Jones et al, ibid

[9] http://www.nddconline.org accessed 14 April 2005

[10] Associated Press article (Title unknown) 14 July 2002, New York Times

[11] http://www.nddconline.org accessed 14 April 2005

The NDDC's strategies for development of the Niger Delta region are in two phases – immediate and long-term. The immediate programme involves resuscitation and completion of old OMPADEC projects, some new strategic projects and human development. The more long-term strategy necessitated the drafting of a more comprehensive and detailed master plan for the development of the entire region.

Recent agitations in the Niger Delta have been for "resource control" because ownership and control of all petroleum is vested in the state of Nigeria by virtue of the Petroleum Act of 1969 and Section 40(3) of the 1979 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Resource control generally involves acquiring direct political power over resource production, management and utilization by the people of the area in question to ensure regeneration of the environment and overall sustainable human development. As aptly put by Itse Sagay,

> "While resource control should naturally result in increased revenue from the proceeds of the resource for the communities where it is located, the more important aspect of this concept is the involvement of the communities in the actual control and management of the resource. It is about the right of states and communities most directly affected to have a direct and decisive role in the exploration, exploitation and disposal, including sales, of the resource. The argument for resource control is that it is those who live with the devastating consequences of irresponsible exploitation practices who must control the method and management of commercial production to ensure an environment-friendly production process, elimination of pollution, protection of the land, forests, rivers and atmosphere".[12]

THE OIL INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA

According to Jean-Marie Chevalier, the history of the oil industry is inextricably linked to the history of imperialism.[13] In 1937, exclusive rights were granted to Shell D'Arcy Company to explore oil reserves in Nigeria. However, it was not until 1956 that Shell-BP discovered oil in commercial quantity in Oloibiri in the Niger Delta. Other discoveries followed and the first oil shipment was a modest 6,000 barrels per day (bpd) in 1958. Shell-BP commissioned its first Export Terminal in Bonny, Rivers State in 1961. The Trans-Niger pipeline was later commissioned in 1965, to facilitate crude evacuations from fields in the now-defunct Bendel State. With the advent of the civil war, production was interrupted and severely reduced.

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[12] Itse Sagay, "The Niger Delta and the Case for Resource Control".
www.vanguardngr.com/articles/2002/politics/june05/14062005/p414062005.html.

[13] Wale Adebanwi, "Nigeria: Shell of a State", *Dollars and Sense Magazine,* July/August 2001.
<http://www.thirdworldtraveller.com/Africa/Nigeria_Shell_State.html, accessed 13 November 2003.

At the end of the civil war in 1970, there was rapid increase in field development and more investment in oil field facilities, which resulted in a sharp increase in the nation's oil output. During that year, a production level of 1.5 million bpd was achieved. In 1971, Shell's second Export Terminal at Forcados was commissioned to further enhance crude export. The price of crude at this time was $2 per barrel.[14]

After 1956, other oil companies began to appear on the scene, notable amongst which were Mobil, Gulf (now Chevron), Texaco, Elf and Agip. In 1974, following the first world oil price increase and intensive drilling and production activities, oil production in Nigeria rose to a level of 2.2 million bpd, of which Shell produced 1.4m bpd. From 1980 to 1987, production fluctuated between 900,000 and 1.7million bpd, depending on demand. Presently, daily average production stands at 2.3 million bpd.[15]

The discovery of oil transformed Nigeria's political economy, as oil became the focal point of all economic activity, with an accompanying upsurge in state wealth, leaving a legacy of institutional corruption. In the last four decades, oil has provided over 90 percent of Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings. By some accounts, oil revenue accruing to the Nigerian government is approximately $20 million dollars per day[16], while others claim that roughly $250 billion has been derived from oil in the last 25 years.[17]

EVOLUTION OF NONVIOLENT WOMEN'S PROTEST IN THE NIGER DELTA

Previously, actions against environmental degradation by Niger Delta communities were usually an admixture of violent and non-violent protests organized on a communal basis, and involving all segments of society. However, such protests carried out by the communities, particularly when they involve local youth who demand that multinational oil corporations tackle pollution caused by their operations and pay compensation to the communities, have always elicited violence. Community-based protests that proscribe violent approaches were not spared government repression in connivance with the oil multinationals.

It is in this fractured milieu that women emerge and their role must be understood. There is "a tradition of female dissent in the Delta that stretches well beyond the anti-imperialist demonstrations of the late 1920s".[18] Documenting an account of

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[14] Godwin Omene, "Solid Minerals, Oil and Gas: Key to the Nigerian Economy". http://www.nddconline.org accessed 14 April 2005

[15] Ibid

[16] Ashton-Jones, et al, op. cit

[17] Anthony Richter, and Svetlana Tsalik, "Making Sure the Money Goes Where It's Supposed To" 4 December 2003. New York Times. P. A39

[18] Michael Peel, "Nigerian women win changes from big oil"
http://www.csmonitor.com/atcsmonitor/specials/women/world/world081202.html (10 October 2004).

women's political activity in southern Nigeria from 1900 to 1965, Nina Emma Mba, in her book, entitled *Nigerian Women Mobilized,* stated that women's "protest has occurred on both individual and collective levels, within and across communal boundaries, and has involved both peaceful and violent methods".[19] She added that protests by women are informed by a shared consciousness of being a disadvantaged gender with special interests.

