

Women as Rhetorical Agents of Peace in South Africa.

“Open Arms and Tongues of Steel”

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INTRODUCTION

This Working Paper seeks to investigate how women are both perceived and how they represent themselves as agents of reconciliation. Much of the basis of analysis will come from how women in South Africa experience public life. It is at this point that I would like to highlight that it is nearly impossible to separate the ideas of how women experience the public sphere from the ideas of gender analysis and feminism within an African framework. The Feminist Movement will be briefly addressed as it is a key agent in many instances that has enabled many women to participate in South African public discourse. However, the African feminist movement works in many ways differently to that of the West (the deemed source of this movement). This is because of colonialism and the role that African culture plays in these women's lives. This is not to say that there are no lines of similarity but it is to emphasise that in a newly democratic South Africa, there are extenuating factors that shape how this rhetorical experience is perceived and executed.

By highlighting the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report, the role of the Rain Queen and the Reed's Dance in Zulu culture and process of female circumcision in Basotho culture, we aim to illustrate how women help or in fact hinder reconciliation, and how they challenge the notion that they embody a "kinder" way of doing public life. We will also look at the idea that women are "better" than men in being agents of stability. This paper seeks to unpack how these notions have come about – are they inherited, are they cultural, or even biologically determined?

METHODOLOGY

The first process involved getting a thorough understanding of what is meant by two key terms - the first word is "Reconciliation". This word forms the crux of the discussion on "how women are both perceived as and represent themselves as agents of reconciliation". Secondly, we need to have an agreement of what we understand to be an "agent", as this term alludes to two ideas of implementation. The first is a pro-active course of action, where women actively seek to be the mediums that bring about peace. They exert the procedures, they mediate between quarrelling parties, and only through their intervention can any form of reconciliation be brought about. They are rhetorical mediums for well-being. Therefore, by looking at the literature, we aim to see how arguments are structured in such a way as to support the notion of active mediation. How do these authors use deliberative and forensic and even sometimes epideictic arguments to assert the idea that women are reconciliatory agents? On the other hand, women can be seen as agents of reconciliation because they maybe the party that exemplifies how to accept, or be "resigned to something that is not desired" (<http://dictionary.reference.com>: 2007-07-28). They have to be the ones that have to forgive and compromise, because they have to lead or protect themselves and their families in a particular way. This matter will also be addressed by looking at the literature and how the forensic arguments have been framed. Do these authors praise or reprimand how women are conducting themselves in public life.

Key Definitions

RECONCILE

1. To cause (a person) to accept or be resigned to something not desired: *He was reconciled to his fate*
2. To win over to friendliness; cause to become amicable: *to reconcile hostile persons.*
3. To compose or settle (a quarrel, dispute, etc.).
4. To bring into agreement or harmony; make compatible or consistent: *to reconcile differing statements; to reconcile accounts.*

— ORIGIN Latin *reconciliare*, from *conciliare* 'bring together'

AGENT

• noun 1 a person who provides a particular service, typically liaising between two other parties. 2. a person or thing that takes an active role or produces a specified effect. a person responsible for a particular action:

— ORIGIN from Latin *agere* 'to do'

MEDIUM

• noun (pl. media or mediums) 1 a means by which something is expressed, communicated, or achieved. 2 a substance through which a force or other influence is transmitted.

<http://dictionary.reference.com> – (2007-01-09)

The information that is going to be used in this report was gathered mainly from academic journals found on the Internet hosted by www.jstor.org. Other sites that proved to be useful were to do with gender issues in South Africa, such as www.womensnet.org.za, and various other websites such as online newspaper sites, government and South African tourism portals. Ironically in finding information on women's involvement in the public sphere particularly in South Africa, one is forced to look at websites that highlight Gender issues. It is ironic as most of the prefaces for these websites and documents insist that gender had to do with the way we are socialised to be masculine or feminine and has very little to do with the biology that determines whether we are called male or female, yet all the content was targeted towards women. It is for this reason that there is a perpetual association of word 'gender' to be synonymous with word 'woman'.

As mentioned before, we cannot research issues connected with women without looking at the role feminist discourse plays in defining the how women conduct themselves. Much of the literature highlights various forms of feminist arguments and how these arguments create praise, blame, values and choices for women regarding public life.

The method of gathering information could be termed a snowball effect, as one website indicated to information gathered from another website. Or several authors would refer to a particular paper. This was especially true in the section that looks at Gender and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Many of the reports cited the paper submitted to the TRC by Dr Shiela Meintjes and Beth Goldblatt.

Information gathering also involved looking at websites that directly targeted conflict resolution. These sites helped in tackling the issue of whether women embody peace and if they have a kinder way of doing public life. An organisation called Hunt Alternatives Fund whose sole mandate is to assess and mechanise methods of negotiation and conflict prevention, security and post-conflict reconstruction proved to be extremely resourceful.

Information was not easy to come by regarding particular nuances in South African traditional culture and the role that women have in this discourse. The websites that focussed on the Rain Queen, centred towards more of the tourist attraction highlights and the local gossip columns of Limpopo Province daily papers, no substantial academic insights within the last ten years were available in web format.

In terms of the Basotho culture and the concept of women "marrying" women, this proved to be also very limited in information availability. After looking at various websites and academic articles, there really was no evidence that such a practice exists in Sotho culture to the extent as it does in other North African cultures. The next process was to find actual Sotho people and ask them if this practice exists. Of the thirteen people questioned none could concretely confirm the occurrence of this practice. However, what did come about from one of the female participants was the idea of female circumcision (FC) that takes place within the structures of Sotho Culture. This information is novel because FC has usually been associated with the traditions in West and East African countries and a few in the North such as Egypt. In Southern Africa it is the prevalence of male circumcision rituals that are focussed on. Unfortunately hardly any websites addressed this issue fully, but from a discussion hosted by the *Mail and Guardian* there is evidence that this event does

take place in Sotho culture. Regrettably the participant evaded and then finally refused to be interviewed on this subject. As a result of t, this report will use these few examples to give evidence of how FC challenges how women participate in public life.

Reed Dance is a part of Zulu and Swazi culture, the role and the impact this has on women, and young girls will be discussed. Of interest will be to look at the role this tradition still plays in a very modernised Africa, were the values on virginity are constantly being challenged.

This paper has been divided into the following sections

1. Women in Public Life and Feminist Discourse - Literature and discussion
2. Female circumcision and challenges of Feminist Discourse in Africa - Literature and discussion
 - o Sotho Culture - Literature and discussion.
3. The Rain Queen - Literature and discussion
4. The Reeds Dance - literature and discussion
5. South African TRC Reports pertaining to gender and the information - Literature and discussion.

WHAT IS A WOMAN

When a child is born it is either sexed male or female, as a result certain expectations are set regarding the future roles the child is supposed to fulfil in society. These roles pertain to the following:

Performance – how one is supposed to act in public; one's behaviour has expectations thrust upon it, for instance aggressiveness is attributed as masculine behaviour.