The Aba Women's War of 1929, the Egba Women's Movement of the early 1930s to the 1950s, the Ogharefe women's uprising of 1984, the Ughelli women's anti-tax protests of 1985-1986, the Ekpan women's uprising of 1986 and several others in the 1990s are poignant examples of occasions when Nigerian women mobilised and exercised their collective power.

As far back as 1929, women had engaged in a protest called "women's war" against colonial rule.[20] The Aba Women's War, which occurred in South- Eastern Nigeria, was in protest against a feared imposition of taxation on women, after what was already considered excessive taxation of their husbands and sons. It also was to protest British imposition of warrant chiefs on the communities. Beginning with the practice of male censorship through song, dance and ridicule, the women's protest spread. Local women sent folded fresh palm leaves to neighbouring communities as a signal to begin attacking buildings symbolizing the imperialist presence. Firstly, by forcing the warrant chiefs to surrender their caps, the women succeeded in destroying the warrant chief system and forestalling further taxes.[21]

Between the 1930s and 1950s, it was the turn of the Egba women of South-Western Nigeria to mobilize. They pressed for and achieved the abdication of the Alake of Egbaland from his throne. Their resentment was based on the alleged collaboration of the Alake with the exploitative colonial government and his perpetuation of hardship and oppression on the Egba people, especially the women.[22]

In 1984, the women of Ogharefe in present-day Delta State, laid siege to Pan Ocean's Ogharefe Production Station. They demanded compensation for land seized, pollution damage, provision of clean water and electricity. Arriving at the production station at dawn, they prevented workers from coming in to relieve their colleagues who had worked the night shift. In this protest, the women, having refused to negotiate anymore but insisting on their demands being met, stripped naked. The sight of thousands of naked women of all ages was too much for the management of the company to handle. They fled from the scene and the women's demands were promptly met.

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[19] Nina Mba, *Nigerian Women Mobilized,* University of California, Berkeley (1982); Michael Peel, op. cit

[20] Michael Peel, op. cit

[21] Terisa Turner and M. Oshare, "Women's Uprisings against the Nigerian Oil Industry in the 1980s" http://www.uoguelph.ca/~terisatu/Counterplanning/c9.htm accessed 15th April 2005

[22] Terisa Turner and M. Oshare, ibid

The Ogharefe women's uprising was a success. The US oil company paid compensation for land taken, as well as for pollution claims made by the women. The company also provided water and electricity for the villagers. Contributing to its success was the alliance between the women and the youth. The Council of Youth supported the women and were seen as defenders of the Ogharefe people, as opposed to the traditional ruler and his Council of Chiefs who were discredited and seen as having sold out to the oil company.[23]

The high level of organization of the women also led to their success. They simultaneously held workers hostage, seized production buildings and blocked all access roads, effectively bringing work to a stand still. Another significant point is the fact that the Nigerian government was not involved in this dispute. It was strictly between the women and the oil company management.

More than seventy years after the Aba Women's War, Niger Delta women's involvement in protests against governments and institutions has endured with increasing focus and sophistication, even though there have been adjustments at the tactical level of operations. The incidents described above and subsequent protests undertaken by women were equally characterized by some level of violence either on the part of the protesters or that of the authorities, who often drafted the police and army to quell the riots. In the end and in certain cases, very little or nothing was achieved by the protests as protesters suffered heavy casualties and were jailed on charges of breach of the peace.

Usually, the opponent in nonviolent action possesses superior force and thus is able and willing to use violence. In this vein, Gene Sharp contends that "there is no assumption in this technique that such opponents will, when faced with nonviolent action, suddenly renounce their violence, or even that they will consistently restrict their use of violent repression."[24] This explains why in the confrontations between the Nigerian government and oil companies on one hand and the people of the Niger Delta, not all nonviolent actions have been met with nonviolence. Some nonviolent actions have in fact been met with brutal force from the military. Using nonviolence against violent repression leads to an asymmetrical conflict situation, as both groups are relying on different techniques of struggle, one on violent action and the other on nonviolence. Higher chances of success are possible when the people who are carrying out the non-violent action remain resolute in their choice of non-violence. Learning from the tactical errors that have invited government repression and recalcitrance, Niger Delta women have incrementally engaged in non-violent protests, culminating in the recently celebrated nonviolent protest by Niger Delta women against Chevron-Texaco and Shell in Escravos on 8th July 2002.

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[23] Terisa Turner and M. Oshare, ibid

[24] Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action , Vol2: The Methods of Nonviolent Action* (Boston, Porter Sargent Press, 1973), p.109.

Even prior to this, and drawing inspiration from the example of the nonviolent direct-action campaign of MOSOP (Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People), communities and peoples across the Niger Delta have organized themselves to challenge the multinationals.[25] Women's organizations, such as the Federation of Ogoni Women's Organisations (FOWO), the Niger Delta Women for Justice (NDWJ), the EGI Women's Movement and the Ijaw Women's Organization for Human Rights, have built a strong grassroots base for resistance, and engaged in demonstrations, festivals and peaceful occupations to further their demands. These stratagems have achieved varying degrees of success.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The research for this article entailed a review of available literature on the Niger Delta conflict and other secondary data sources. Newspaper articles covering various violent and nonviolent direct actions were examined. Primary data was sourced through semi-structured and open-ended interviews. A case study approach was used to specifically study the successful Escravos protest of 2002.

The research was both exploratory and explanatory. It sought to explore what made it possible for the women to adopt nonviolent strategies, what impacts they have had and what lessons can be learnt from them for the resolution of other conflicts. It also sought to explain why the women chose to use nonviolence when the common belief is that oppression or repression necessitates a violent reaction. It attempts to explain the relationship between gender and nonviolent direct action in achieving peace in the Niger Delta.

UGBORODO (ESCRAVOS) WOMEN'S PROTEST 2002

Escravos comprises of six rural communities (Ogidigben, Ugborodo, Madogho, Ajidigho, Imaghagho, and Iyala) in Warri South Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. It is host to two major multinational oil companies – Shell and Chevron. Chevron (then known as Gulf) started oil exploration in Escravos in 1964, and has both flow stations and oil fields in the area.

Inhabitants of Escravos communities are mainly Itsekiri, Ijaw and the Ilaje. Like other rural communities in the Niger Delta, they depend on fishing and subsistence farming for their livelihood. Due to decades of environmental degradation and pollution caused by oil exploration activities in the Escravos communities, the local people have been impoverished and their sources of livelihoods destroyed, and as is

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[25] For more details, visit the following website: Visit the World of Chevron, Niger Delta, 1999 www.moles.org/ProjectUnderground/reports/chevworld2.htm,

now typical, little or nothing has been done to restore the environment and safeguard the livelihood of the people. According to Adebayo Abiola, "rusty zinc shacks covered by soot and acid rain line the narrow streets. There are stretches of marshy soils and oil stained ponds, oil films floating on the water endangering marine life, and parched looking palm trees that were once sources of livelihood".[26]

By June 2002, the simmering resentment had reached a crescendo. The women were aggrieved that they could not fish in the Warri River or the Ugborodo Creek because Chevron's oil exploration activities had driven the fishes and crayfish beyond their reach. Farm yield also dropped drastically because of the degraded soil. Flooding whenever there was a high tide from the nearby Atlantic Ocean was now a common occurrence. Moreover, they argued that Chevron preferred to employ people from other communities, while their children and husbands remained unemployed.

The first action of the women was to meet, articulate their grievances and seek dialogue with Chevron. Over 700 women of Escravos held a meeting where they resolved to write Chevron and ask for a clean environment and employment for their children. A month after they wrote their petition, Chevron did not bother to acknowledge the letter, let alone address the concerns raised by the women. They then met again and resolved that they were going to occupy the premises of Chevron and disrupt work, to force officials of the company to dialogue with them. On July 8 2002, on their own and not accompanied by men, they invaded the Chevron platform at Escravos and brought operations at the facility to a standstill, promising to leave only after they have spoken to the Managing Director of Chevron.

The Escravos protest, which was a 10-day siege of Chevron-Texaco offices in Escravos, was the beginning of a month-long, all-women demonstration against Chevron-Texaco and Shell. The women, who numbered only 150 when the strike began, were gradually reinforced with their numbers rising to over 2,000. They demanded, among other things, the following:

- Provide jobs for their husbands and sons
- Clean up of oil spillage and protection of the environment
- Provide clean water, electricity, health care and free education
- The oil companies should respect local customs and traditions by first of all negotiating with traditional leaders and elders
- Assist the people in setting up micro-economic enterprises.

The women, who were between the ages of 30 and 90, seized control of the Chevron-Texaco oil terminal, airstrip, docks and stores, which provide the only

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[26] Adebayo Abiola, Environmental Rights Action field report, 2002.

entry points to the facility; disrupting production of about 450,000 barrels of crude oil each day the protest lasted. Sometimes working in shifts of 200 at a time, they kept the facilities occupied round the clock. This act of nonviolent occupation is one of the methods of nonviolent intervention listed in Gene Sharp's *The Methods of Nonviolent Action.* The women, armed with only food and their voices, sang and danced. To drive their point home, they even threatened to disrobe – a strong local shaming symbol, referred to as the "Curse of Nakedness".

THE CURSE OF NAKEDNESS

For the women, their nakedness was the weapon they could wield against the might of the oil company, considering the power asymmetry between both parties. According to D'arcy Doran, "most Nigerian ethnic groups consider the unwanted display of nudity by women as an extremely damning protest measure that can inspire a collective source of shame for those at whom it is directed".[27] Of the power of nakedness, Sokari Ekine, international representative for Niger Delta Women for Justice, said that "the mere threat of it will send people running. These are mature women and for mothers and grandmothers to threaten to strip is the most powerful thing they can do".[28]

In the Niger Delta, women use the "Curse of Nakedness" as a last resort when other means have been tried unsuccessfully. It remains a powerful weapon because it is rarely used and only under extreme provocation. Sokari Ekine, in "Women's Responses to State Violence in the Niger Delta", stated that, "though greatly feared and rarely used, nakedness as a form of protest is legitimate within the cultural context of the Niger Delta and one of the few occasions when women are able to manoeuvre themselves into a position of power." The use of the threat of disrobing, though potent in terms of culture, is also controversial. This is due to the negative gender stereotype it connotes in a patriarchal society as women being the ones who bear curses. Notwithstanding, however, Allison Drew maintains that:

> women may often choose to use traditional techniques or draw on traditional protections when they are ignored and marginalized in their protests… For many women, the most efficient strategies have traditional bases. Some of these strategies may be recognized as ritualized protests that do not actually challenge the structure or basis of political authority or male dominance, but they are legitimate, institutionalized means that women use to rebalance the

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[27] D'arcy Doran "Nigerian women take on oil corporation – and win."
http://www.namibian.com.na/2002/july/africa/02726ACCD6.html   (19 November 2004)

[28] http://www.guardian.co.uk/oil/story/0,11319,759652,00.html
Ekine, Sokari. "Women's Responses to State Violence in the Niger Delta",
http://www.authorsden.com/visit/viewarticle.asp?id=17422&AuthorID=26747 accessed 16 April 2005

social and gender relations. Because the use of such protest temporarily turns social and gender relations upside down, they encapsulate a symbolic threat to the prevailing social order.[29]

The tactics and determination of the women convinced Chevron to send senior executives for negotiation. The parties agreed to a deal that will see Chevron-Texaco employing more local people, funding schools, electricity and other infrastructure projects, and assisting the women in setting up poultry and fish farms[30]. Jay Pryor, Managing Director of Chevron-Texaco Nigeria said that, "we are delighted that this crisis has been resolved peacefully, even though the process has been painstaking."[31] These gains achieved by the women contrast with the frequently violent and fruitless clashes that have taken place between the youth and the soldiers/police. According to Oronto Douglas, an environmental human rights lawyer, "through marches and demonstrations, sit-tights and non-violent occupations, through songs, poetry and international campaigning, networking, the frontiers of environmental action in the region have gained unstoppable momentum".[32]

Esther Tobar, a spokeswoman for the group, said history has been made. She said, "Our culture is patriarchal. For women to come out like this and achieve what we have is out of the ordinary".[33] This goes to show what women can achieve when they employ nonviolent means. As Mahatma Ghandi said in a message to Chinese women,

> if only the women of the world would come together, they could display such heroic non-violence as to kick away the atom bomb like a mere ball… If an ancestral treasure lying buried in a corner of the house unknown to the members of the family were suddenly discovered, what a celebration it would occasion. Similarly, women's marvelous power is lying dormant. If the women of Asia wake up, they will dazzle the world. My experiment in non-violence would be instantly successful if I could secure women's help (New Delhi 18 July 1947).[34]

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[29] Allison Drew, "Female Consciousness and Feminism in Africa" Theory and Society, Vol. 24 pp 1-33; Ekine, Sokari. "Women's Responses to State Violence in the Niger Delta", http://www.authorsden.com/visit/viewarticle.asp?id=17422&AuthorID=26747 accessed 16 April 2005

[30] Michael Peel, "Nigerian women win changes from big oil" http://www.csmonitor.com/atcsmonitor/specials/women/world/world081202.html (10 October 2004).

[31] www.chevron.com accessed 20 April 2005

[32] Oronto Douglas, in "Forests, Trees and People", Newsletter No. 36/37. http://www-trees.slu.se/newsl/36-37/ accessed on 21 October 2004

[33] For more details see "Nigerian women Force Oil Company to Take Corporate Responsibility" http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/legislative/oilcompanies.html, accessed 19 October 2004.

[34] Mary King, *Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr: The Power of Nonviolent Action* p.333(Paris, UNESCO, 1999)

Remarkably, the women's struggle achieved success without any loss of lives. Christiana Mene, a member of the Escravos Women's Coalition and one of the leaders of the occupation, said women must take on the struggle in the Niger Delta because of the number of youth that have been killed. This success led to similar all-female protests throughout the Niger Delta, until August 2002, and Shell facilities were also later occupied. Security forces of the oil companies broke some of the subsequent occupations up and the women were brutalized.

The successful all-female protests drew international attention and were seen as the most effective tool to force social improvements by multinational oil companies doing business in Africa. Even the UN news agency, IRIN noted that "the recent protests by women at oil facilities have altered the rules of engagement in the longstanding conflict in the Niger Delta oil region".[35]

It is pertinent to note that, though the initial actions were carried out separately by women from the different ethnic groups, the last occupation was one concerted effort, a coming together of Ijaw, Itsekiri and Ilaje women for the first time against the oil corporations. Recognizing the divide and rule tactics that had been used against them in the past by the oil companies, as well as the need for cooperation if they were to succeed, the women worked across ethnic divides. Emem Okon of the Niger Delta Women for Justice was quoted by Sokari Ekine as saying:

> whether or not these women succeed in restoring corporate sanity by making the oil giants respond to the plight of their host communities, they must have by their united action contributed immensely to peace building among the Itsekiri and Ijaw communities in Delta State.[36]

Arguably, the Escravos women protests, though nonviolent in principle, contained some elements of violence, since some oil workers were forcibly detained in the occupied oil terminal. However, as Robert Burrowes contends, there is no perfect nonviolence. He quotes Ghandi's remarks that "perfect nonviolence is impossible as long as we exist physically…"[37] He concludes by saying that "clearly, life is not a choice between violence and no violence. It is a choice between violence and less violence; the latter sometimes expressed through the medium of non-violence."[38]