Labour – what jobs one can or cannot do and how one is supposed to do those jobs. This also looks at hegemonies regarded either masculine or feminine institutions.

Authority – there are certain areas where a particular sex is expected to assert their authority, conversely there are also certain situations where a particular sex is not expected to have or express authority. For example, domestic nuances such as knowing the best detergent for clothes is an area where women are expected to be an authority and men are in general are not.

Sexuality – how that sexuality is expressed or should be expressed is validated by how one is sexed.

By now it is clear to see that how one performs in these different areas is the thread that connects all the roles an individual has to fulfil in order to be a functioning member in the community. Feminine and masculine identities are co-constructed by men and women, and it is through this construction that we gauge how we relate, or judge one another even if we do not know each other personally. Issues arise when individuals' rebel against that attributed expectation. It is here in this grey area of rebellion that many women politicians or leaders fall. The performance of a public leader has for the most part been given a masculine value, how do women fit in this role. This report's function is to look at how women negotiate this space.

It is important to highlight that the body of a woman is in fact a symbolic space and a political space; this is why they are such powerful rhetorical agents. A woman's presence or absence in a situation has value, particularly nowadays where there is much scrutiny and analysis on gender relations or gendered experiences. One could even argue that this is why women are used as pawns during war, resulting in either their rape and/or torture. "Often the women may be sexually brutalised before being killed. If men are at home at the time of the attack they are often forced to stand and watch the attackers brutalise and kill the women and children before they themselves are killed" (Meintjes and Goldblatt 1996:28). There is a perverted value during war regarding raping a community's women. This value when unpacked illuminates how men relate to each other, and how men relate to women, and the values placed on the physiology of women.

However, the real question is what is the symbolic value of women and how has that come about to the point that we cringe if we hear or see women being tortured and even worse if we see women being the perpetrators of violent acts? For this report we are working on a claim that women embody a better way of brokering stability. Some of the reasons for this claim lie in the expected performances of women, women are not supposed to be violent, but some of the testimonies in the TRC prove otherwise. What this report will highlight is how the gendered expectations for women and men are different in terms of public life.

It seems that women have always symbolised stability and peace. This is quite apparent to the evocation of “motherhood” and what embodies the maternal. These are attributes that have to do with patience, kindness, sincerity and self sacrifice and also a certain amount of required decorum. These values affect the way women conduct themselves in their private and public life. There is almost a constant burden of guilt associated with the future and what their children will hear or learn about their past if it was less than innocent. For example, a woman is supposed to be a virgin until she is married. A woman who is a virgin conducts herself in a particular way, wears certain clothes and many other variations to what this innocence should be differs from culture to culture, but one thing remains constant, a woman must always embody what is virtuous, even after she is married and has grown children. The realm of motherhood is sacred, and it comes with expectations – across all cultures. A mother is wise, but not wiser than the father, a mother protective of her children, a mother is loyal to her family a mother is a provider and accountable for her children’s conduct.

There as implied psychological strength enshrined in the notion of motherhood. To explain this I will use the old adage ‘Strike a woman strike a rock.’ It was a slogan popularised in the 1950s by the racially oppressed black women of South Africa who protested against apartheid policies. It “was displayed on posters by women wearing green aprons with the phrase: “We are the future of our children.” These protests and slogans inextricably linked motherhood with political activism for women living under Apartheid in South Africa” (Miller 2003:119). I would argue that this perception of linking motherhood with political activism has ingrained perceptions of how women should participate in public life especially in South Africa, and any deviation from these values renders the participant an illegitimate candidate within the public sphere.

On the other-hand, the rules are not the same regarding men. They do not have as much pressure of being ashamed of their past. Their authority is not challenged nor is their value to their community if they have had a chequered past. Fatherhood is different from motherhood; it can be a distant relationship, in that it only deals with provision of the physical necessities, discipline, and the final authoritative judgement on matters regarding the family welfare. The good performance of these attributes in some communities that is enough to justify being a good father.

Understanding African Feminist Discourse and the Public Sphere.

“I have never called myself a feminist. Now if you choose to call me a feminist, that is your business; but I don't subscribe to the feminist idea that all men are brutal and repressive and we must reject them. Some of these men are my brothers and fathers and sons. Am I to reject them too?”

1994 Buchi Echemta (lecture at George Town University)

The above quote not only exemplifies the crisis in determining the experience of feminism in Africa, but also it highlights a form of negotiation that African women are particularly privy to; negotiating a binary existence of Western knowledge and values together with African authenticity and cultural value.

There is an agreement on a generally perceived hegemonic discourse of what feminism is and it is derived from western definitions, because traditionally and geographically the west has provided the disposition and the strategies associated with this movement. Natasha M. Gordon in her paper *"Tonguing the body": Placing Female Circumcision within African Feminist Discourse* highlights this point and supports it with other feminist literature done by Chandra Mohanty. She argues that "Western Feminism has ultimately created an ahistorical, stagnant 'Third World Woman' that is constituted as a coherent group, (thus) sexual difference becomes conterminous with female subordination, and power automatically defined in binary terms: people who have it (read: men) and people who do not (read: women)" (Gordon 24:1997)

If we look at the issue of Female circumcision (FC) and the surrounding debate of its practice, it is clear especially from the Gordon reading that although women may embody the ideas of being the better agents for reconciliation, FC as a debate has not been reconciled by women. The main problem lies in that there seems to be an antagonism between African Feminist and Western Feminist on the ideas of what is tradition and what is violation. Also in part, a fear from African Feminists that this a re-colonisation being perpetrated by Western feminists who seem to be forcing their ideologies of what "womanhood" should be, based on their Western lives.

It is important not to brush all women with the same values in how they function as rhetorical agents. Women, do not just have to argue differently from men, they have to argue differently depending on their localities and the values within those communities.

South African Women and the path to the Public Sphere.

For the discussion of this section I would like to begin by highlighting the literature done by Gwendolyn Mikell, who published "African Feminism: Toward a New Politics of Representation" in 1995. In this paper she gives a summation of some limitations women have experienced in legitimating their access to the public sphere and politics in Africa.

Firstly, she supplies us with a description of African feminism as "dealing with multiple oppressions" and as dealing with "women first and foremost as human, rather than sexual beings." This is a key point because a woman's sexuality and reproductive role in society has been a point of contention in determining women's access and mobility in the public sphere. However, as new subtleties in African women's realities surface, "politics is becoming the central point around which a new feminist consensus is emerging. The realities of women's political representation in the 1990s are shaping the emerging African women's movement." The question now is that since the 1990s are over and South Africa has now experienced over a decade of independence has that activism helped create a new reality, and how is that reality expressed? (Mikell G, 1995:406)

Mikell also points out that "in the early part of this century, women's declining political status was directly related to the oppressive control of the colonial regime.... African women took strength from the fact that their participation was essential if their

countries were to end the colonial experience and achieve independence” (Mikell G, 1994:407). The TRC report looks at some of these experiences, like those of Albertina Sisulu and Winnie Mandela. During apartheid these women played pivotal roles in shaping the liberation movement they were leaders in their own right, but they had to exert this leadership in a way that was different from men because of the impositions put in place because of tradition, because of consequences of having husbands who were key leaders against apartheid and the general apartheid system.