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[35] Women Central to Oil Region Crisis (IRIN)
http://africanconflict.org/article.php?sid=496&mode=thread&order=0, accessed on April 13, 2005

[36] Sokari Ekine, "Women's Responses to State Violence in the Niger Delta",
http://www.authorsden.com/visit/viewarticle.asp?id=17422&AuthorID=26747 accessed 16 April 2005

[37] Robert Burrowes, *The Strategy of Nonviolent Defense: A Gandhian Approach,* p.123; Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996

[38] ibid

WHY NIGER DELTA WOMEN ENGAGE IN (NONVIOLENT) PROTESTS

Women suffer great hardships in times of conflict. Women of the Niger Delta are no exception. During conflict with oil companies and the Nigerian government, women are subjected to all kinds of violence - sexual, physical as well as violence against property.[39] Niger Delta women, in this sense, suffer unimaginable human rights abuses for which redress is unattainable because the agents of government who perpetrate the abuses flagrantly flout and are not bound by the rule of law.

The women are also subjected to mental and emotional abuse. Many of them have had to assume greater responsibilities because their fathers, husbands, and sons have been killed or maimed. Just as the Somali women found strength in their weakness,[40] the women of the Niger Delta, have very much been "empowered by the very same events and experiences that seek to destroy them"[41] Hence, instead of sitting and feeling sorry for themselves, the women are increasingly taking control of their destiny and are now actively involved in non-violent strategies in their struggle against the oil corporations.

The activism of Niger Delta women is also rooted in their culture, which compels them to form socio-economic groups. Such social groups, ranging from market-women associations to women's cultural dance groups, provide platforms for them to meet regularly. These fora create the necessary public presence for concerted and open political action. It is therefore understandable why Niger Delta women, when confronted with unbearable situations, seem to rally quite quickly and take advantage of the previously created platforms.

Even though the Niger Delta society is patriarchal, in many respects rural women assume much of the responsibility of managing the family expenses. Early in life, the Niger Delta woman realizes that contrary to what obtains in some other cultures, she must be prepared to fend for herself and children either by herself or at best in concert with her husband. This burden and the apparent bold response of the Niger Delta women have combined to help them develop self-help strategies in moments of need or crisis.

Related to the above is the fact that whenever youth and men engage in violent protests that attract police and military brutality, most of the casualties are women and children. Protest participants, who most often are youth and men, would have escaped the vicinity of the protest before the arrival of the forces drafted to the scene.

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[39] Sokari Ekine, "Women in the Niger Delta: Violence and Struggle"
http://www.ndwj.kabissa.org/ArticlesResearch/Sok1/sok1.htm , accessed on April 13, 2005

[40] Debra Timmons, *"The Sixth Clan-Women Organize for Peace in Somalia: A Review of Published Literature"* (Switzerland, 2004).

[41] Sokari Ekine, "Women in the Niger Delta: Violence and Struggle"
http://www.ndwj.kabissa.org/ArticlesResearch/Sok1/sok1.htm , accessed on April 13, 2005

The violence perpetrated by the forces is therefore unleashed upon the women and children, who lack the ability to escape the scene of protest. It therefore became increasingly apparent to the women that violent protests often result in violent government response with potentially devastating consequences for them. This elicited the modifications that resulted in all-women, non-violent protests in the Niger Delta.

Another explanation for the all-women protests, tied the women's agitation to the environment. One of the most immediate causes for the uprising was said to be destruction of farmlands due to oil spillage. Though the degradation of the environment affects the whole community, women and girls suffer the most. Amongst other reasons, it places more burden on them as they try to meet the demands placed on them by the society, while they are also more susceptible to the health hazards that such destruction engenders. Having this in mind, oil spillage, pollution of farmlands and streams are more like a frontal attack on women. Being the ones who suffer the most from it, they took matters into their hands to seek redress.

There is a biased cultural perception of women as a *weaker, more vulnerable and fragile gender* that needs protection from the use of maximum force. As stated by Michael Peel, the women who participated in the Escravos protest were betting on the fact that the authorities would not use force on them.[42] Indeed, that was what happened. This bias offers added incentive that encourages all-women, non-violent protest, even though this view of women fits into society's stereotypical and patriarchal attitude. Mahatma Ghandi criticised the patriarchal view of women as weak, saying:

> to call women the weaker sex is a libel; it is man's injustice to woman. If by strength is meant brute strength, then indeed is woman less brute than man. If by strength is meant moral power, then woman is immeasurably man's superior... If non-violence is the law of our being, the future is with woman (Young India 10 April 1930).[43]

OTHER MAJOR FINDINGS

- Gender played a major part in the success of the nonviolent actions by women. Nonviolent actions by men or youth usually ended in violence because the security forces responded with violence. However, when women are involved, the security forces are less likely to use force.

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[42] Michael Peel, op. cit

[43] Mary King, *Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr: The Power of Nonviolent Action* p.331 (Paris, UNESCO, 1999)

Capitalising on this and on society's expectations of women as more peaceful people, the women used nonviolent struggle to achieve their aims. It can be concluded that gender and the use of nonviolent strategies were responsible for the success of the women's actions.

- There is a need for more strategic, long term planning. The women's actions seem to be more about immediate needs. They need to articulate their long-term needs and seek redress to the root cause of the problem instead of just temporary solutions. Strategic planning requires patience and the ability to see beyond the immediate.

- Though nonviolent actions by women reflect a change in gender roles considering the very patriarchal structure of Nigerian society, these changes were not sustained. Women have not been able to capitalize on their gains and acquire more political power. Decision-making is still a male dominated affair even when it involves the environment, which directly affects women. In fact, the demands made by women during their protests are usually for the benefit of the community; an example being their demand for jobs for their husbands and children and rarely for themselves. They are still fulfilling their roles as caretakers of the whole community.

- Though the NDDC seems to be working towards realizing its mandate, the people of the Niger Delta do not seem to be very optimistic about its mission. The people are weary of being promised development projects, jobs and poverty alleviation schemes by government or the Multinational Corporations that never materialized or were just means for government cronies to feed fat on the suffering of the people. The federal government established NDDC as an agency saddled with bringing sustainable development to the Niger Delta. Yet, coming on the heels of the Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission OMPADEC) and other agencies before it, the NDDC faces innumerable challenges. Accusations of corruption, lack of transparency in project allocation and funding, as well as several uncompleted projects for which money had already been paid out were levied against OMPADEC and supposedly led to its being wound up. With such antecedent, the NDDC has to prove itself consistently for the people to begin to share in the optimism of the government and officials of the NDDC about its capacity to bring about change in the lives of the people of the Niger Delta.

- The need to control the management of the resource from their land is the new dimension to the agitations in the Niger Delta. The cry is no longer for government and the oil companies to give back to the people in whose environment oil is exploited but for the people to have control over the

management, exploration and exploitation of the resource. Irrespective of this observation, people are not just interested in resource control but resource control under a people-centred government. Resource control for the sake of it is not their demand.

• Multi-sectoral actions are needed for a resolution of the problems of the Niger Delta. All stakeholders in the conflict – the communities, the government, the oil companies and other regions of Nigeria need to come together to seek out amicable solutions to the crisis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

• Nonviolent struggle has proven successful in conflict transformation where the conflicts are of a protracted nature. Women of the Niger Delta are thus on the right track in seeking lasting solutions to the problems in the region, through nonviolence. There is no gainsaying therefore that the men and youth should also toe this line of action and shun violence. More emphasis should be placed on nonviolent means of conflict transformation.

• Women, having achieved temporary success in their struggle, should explore more carefully the role of strategic planning in their actions. More emphasis should be placed on long-term goals and how to work towards achieving them. It is important that they be not distracted by their temporary gains. In this regard, the need for an umbrella body to coordinate the women's struggle cannot be over emphasised.

• Following from the above, it will be necessary to conduct training workshops on non-violent struggle with emphasis on strategic planning, for men, women and youth in the Niger Delta.

• Changes are necessary in the political structure to give women more voice in decision-making. Their proactive actions and the benefits accruing to society there from show that women should fill more decision-making positions. Also, Nigeria is a signatory to the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, which requires that women be involved in matters of environmental management and degradation and sustainable use of the environment and natural resources.

• It is important for the people to feel a sense of ownership of NDDC projects. They should be consulted every step of the way, so that they

begin to have confidence in the NDDC and its programmes. Confidence-building measures are very important for the NDDC to successfully carry out its mandate. The NDDC should be focused on its goals and avoid the problems of its predecessors. With infrastructural and human development in the Niger Delta, there will be less violence.

- The Multinational Corporations should implement a gendered approach to Corporate Social Responsibility. This will stimulate recognition by corporations of the impact of their activities on the society in which they operate and how such activities affect women and men differently.

- Government and the Multinational Corporations should recognize the role of women in peace building in the communities and deal with them more often. Recognising the critical role women can play in preventing and resolving conflicts and in building peace, the United Nations Security Council through Resolution 1325, urged member states to include more women at all levels of decision making and operations related to conflict resolution.

- Ultimately, a resolution of the issue of resource control is needed for a more peaceful Niger Delta region. A more equitable distribution of oil revenue is what the people are yearning for.

CONCLUSION

The research for this article confirmed that the increased spate of conflicts in the Niger Delta could be traced to the political economy of oil exploration and exploitation in the region, with its attendant degradation of the environment. These agitations by the people, whether violent or not at the onset, usually ended in violence either on the part of the protesters or the government. Notwithstanding, women in the region have adopted nonviolent protests as a means of seeking redress. The Escravos incident is evidence of the phenomenal transformation women's protest has undergone in Nigeria from the colonial period onwards. Nonviolent action worked where violent action had failed to produce substantial results. The momentum generated by the success of this protest will hopefully continue to serve as an incentive for women to choose the nonviolent path. There are indications that the adoption of peaceful approach by women will continue to generate positive response and not repression from government, even though it cannot be assumed that the opponents in nonviolent struggle will "consistently restrict their use of violent repression."[44]

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[44] Gene Sharp, *The Methods of Nonviolent Action* 2: *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston, Porter Sargent Press, 1973).