The paper also notes that, in many African countries, “after independence, male suppression of African women's political autonomy increased, despite the contributions women had made to nationalist politics and despite state claims to equitable approaches in education, policies, and laws.” (Mikell G, 1995:408) This inequality is continually redressed through legislation and women’s movements. The evidence of success is still to be established in South Africa.

The search for evidence leads us to need to examine how women are interacting in public life, and as Mikell indicates that “much scholarly discussion has been focused on understanding why African women eschew an explicitly woman-oriented politics, while being victimized by military regimes and oppressed by males in both public and private life. The results of such questioning have been greater insights into state and gender interactions, but we have little information on women's ideological and practical configuration.” (Mikell 1995:408)

African Women

Margaret Strobel

Signs, Vol. 8, No. 1. (Autumn, 1982), pp. 109-131.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0097-9740%28198223%298%3A1%3C109%3AAW%3E2.0.CO%3B2-D>

Signs is currently published by The University of Chicago Press

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This article highlights the dynamics South African women in had to face at least 25 years ago and the role they played in the public sphere. The issues have considerably changed because of new legislation and programs put in place to protect the dignity of women. However, it is important to note how this change has occurred and to see where some of the perceptions some of the inherited capabilities of women have come from.

Firstly, the paper points out the expectations of women's labour, at least 25 years ago, "African women represent[ed] a small fraction of the wage-labour sector, and in urban areas they are concentrated in semiskilled jobs in secondary industries and in service-sector jobs as clerical workers, teachers, nurses, and domestics. Women migrants find themselves without the education to compete with men for better-paying jobs, and they also face sexist assumptions about the kinds of work appropriate to females." (Strobell, 1982:115)

This is a salient point as this report will look at what jobs women now have and how the impact of education has shaped how women create dialogue. Not forgetting that these jobs are previous vocations of many women who are leaders today. It would be interesting to look at if these jobs affected the way these women talk and interact with the public?

One aspect of [women's] problems lies in the desire of male dominated companies and national marketing boards to deal exclusively with men. (Strobell, 1982:119) To some extent this is still true. But to combat this there is a government led gender mainstreaming initiative that seek to redress these imbalances province by province and across all racial categories.

The rise of independent urban women is one indication that control of women by chiefs, male lineage heads, and husbands broke down as a result of colonialism. Colonial mission stations provided an oasis to which female slaves could escape. Despite a largely domestic curriculum for women and unequal male and female access to education, Western-style schools opened some opportunities to women and led, eventually, to the possibility of employment-within the context of a sex-segregated and discriminatory labour market, of course. Most significantly, the new towns that grew up provided the opportunity for women to live independently and unmarried, rare options in rural areas.(pp.121-122). This is a curious and controversial statement by Margret Strobel as she justifies in essence the opportunity for South African women to be apparently emancipated to have been a positive result of colonialism. However, this perspective is limited as it does not look at the pivotal roles that women play in tradition culture, for instance the role of the Rain Queen in Sotho Culture.

Stroble mentions an interesting dialectic, in that, “despite the outpouring of literature on resistance and nationalist movements in Africa, there is remarkably little mention of women’s role in these activities. In part, their leadership may have been limited; to the extent that nationalist groups were led by educated men, the relative absence of women reflects their lesser access to education. It is more likely, however, that women’s role has been largely hidden” (Strobel, 1982:124). What is vital is that the TRC report, just over a decade after this publication, seeks to redress this situation by obtaining testimonies from women and the role that they played in nationalist movements.

Lastly, Stroble notes that, women’s political leadership was intertwined with ritual responsibilities for protection of the community. Or, in times of crisis, a woman might arise to a political role by way of spirit mediumship. It is a noteworthy interconnectedness, that ritual and religion plays in the role of validating and legitimising the role that women play in public life. Joan of Arc of France and Mbuya Nehanda of Zimbabwe, women fighters and leaders have needed to be validated through the role of spirituality and not by virtues of personality. \this is not to say that the spiritual claims should be dismissed, but to show that in traditional societies in order for women to lead the society, this leadership it has to be sanctioned in order higher than what can be explained by logic and reasoning or negotiation between men and women of that society.

FEMALE CIRCUMCISION
LEBOLLO LA BASADI – (*Sotho Translation*)

Female Circumcision: Rite of Passage or Violation of Rights

Female Circumcision in Africa: An Overview

Leonard J. Kouba: Judith Muasher

African Studies Review, Vol. 28, No. 1. (Mar 1985), pp95-110

Sable URL

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-0206%28198503%2928%3A1%3C95%3AFCIAAO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-B>

Date Accessed: 15 Aug 2007

Summary

This paper is an overview of the history of female circumcision (FC) in Africa. These authors take examples of FC occurrences that have been historically recorded from ancient Egyptian evidence to 1982, two years before this paper was published.

They discuss:

- Geographic distribution
- The number of women involved
- The serious complications involved as a result of this process.
- They give the description of the five variations of FC operations
- They emphasise that there are two types of operations mainly practiced in Africa
 - “Excision and Infibulation–excision” (Kouba and Muasher 1985:97)
- Predominantly in Ethiopia, rural Kenya Djibouti, Nigeria, Somalia and Sudan
- They provide a geographical map illustrating where each type of FC operation occurs. It’s a band from Africa from West to the Horn of Africa, it is interesting to not that this map does not locate any of these FC operations in Southern Africa.
- Focuses on the health risks and who the practitioners are pp.101

“Since circumcision is performed largely by non skilled practitioners, under adverse hygienic conditions serious complications can result. The following adverse affects have been identified. Immediate physical effects are shock from loss of blood and severe pain, local sepsis and ulceration occur in the genital area in days after circumcision....tetanus infection which can be severe enough to result in death”
- Emphasises FC is on young girls on the advent of puberty/infancy – leading the reader to see how this is form of violation.
- The older women endorse the practice by inspecting the girl after the process to give their approval and to make sure it was done properly
- Through the use of irony, the authors describe process as unhygienic, and also quote that the symbolic function of this process is “...to keep the young girl pure, and the married woman faithful, genital operations are maintained as Africa’s most valued traditions.” Pp104
- The authors refer to FC as genital mutilation right at the conclusion.
- Provides a seemingly objective rationale on behalf of those who do not consider FC to be a health risk.
- Give the background of the mythology associated with FC, and debunks the role that tradition and religion plays. Report places value on scientific proof pp 103.