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Pedagogical Approaches for Training
in Gender and Conflict Resolution

Amr Abdalla

Amr Abdalla is Dean for Academic Programmes and Professor at the University for Peace. He served as a professor on conflict analysis and resolution at different institutions in the Washington, D.C. area, including the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences in Leesburgh, Virginia, and at the George Mason University. He was also a Senior Fellow with the peace operations policy programme, at the School of Public Policy, at George Washington University. He has conducted training, research and evaluation of conflict resolution programmes in Egypt, Switzerland, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Italy, Rwanda and Ireland. Professor Abdalla pioneered the development of the first conflict-resolution training manual for the Muslim communities in the United Status. Professor Abdalla has authored and co-authored several research and evaluation teaching manuals.

Professor Abdalla has actively promoted effective cross-cultural messages within the Islamic and Arabic-speaking communities in the United Status and has also been involved in other U.S. interfaith dialogues. Professor Abdalla holds a PhD in conflict analysis and resolution from George Mason University.

The field of peace and conflict studies has grown into a distinct academic discipline over the past 20 years. The new field has distinguished itself through a strong multidisciplinary approach which draws from various social science disciplines. In terms of pedagogy, the field has incorporated the use of simulations and role-plays as integral elements of education. This was necessitated by the need to develop the students' understanding of conflict dynamics, their impact on conflict behavior and students' practical skills towards peace building and peace making.

Based on my experience teaching and training in the field of peace and conflict studies over the past 10 years, I find that the use of simulations and role-plays to be perhaps the most effective and successful method within the field.

In the practical presentation that was used in the Faculty and Staff Development Seminar in Kitwe, April 2005, the following was the format employed for demonstration:

- An introduction, articulating the different approaches to teaching in the field of peace and conflict;

- An emphasis on the benefits of interactive pedagogical approaches;
- The enacting of the role plays, with one on Formal Mediation of a Marital Dispute and a second one on the Non-Formal Intervention;
- A discussion of the role bringing out the different intervention techniques, observations about gender roles and expectations, as well as implications to participant's teaching, training and practice;
- A final group wrap up with concluding comments.

Experience with this approach to peace teaching has allowed us to note several conditions that have to be fulfilled in order to achieve a successful use of simulations and role-plays in training in gender and conflict resolution:

- The use of such methods must be strongly connected to theoretical frameworks in order to enhance students' ability to recognize how concepts and theories present themselves in real life situations.

- The selection of topics for simulations and role-plays must be relevant to the audience. Often, peace and conflict studies students represent a wide range of undergraduate and graduate students, in addition to professionals in various fields. An educator or trainer must design and select simulation and role-play topics that relate to issues which members in the audience may face.

- The selection of topics must also relate in a sensitive manner to the cultural values and norms of different groups. In fact, the use of simulations and role plays in cross – cultural settings has often been used because such methods tend to expose underlying cultural elements that may not be easily addressed using traditional methods of teaching such as lectures and presentations.

- Simulations and role-plays must reflect, as much as possible, real life situations. In the early years of the field, there was a tendency to develop unrealistic or extreme scenarios with the intention of highlighting differences between cultures or perceptions. Such approaches, in my opinion, worsened problems of stereotyping and labeling across groups. I believe that the move towards more realistic situations provides materials that are more relevant to students, and which connects better with what they would face in the real world.

- The use of comparative simulations and role-plays is necessary to highlight different conflict elements and peace building/making approaches effectively. One approach that can be applied is to develop two or more scenarios that share common factors (for example, a conflict over the same scarce resources, between a couple in two different cultural settings). The approach is then used to highlight how conflict intervention, such as mediation, varies in the two scenarios.

- While a simulation or role-play must be an effective learning experience, it does not have to be – and indeed should not be – boring. Adding funny lines to the scenario usually helps to break the ice and break fear among students and trainees, increasing their attention during class. It also tends to make the experience a nice memory among the students which they usually share with others.

In suggesting the pedagogical approaches for training in gender and conflict resolution, my framework for the presentation of this paper during the Kitwe II Seminar adopted two illustrative role plays, the first one centered on a Formal Mediation of a marital dispute. The second one illustrated Non Formal intervention in the same type of dispute.

BOX I.   ROLE PLAY I

Tabu Sana, the 16 years old son of Mrs. Philippa Mugisha, in Tanzania, comes running home one day with a letter announcing her mother's admission for an MA in Gender and Peace Building at the University For Peace, Costa Rica. He is excited as he, the mother and father read the letter of admission. This might just be the chance of his life to go abroad in an international school and get access to better IT and library facilities at high school level.

His father, Professor Mugisha, is very upset with the news of Philippa's further studies. It will mean making expensive special child care arrangements for Malaika, the younger daughter who is 10 years old and being single parent for over one year. Given his teaching load, his recent deanship appointment and research commitments it will be very difficult for him to play all these multiple roles successfully.

Just as they are trying to make sense of the tension created by the news, Muzei Mutale, Phillipa's father comes by their home. He sides with his daughter and openly challenges his son-in-law's position on the need for caution and joint planning. If Philippa has a scholarship and can cater for Tabu Sana while in Costa Rica, that should be less troubles for Mr. Mugisha. Why is he acting stubborn and unsupportive instead of showing gratitude to his ingenious daughter? He goes on to announce to all his threat to take back his daughter if Professor Mugisha has become incapable of taking care of his family.

As tongues get sharper and voices louder, Muzei Washira, the elder brother of Mr. Mutale happens to pass by the Mugisha's home. It is obvious that a strong conflict has just erupted. He tries to calm down everybody and using his advantage as a family elder, he proposes to consult each member, arrange for negotiation and settlement of the issues informally, based on the shared family values and traditional principles.

BOX I.   ROLE PLAY I

Mrs. Joanita Obije, a lecturer at Jos University, Nigeria, had received news of her admission for an MA in Gender and Peace Building in the University for Peace in Costa Rica. Aware of the outstanding educational facilities in international schools in Costa Rica and in an effort to avoid staying alone during her studies, she decided to take with her Simon, their eldest son who is 16 years old. She plans to leave the younger daughter, Isabella, 10 years old, with a resident nanny under the supervision of the father.

Mr. Obije, a Professor at the same Jos University, the day Joanita announces her plans, is very upset. All her plans had been done and finalized without consulting him. A strong conflict thus erupts.

Joanita considers the chance to go for an MA as the best career opportunity of her life. It would allow her to get a professional qualification which could open doors into the life of consultancies. The teacher's income that she and her husband get from the University is definitively insufficient for the family needs and an additional resource of income would be obviously welcome.

Mr. Obije believes that as husband and father, he should be part and parcel of Joanita's plans for further studies. He feels uncomfortable with the very expensive and institutional-like domestic arrangements that have been made to take care of Isabella during Joanita's absence. He is generally upset and insecure with his wife's apparent lack of commitment to their marriage and the children's care.

Tired of daily arguing and outbursts in front of the children, the two spouses decide to seek the intervention of Dr. Abdulai Jie at the Hope Counseling Centre. Dr Abdulai (PhD. Psychology, MA Conflict Resolution, George Mason University) and his team of social workers run a modern counseling/mediation clinic in the town centre of Jos. They make a clinical analysis of the dispute and offer formal mediation for resolving the conflict.

In both disputes, the major cause seemed to be the question of power relations with regards to control of decision-making and defining family financial priorities.

This animated lecture aimed at demonstrating the invaluable benefits and effectiveness of simulations and dramatizations as interactive approaches in peace and conflict education. It was stressed that the multidisciplinary nature of peace education necessitated the need to develop, through simulations and role-plays, the students' understanding of conflict dynamics and their subsequent impact on conflict behavior on negotiation and peace building. This in turn, would help students in rehearsing practical skills.

In the group wrap up session, the following observations were made by peace practitioners:

- Where mediation institutions exist, for example in South Africa, many people in communities are unaware of their existence and their role in society. There is need therefore of making people aware of availability of such mediation spaces.

- The importance of contextualizing traditional approached to conflict transformation. It was pointed out that such approaches can be used to settle modern conflicts as well, the case point being the ECOWAS in the Manu River Peace hearings based on civil society, appeals for peace negotiation, the "Obushingatayi and Obunywani" processes in Rwanda, to mention but a few.

- On the worrying issue of women's inclusion in conflict resolution as key actors and not "victims", it was highlighted that in several peace processes in Africa, women have played very crucial roles, the case quoted for demonstration was the women's contribution to the government-rebel forces peace negotiation in Burundi.

In the concluding remarks, as facilitator, I pointed out that power struggles among the parties involved in a dispute or conflict usually provoke high and sometimes violent emotions. This therefore calls for a peace-negotiating third party to provide a channel for channeling these negatively impacting energies. Such a negotiator should have reliable psycho-socio professional, communicative competence as well as adequate listening skills to promote consensus and peaceful solutions during the mediation process. S/he should be knowledgeable in the cultural values and norms of the disputing parties a neutral personality, with integrity and unquestionable commitment to nonviolence in order to facilitate the active construction of meaningful solutions to the dispute by the parties involved.

ABOUT THE EDITORS

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University for Peace

The University for Peace is established with a clear determination to provide humanity with an international institution of higher education for peace and with the aim of promoting among all human beings the spirit of understanding, tolerance and peaceful coexistence, to stimulate cooperation among peoples and to help lessen obstacles and threats to world peace and progress, in keeping with the noble aspirations proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations.

Gender and Peace Building Programme

The Department for Gender and Peace Studies was established in January 2001 and is one of the central academic departments at the University for Peace. Through formal education, research, formation of networks and publication of materials, the Department for Gender and Peace Studies aims to mainstream the gender perspective as a strategic means of reducing inequalities and inequities between men and women, and the establishment of peaceful societies. The Department believes that this strategy can make substantial contributions to development and the strengthening of democratic institutions as well as instill a full respect for human rights.

Africa Programme

The overall goal of the Africa Programme is to strengthen African capacity for education, training and research on issues of peace and security, including the prevention, management and resolution of conflict. It is hoped that the University will act as a catalyst in mobilising an international network on the definition and implementation of cooperative activities in the fields of education and research for peace in Africa. The linking of African scholars into a knowledge network is imperative and as such, a programme that facilitates linkages between institutions of higher learning is of a high priority. Added value brought to this initiative by UPEACE lies in the unique advantage it holds in offering a genuinely international, multicultural and multidisciplinary orientation of its academic programme, which builds on prespectives from other regions of the world.

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