- Conclude by giving an appeal for the eradication of FC by making a deliberative argument about the choices African women should have, and also attacks the values of Tradition and appeals for them to be modified. pp 108.

MYTHS

- Religion cannot endorse such acts
- FC is necessary because the clitoris is a dangerous organ and will kill a baby, if it comes into contact with the head during delivery.
- The clitoris is poisonous and will kill a man if it comes into contact with his penis during intercourse.
- Clitoris is considered unpleasant to both the sight and touch, and the sign of maturity is when a woman's ugly genitalia has been removed pp103

Discussion

This paper frames FC primarily as a health risk; they provide a forensic argument by including mortality rates. Through use of all these examples they create a form of inductive logic within the reader to conclude that this practice is barbaric. This paper forms an interesting ethos in that it has been written by both a man and a woman. This is interesting as men are not usually associated in a positive light regarding this subject matter, and very often are excluded from the actual debate for two reasons. The first lies in the idea that FC is a process in order to please men, and the second is that men do not really understand how a woman's biology works and feels like in the first instance; therefore they have no right to be an authority. Yet, having a man write about this issue in such a way as to frame it barbaric works in creating a better ethos, by proving not all men condone this act.

The report does well by focusing on the myths associated with women and their biology, as through this we can begin to see how women are disadvantaged in many African societies just because of how their bodies are valued. The idea is to eradicate the evilness within a woman by removing her clitoris. The question that arises has to do with how you engage with a person who is considered evil from the day she was born? In what capacity can they speak, and how can their claims be made to be legitimate if they do say anything?

Relating this to South Africa public discourse is important, because do the same values that are endorsed by other African culture bare the same worth in Sotho culture. If this is so, how women in a democratic South Africa negotiate the paradigms. Granted Lesotho is a Kingdom that has its own value system, unfortunately this has not been adequately explored especially in relation to South Africa.

"Tonguing the Body": Placing Female Circumcision within African Feminist Discourse

Natasha M. Gordon

Issue: A Journal of Opinion, Vol. 25, No. 2, African Women in the Age of Transformation:

Women's Voices from the Continent. (1997), pp. 24-27.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0047-1607%281997%2925%3A2%3C24%3A%22TBPFC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-%23>

Issue: A Journal of Opinion is currently published by African Studies Association.

Date Accessed : 15-Aug 2007

Summary

- Relate female circumcision (FC) to feminist discourse, puts the argument across that African Feminist discourse and traditional Western Feminist discourse are at loggerheads, surrounding FC
- Looking at how women are discussing this issue and how they are not coming to a resolution about it
- Framed it in such a way as to highlight who has the legitimate claim to try and solve this perceived problem of female circumcision.
- Gordon uses evidence provided by Chandra Mohanty, who wrote "Under the Western Eyes", an article that looks at feminism in the 'Third World', and how culture and tradition have shaped most of it
- Feminist discourse has become binary, either you are endorsing patriarchy or you are not and "power is automatically defined...people who have it (read: men) people who do not (read: women)... Feminism is read as is western (read: white) speaking for an African problem" pp24
"Western Feminism has influential powers in global discourse on women's issues. It is exactly this influence that remains to be questioned as western feminist perpetrate similar aspects of silencing and remain blind to the lives of the women who work from the margin" pp24
- Also talks about the myths, and history surrounding female circumcision
- Talks about the instruments used, "razor blades, knives, stones sharp glass and in some regions, the midwife or *daya's* teeth."
- Associated of African Women for Research Development (AAWORD) – highlights their opinion that argues against Western Feminists intervention. In essence it is a problem for African Women that needs to be solved by African women. However, Gordon attributes them the role of being defensive and not actually solving the problem.
"Do African and other Third World women have to wait for the flurry of words to subside before moving into action towards eliminating FC?" pp26

Discussion

Gordon's paper highlights some of the irony involved in viewing women as rhetorical agents that embody a kinder way of doing public life. If feminists cannot come to an agreement because they accuse each other of taking either a colonialist discourse or being inefficient feminists, how then do issues become resolved especially in a nation that is as diverse as South Africa? A nation were not only race plays a factor but also class and education levels? Who epitomises the right way of how South African women should conduct themselves when dealing in public sphere.

It is clear which view Gordon endorses in this paper, through her use of deliberative and epideictic words to appeal to African woman to enforce a change in how FC should be valued. "Where do African Feminists in Africa stand on this debate, and most importantly, what are they doing? While one agrees (in part) that the Western intervention has been a mixed blessing, inviting the direct repose of Third World feminists against colonial imperialism, it is doubtful that there can be any mobilisation towards action beyond the deadlock into which these debates have wedged all the "voices" (Gordon 1997:27).

She makes further appeals for a "third space" where "words can be converted into actions...so that debates over female circumcision do not end up in the rhetorical piles or neo-colonialist debates that plague Western academic discourse at present" (Gordon 1997:27).

This paper is call for action, it is a challenge directed towards African feminists to engage actively in the public life to enforce change. Natasha Gordon is an active rhetorical agent for reconciliation as she is trying to bring to harmony differing points of view, and she is also calling for action. It is also a paper that could easily be delivered verbally in public because of how it has been composed. There are no articles that have responded to this.

Frances A. Althaus

International Family Planning Perspectives, Vol. 23, No. 3. (Sep., 1997), pp. 130-133.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0190-3187%28199709%2923%3A3%3C130%3AFCROPO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-T>

International Family Planning Perspectives is currently published by Guttmacher Institute.

Date Accessed 16 August 2007

Summary

- The articles primary function is to argue about the consequences of excision and the author provides evidence to support the notion that female circumcision should not take place. For example pp131 “In addition the amputation of clitoris and other sensitive tissue reduces the woman’s ability to experience sexual pleasure. For infibulated women the consummation of marriage is likely to be painful because of the small vaginal opening and the lack of elasticity and the scar tissue that forms it.”
- This paper also highlights a study of three hundred polygamous Sudanese who were asked whether they prefer to have sexual relations with women who have been circumcised or not – out of that 266 expressed a definite sexual preference for an uncircumcised wife. In addition, 66 said that they had married an uncircumcised wife because of the penetration difficulties they have experienced with their first wife.
- Althaus focuses on the Sudanese situation to illustrate a point against arguments that have advocated FC. Gives evidence to prove that in actual fact divorce rates are higher, and fertility rates are much lower in communities that practice FC. The author questions why this practice should continue seeing as neither the men nor women are being gratified by this process.
- If FC is considered normal there needs to be a critical look at the societies and how they normalise the situation, some of these reasons lie in the social and economic rationality.
- There is blame put on patriarchy and how patriarchy functions in African societies in defining female sexuality. The interesting function of virginity in African culture and how it is not only about a moral stand point (family honour), but also a commercial one in the value of the bride price. That is why a young woman’s virginity is regularly checked by the mother or the elder women in the community.
- Peer pressure from other women pp 132. It is the name calling that is directed to those who are not circumcised. This also removes the idea of individual agency.

- The paper advocates change. However, criticises briefly Western ideas of feminism towards African women “African women are depicted as aberrant, while their intact Western women have their sexuality affirmed as the norm”
- The paper gives evidence of change and how change is taking place in different African countries, through the use of; Community Education, Alternative Rituals and Theatre. Finally this paper, tackles how to manage the future of FC.

“In most countries, women with higher levels of education and those who have income of their own are less likely than other women to have been circumcised and to have had their daughters circumcised....this one violation of women’s rights cannot [be abolished] without placing it firmly in the context of efforts to address the social and economic injustice women face the world over. If women are to be considered as equal and responsible members of society, no aspect of their physical, psychological or sexual integrity can be compromised” pp133

**WEBSITE, NEWS AND CHATS ON FEMALE CIRCUMCISION IN
SOUTH AFRICA**

News24.com

http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_1531852,00.html

Date: Accessed : August 18 2007

Female circumcision law shock

24/05/2004 16:39 - (SA)

Johannesburg - Most South African provinces do not have legislation that explicitly outlaws female circumcision, the Congress of Traditional Leaders of SA (Contralesa) said on Monday.

Contralesa national organiser Inkosi Mwelo Nonkonyana said most provinces needed to revisit some of their legislation to ensure that it was in line with the Children's Bill, which deemed female circumcision unconstitutional.

"This state of affairs is unacceptable as the national legislation outlines clearly that all children, boys and girls, should not be subjected to harmful social and cultural practices."

"The bill prohibits the circumcision of female children, while every male child is granted the right to refuse to be initiated or be circumcised under unhygienic conditions."

Nonkonyana was addressing delegates at a traditional initiation conference in Johannesburg. The two-day event, which started on Monday, was organised by the National House of Traditional Leaders of SA.

He said it appeared as if there was little motivation for provinces to collect specific information, in a systematic way, on circumcision.

"An important factor in this regard is the fact that circumcision is not coded in the International Code of Disease. Instead, what is recorded at public hospitals relates to the infection and septicaemia resulting from botched circumcisions."

Nonkonyana said it was unclear why the Northern Cape and the Western Cape had not promulgated any legislation on circumcision.

The two provinces do not collect information on the traditional custom.

There were no statistics on the number of cases of patients admitted to state hospitals after botched circumcisions in the Western Cape.

"It appears as if other health related issues such as tuberculosis and trauma are of greater priority to the province, (in) compar(ison) to traditional initiation," he said.

<http://forum.mg.co.za/printthread.php?Cat=&Board=rape&main=1801978929&type=thead>

DATE ACCESSED- August 16 2007

Can women who have been circumcised still achieve oragasm? If Yes, they should stop whining too.

Kathryn Kendall writes on Female Genital Mutilation:

"I'm a 'white' US citizen and academic living in South Africa and working among Zulu women since 1995, and before that in Lesotho on a Fulbright, working among Basotho women 1992-94, before that at Smith College for some years. I have been reading contributions to this topic with interest and am disappointed in the acrimony that seems to arise between scholars on different 'sides' of the issues. Is it really necessary to insult and attack each other and call each other names? Is it not possible for 'feminists' to question, to discuss, and to explore issues without insulting each other or without engaging in bad faith, assuming the 'other' academic is mean-spirited, stupid, incompetent, or politically uninformed? While this strategy has been common among scholars in the past, it seems to me to discourage cross-cultural learning and exploration; it seems to me to frighten young scholars away from the field of cross-cultural studies; it seems to make any venture into a culture other than one's own so subject to vicious criticism that one had best stay in her own back yard or better yet, speak only from within her own house not even looking out the window. From my position as a 'western' woman situated among African women, I see many different attitudes and responses to what might be called FGM or female circumcision among Zulu and Basotho women, and I would like to contribute to the discussion, not as an expert but as a woman on-site who hears and sees and experiences, and attempts to report, different African women's responses and attitudes, as well as my own. I also want to encourage other women who might like to look beyond their personal cultural experiences to see what, who, and how the 'other', both within themselves and in places beyond their windows, operates. If, as bell hooks writes, a feminist opposes all forms of domination, then we must be careful as feminists not to dominate each other with name-calling and vindictive attacks on each others' attempts to understand and define self and other.

What I have found during my five years of living and working among women in southern Africa, and given the faults of the lenses through which I view what is around me, is that SOME Basotho and Zulu women cherish the initiation process that includes clitoridectomy; they view this process as part of their transit from childhood to womanhood; they enter the circumcision schools voluntarily and are there engaged in 'training' directed and administered by adult women of their own social groupings; and they feel empowered by the process. Among these women it is not usual to expect sexual pleasure from heterosexual relations; many of the women experience pleasure only with other women, often in the form of kissing, and the clitoridectomy does not affect this pleasuring (unless, of

course, the operation turns septic; but in fact that seems seldom to occur). Other Basotho and Zulu women wouldn't go near a 'circumcision school'! They view the schools as 'primitive' and 'barbaric' and they view clitoridectomy as mutilation. This difference is often based on class, education, and exposure to 'western' thought, which includes exposure to homophobia. These more educated women often view clitoridectomy and homosexual behaviour among women as equally horrific. Still OTHER educated Zulu and Basotho women call themselves 'feminist', reject clitoridectomy, and yet regret the passing of an institutionalised form of women's initiation; not all educated Zulu and Basotho women are homophobic, indeed some are lesbian, others lesbian-and-gay-friendly. Some uneducated poor women, or rural women who are not poor but have had little exposure to 'western' thinking, but who have been exposed to missionary forms of Christianity, regard circumcision schools as 'heathen' but secretly seek out clitoridectomy in an effort to be acceptable to 'traditional' women and men in their villages. There is absolutely no position from which one can generalise a 'Zulu' or 'Basotho' point of view on the subject; the points of view are many and complex. And so the issue of FGM or clitoridectomy is vastly more complicated than many people, in or outside Africa, realise, and I am only privileged to hear this multiplicity of points of view among TWO of the many hundreds (perhaps thousands) of cultural groups in Africa.

Gina Oboler writes: Bottom line: of course we can teach about oppression in other cultures, but we really should try to understand it thoroughly first, consider critically what is really wrong about it and why, and how it compares to other wrongs, listen to the voices of the people it intimately affects, try to understand it from their point of view, etc. It is in failing to do those things that we fail in cultural relativism -- not in the mere fact of having made a value judgment.

I agree with this point of view but would add--clitoridectomy is not always experienced as oppression; not only should we 'consider critically what is really wrong about it and why', but we should consider opening our minds to consider what might be RIGHT about it, from the points of view of the women concerned. I edited a book of short stories called BASALI! STORIES BY AND ABOUT WOMEN IN LESOTHO (University of Natal Press, 1995), and one of those stories, 'How She Lost Her Eye', concerns a woman who actively sought admission to a circumcision school. It presents a point of view not represented in the recent postings to WMST-L, and it might be enlightening to those who are interested in what is, however, merely ONE way of looking at the issue (not representative of ALL Basotho women).
Kendall"

RAIN QUEEN

Rain Queen (Ga-Modjadji)

There is no much comprehensive academic literature that seeks to understand the role of the Rain Queen after 1943. This is unfortunate as it limits a comprehensive understanding of the role of the monarch in post-apartheid South Africa, and there is also a fear that the literature that is available, although thorough, is outdated and could be tainted with racial prejudice. However, information provided by tourist websites for South Africa supply brief histories and a descriptions of the role she plays in the Lovedu community (also known as Lobedu/Balobedu). The websites also have their shortcomings in that they dwell far more in the mythological aspects of her role, rather than explaining her day to day experiences. The reasons for this form of presentation are many, but one would assume the main purpose is to heighten their tourist profile.

In the process of gathering research on Queen Modjadji, I found it interesting that many of the Sotho speaking university students were unfamiliar with the term Queen Modjadji. This is significant and there are many possible reasons to explain this phenomenon. Firstly, the Lobedu is a small community within the Sotho culture and none of the respondents were from this community so that could explain why they knew nothing about this monarch. It could also be a small reflection of how less and less pivotal the view of her role has become in the 21st Century. Added to this, it is representative of the tragedy many African cultures are facing in that they are becoming more and more diluted with other dominant value systems. Chiefs, kings, queens and African royalty after colonialism, now serve more figurative ceremonial functions rather than the previous integral role. Finally I would like to suggest that this can also be an example highlighting that women in traditional societies who used to have great influence are now becoming more and more peripheral in terms of their command and respect.

As earlier stated the most comprehensive ethnographic study that is heavily relied on by authors on the subject today was published in 1943, by E. and J.D Kridge, the publication is called "The Realm of A Rain-Queen: a study of the pattern of the Lovedu society." They did a study of the Lovedu society over a period of 20 months. The Lovedu (Lobedu) are a part of the Sotho, a culture that has mixed heritages from Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe. It is understood that the Lovedu people within the Sotho culture are the one's who have the assigned Rain Queen.

The following information has been gathered from various South African tourist websites.

- "Queen Modjadji is a direct descendant of the once powerful royal house of Monomotapa, which ruled over the Karanga people in Zimbabwe in the 15th and 16th centuries. Rider Haggard's classical novels King Solomon's Mines and She drew the world's attention to the legendary Rain Queen of the Balobedu Peoples." (prominentpeople.co.za: 2 Jul 2007)
- Currently this Queen has dominion over 150 villages located in the Venda region of the Northern Province, the then Northern Transvaal. The Kingdom of Modjadji situated in the Limpopo Province comprises of a rural community of over 150 villages, called the Balobedu Kingdom. "Although she is the leading political personality of the tribe, she is essentially a rain-

maker; and her political power in this agricultural society, located in an area of uncertain rainfall, depends in large measure upon her rain-making prowess...As old age comes on and her powers fail she is expected to take poison and her successor is chosen by a rather elaborate process” (Brown 1945:67).

- This ‘rather elaborate process’ happens when the Queen is nearing death. She selects her eldest daughter to be her successor and then she ingests poison.
- The Queen communicates to her subjects is through her male councillors or *ndunas*, and village headmen, according to tradition the Queen must have nothing to do with public functions; except for the rain-making ceremony at her royal residence in Khetlhakone village. (www.tzaneen.co.za: 2 July 2007)
- Also according to custom she never marries, but she bears children by her close relatives to continue the royal lineage. She is attended by her 'wives', each sent from the many villages in Ga-Modjadji. For centuries many tribes have respected the Queen's powers, even Shaka Zulu sent his top emissaries, including his traditional healer Dumisa, to request the Queen's blessings. With the influence of Christian missionaries, many of these traditional customs have been discontinued. (www.tzaneen.co.za: 2 July 2007)
- The current Rain Queen, Makobo Modjadji VI, reign began on 16 April 2003. “The 25-year-old succeeded her grandmother Mokope Modjadji V. Her own mother, Princess Maria Modjadji, the real successor, died two days before the last Rain Queen. Makobo Modjadji is the first rain queen to have received formal education, having completed high school. Her predecessors were:
 - Rain Queen Maselekwane Modjadji I (1800-54)
 - Rain Queen Masalanabo Modjadji II (1854-95)
 - Rain Queen Khetoane Modjadji III (1896-1959)
 - Rain Queen Makoma Modjadji IV (1959-80)
 - Rain Queen Mokope Modjadji V (1981-2001)”(www.prominentpeople.co.za: 2 July 2007)

Discussion

Using the given evidence to assess the Queen as a rhetorical agent in public life, we see that she hardly interacts within this sphere. Her role as a leader is not the same as how it is understood in Western monarchies, democracies or political systems. This is interesting as it is an isolated monarchy that works within an overtly pluralistic state such as South Africa. It is an isolated value system that has to work concurrently with an entirely different system of governance that has different political values. The Lovedu embody seemingly old aristocratic values that put the Queen in a position where she is inaccessible, and is regarded as sacred. This value is reinforced within the community, especially if you look at how the media in that community represent her position. In October 2004, the *Mopani News* claimed to have published the first ever pictures of Modjadji Rain Making Ceremony. The article goes on to state that, "During the ceremonies, while speaking to her ancestors, the Queen poured a traditional mageu, [this is a traditional homebrewed beer] called Mphapo, onto a sacred piece of ground called Thokoleng at the foot of a tree said to be more than 100 years old." The Mphapo drink is given to members of the royal family to heal their illnesses, to pass the Royal powers on to them and bring luck to the family.

This is the only vocal interaction the Queen is recorded to have had in public, no details are provided for what she said to the ancestors nor was there a description of the delivery. The rest of the article gets the information by interviewing the spokesperson "for the Modjadji Royal Council (MRC), Mr Victor 'No Mistake' Mathekga,

It seems that the Queen's ethos is reinforced for her by her royal court and by the actual rainmaking process. This is because the importance of the Queen is entrenched in the culture and the history that so she does not have to build her own ethos. This is highlighted by the opening paragraph of the article:

"TEARS of joy and cars hooting in Bolobedu on Monday last week best described the happy mood of the Bolobedu people after it became evident that the Modjadji Royal family, under their newly crowned Rain Queen, Makobo Modjadji, had been successful in her first rain making campaign."

Her success enshrined and validated her value as a rainmaking Queen so much so that she reinforced the community's spiritual belief in the power of the ancestors. In fact it was so heightened that the newspaper noted that her success in rain as defeating western science that had predicted a drought for that area. "There was also much satisfaction and pride that they had contradicted a forecast by the South African Weather Bureau that there would be no rain in Limpopo this month."

However, her role is not ubiquitously accepted in the community, as the article ends by stating that half the people they interviewed did not think that a single human being had the power to control the weather by making it rain as they wished. They actually believed it to be blasphemous and that that person should be punished by God for thinking that they can do so.

I find it interesting that two spiritual systems are the tools that either discredit her or honour her and not her capability of governing this community.

The Queen however is not regarded as a feminine embodiment of high powered monarch as we would assume. The queen has masculine values placed on her, in that she can have wives and she is regarded as a 'father'. The second article published on the 18 of March 2005 (Mopani News), explains this complex identity of the queen through their interview with a member of the MRC.

This article is titled "Joy as Modjadji Rain Queen has baby", it starts of by celebrating the fact that Rain Queen, Makobo Modjadji VI had given birth to a baby girl. The baby was named Masalanabo after the former Queen Masalanabo Modjadji who reigned from 1854-1895 to honour their ancestors. It is a tribute to the ancestors also a request for the ancestors grace to guide and protect her.

The dual roles and identities of the queen are clarified when the identity of the father of the baby is explained. Firstly, "according to Lobedu tradition, the Queen is not permitted to marry. Marriage takes place in the sense that the Queen is seen as a 'man' who marries a woman from every headman-ship in the kingdom to keep the royal blood going...the Queen's 'wives' (Bahlanone) reside in the Royal Village. The children are fathered by men from the nobility (Bakholola). The biological fathers, however, may not claim fatherhood since the Queen is considered as the 'father'..." The article further adds that because the child has been fathered by a 'commoner' and not of 'royal' blood it is believed "the baby will only bring bad luck to the Royal family". Historically, "a boy child or one born to a commoner was strangled immediately after birth without anyone knowing about it."

It can be argued that the Queen embodies stability because she has divine virtues and masculine virtues thrust upon her. She is considered a father, and so by extension she is viewed as a protector and a provider. She is divine in that she can make it rain and she alone can talk to the ancestors in the rain making ceremony. Her ability to provide rain creates stability within that community, because rain is so integral to the well being of this agricultural society. However, she is not allowed to speak publicly to her subjects and no reason is given. There is also no evidence to show how the Queen relates and interacts with other royal members of other cultures and in what situations. As the first article suggests, that even Shaka Zulu sought her advice, it does not indicate whether this advice was just regarding the rainfall pattern, or do with political matters. Or even if the royal members of other cultures such as the Zulu still communicate with her and about what sort of issues.

ARTICLES and REFERENCES

M **By the people, for the people**
Mopani News
Tel:(015) 267-0050 1/2/3 Fax:(015) 267-0054 PO Box1073 Tzaneen, 0850
Friday 22 October 2004 VOLUME 2 NO. 42 50c incl.

FIRST-EVER PICTURES OF MODJADJI RAIN MAKING



▲ A BLACK cow, or 'Kgomo ya Thokola', is helped by members of the Royal Family to drink Mphapo while Rain Queen Makobo Modjadji V looks on.



▲ RAIN QUEEN Makobo Modjadji V, pours a traditional mageu drink, called Mphapo, onto sacred ground at the foot of a 100-year-old Mohlapu tree during the rain making ceremony held by the Mathekga family last weekend. These pictures are believed to be the first ever published of scenes from the Modjadi rain-making ceremonies. FULL STORY AND ANOTHER PICTURE ON PAGE 2

Modjadji joy as rains fall

Alex Ipho Matlala

TEARS of joy and cars hooting in Bolobedu on Monday last week best described the happy mood of the Bolobedu people after it became evident that the Modjadji Royal family, under their newly crowned Rain Queen, Makobo Modjadji, had been successful in her first rain making campaign.

From Monday last week, rains fell in many different parts of the country and even on Monday this week, rain was falling in the Letaba district.

Five different families in the Royal dynasty each hold rain-making rituals on successive week ends; with the first being held by the Moalwe on October 9, followed by the Mathekga this past week end, the Molokwane in Phakong village this coming weekend 23 October, and the Mampeule and Matshwi due to hold their rituals on 30 October.

The Modjadji Royal Family, who are world-renowned for their rain making powers, delighted many when rains fell on Monday, 9 October, two days after the first rain making rituals held by the family of Moalwe gave the Bolobedu something to smile about.

There was also much satisfaction and pride that they had contradicted a forecast by the South African Weather Bureau that there would be no rain in Limpopo this month.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people from all corners of Limpopo have converged on Bolobedu for the period 9 to 30 October to see Rain Queen Modjadji V calling on her ancestors to bring rain to Limpopo.

The Royal Family strongly believe that more rain is still going to fall during the weeks ahead.

During the ceremonies, while speaking to her ancestors, the Queen poured a traditional nageu, called Mphapo, onto a sacred piece of

ground called Thokoleng at the foot of a tree said to be more than 100 years old.

The Mphapo mixture was then fed to a black cow called Mokgadi, which is also known as 'Kgomo ya Thokola.' Finally, the Mphapo was given to members of the Royal Family to drink. The ceremonies concluded with traditional dances by elderly people connected to the Royal Family.

Speaking to Mopani News, the spokesperson for the Modjadji Royal Council, Mr Victor 'No Mistake' Mathekga, said the Mphapo drink was given to members of the family to heal their illnesses and also to pass the Royal powers on to them. 'It also brings brings luck to the family,' he added.

Asked about what makes the rain fall, Mathekga said, the Royal Family received their rain making powers from a horn which had been given to their forefathers while they were still living in what is now Zimbabwe back in the 16th century.

"Because of the wars which were taking place in Zimbabwe in those years, our forefathers moved down South and settled in Bolobedu. 'We then started to speak to our ancestors who responded with rains that sent rivers flowing to their banks and dams filling up. Since then we have performed our rain making rituals annually in October and we have never failed,' he explained. Mathekga further said that because the Royal Family's 'supernatural rain making powers,' enabled Bolobedu to receive a high annual rainfall it could be called 'The Evergreen Paradise.'

However five of ten people spoken to by Mopani News said they believed that rain came from God, and not from any human being. They said any one who claimed to have powers to control nature deserved to be severely punished by God.



▲ MEMBERS of the Modjadji Royal Family take turns in drinking Mphapo during the rain making ceremony last weekend.

Joy as Modjadji Rain Queen has baby girl

Alex Japho Matlala

THE MODJADJI Royal Council has finally gone public about escalating rumours that Queen Makoho Modjadji V had given birth to a baby girl. Requests by Mopani News to obtain photographs of the baby were refused.

According to tradition the baby will be first in the line of royal succession.

This was confirmed to Mopani News last week by the chairman of the Modjadji Royal Council (MRC), Mr Kelly Modjadji, who also revealed that the baby was born during the last week of February.

"We decided to name the girl Masalanabo after the former Queen Masalanabo Modjadji who reigned between 1854-1895 to honour our ancestors for this precious gift," Kelly said.

"We would like to thank our ancestors, whom we strongly believe played a crucial role in bringing the baby into the world, and believe they will also help in raising her," he added.

Asked about the father of the child,

Kelly said he was not in a position to reveal his identity and had still to consult with the family.

However, sources in the MRC confirmed that the child's father was former Greater Letaba Municipal Manager, Mr David Mohale.

"That is why the council kept the arrival of the child secret at first because the father was a commoner," they explained.

"According to Lobedu tradition, the Queen is not permitted to marry. Marriage takes place in the sense that the Queen is seen as a man who marries a woman from every headmanship in the kingdom to keep the royal blood going.

"The Queen's 'wives' (Bahlanone) reside in the Royal Village. The children are fathered by men from the nobility (Bakholola). The biological fathers, however, may not claim fatherhood since the Queen is considered as the 'father.'

"As for the Queen, she was supposed to be married to any man from the royal

blood, they said'.

Further investigation revealed that while most in the Royal Council and family celebrate the new baby, a certain minority group was perturbed by its arrival.

It was alleged that some people in the family believe that because the father was not of royal blood, the baby will only bring bad luck to the Royal family.

In times past, a boy child or one born to a commoner was strangled immediately after birth without anyone knowing about it.

"That was done to say sorry to our ancestors and ensure that rain fell afterwards," Mopani News was told.

Meanwhile, other elders in the family saw the arrival of a girl baby as a blessing from ancestors.

A big party was reportedly thrown during February at the Royal Kraal to celebrate the pending arrival of the baby. Various tribal kings and queens and headmen were invited.

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Date Accessed 2 July 2007

REED DANCE

Reed Dance (uMkhosi woMhlanga)

1. Who participates, how often is this
2. What is the debate
3. How do women show agency or lack of agency

As with the Rain Queen, the Reeds Dance ceremony does not have much legitimate academic literature or ethnographic reports that have published that concretely explain the Reed Dance. However, the Reed dance ceremony has attracted local and international attention bordering on notoriety. The event is photographed used as a selling attribute for tourists to come and visit South Africa, just witness it.

Information on the procedure of the ceremony is also highlighted by newspapers, and this report will be using some of these stories to help explain and highlight the contentions this ceremony has augmented.

The Reed Dance is a ceremony performed annually in September in the shared Zulu and Swazi Cultures. The historic purpose of this ceremony was to pay homage to the Queen Mother. The reeds are cut usually a week before and they are put before the feet of the Queen Mother (Queen Ntombi) at her Eludzidzini Palace. The women and girls must travel on foot to deliver the reeds. The ceremony is also where King Mswati traditionally picks a new bride from thousands of young girls who dance before him dressed in traditional attire, which is a short-beaded skirt and they are topless, the “culmination of a rite of spring at which girls gather reeds to build a wind break for the queen mother... But in recent years, the king has increasingly made his choice in private, after a thorough screening by palace aides and his mother.” Only those who are virgins are allowed to participate in this ceremony.

There is much symbolism involved in the ceremony,
Umchwasho – tasselled scarves symbolising their (the virgin girls) chastity
male marshals – hundred of them who guide the girls from the rivers to the royal palace
Ntsonjeni Dlamini, - who is in charge of overseeing traditional affairs, compelled by tradition to beat the celebrating girls -- including the king's daughter -- with a stick.
Inkhosikati" – the wives of the King

The Reed Dance has undergone much criticism and praise internationally and locally from different sectors of society. However, women’s interest groups have vocalized the most criticism. Some of the debates that have been put forward include the idea that this practice undermines the “Southern Africa Development Community (Sadc) Declaration on Gender and Development, which calls upon member-states to abolish all cultural practices that undermine women's rights and dignity.” (Mpinganjira 2007)

The dignity that is seen as being violated is because of inspection of the young girls’ virginity.

From the evidence and the reports supplied by the newspapers, we can see some of the debates other women in public life have been subjected to because they have commented on the ceremony. For example, it is interesting to note that the First Lady of Tanzania (Mrs Kiketwe) was reprimanded for condoning this practice by women in her own country. She went to Mbabane to witness this ceremony in

September 2006, and through her public address at this event, seems to have exemplified the Reed Dance as a way of preserving African culture and encouraging young girl to abstain from pre-marital sex. The irony is that Swaziland is recorded to highest HIV/AIDS mortality rates in sub-Saharan Africa.

Mrs Kiketwe seemed to have comprised herself from being the embodiment of stability and positive imagery of Tanzania and African women in power to being criticized for showing a “lack of intellectual mettle”. This argument highlights an often neglected group of rhetorical agents of African ‘First Ladies’. It seems to be that this group has gained a reputation of “relegating women’s rights in their material pursuit” (Mpinganjira 2007).

The evidence does not highlight what the Queen has to say about the ceremony, but women activists from all over Africa have seen this practice as deeming to women. On the other hand many of the participants willing go to the ceremony, but it seems not for the reasons that have been given, for example in an article provided by UN Integrated Regional Information Networks (2005) is that, “the possibility of being chosen as the King's next wife is less of an incentive for participating than the opportunity to socialise with other girls in a rare outing away from home.”

WEBSITE ARTICLES FOR THE REED DANCE

http://www.iol.co.za/index.php?click_id=13&set_id=1&art_id=vn20070907041344868C191235

'No pants' call for Zulu reed dance
Sipho Khumalo
September 07 2007 at 10:23AM

A senior Zulu royal princess, Thembi Ndlovu - one of the organisers of the reed dance ceremony - has urged all women attending this two-day spectacle in Nongoma, KwaZulu-Natal, not to wear pants.

This call follows controversy over the recent assault of a woman at Unit 17 hostel in Umlazi, south of Durban.

She was undressed and her home burned for because she wore pants at this former men-only hostel.

On Thursday, however, Ndlovu was at pains to explain that the royal house was not against women wearing pants under normal circumstances.

"I also wear them but, on the day, I will drop them for isidwaba (short traditional skin petticoat). This is a solemn occasion.

"We are praying to the ancestors and all lords to preserve young maidens from all social scourges ravaging the nation.

"Each reed carried by a young girl represents a victory against these scourges and the quest to preserve their virginity," Ndlovu said.

She appealed to people to respect the traditional function and wear appropriate attire to give it the dignity it deserved.

The princess was backed by Nomagugu Ngobese, of the Nomkhubulwana Youth and Culture Development Organisation, a proponent of virginity testing, who said uMkhosi woMhlanga was indeed a very sacrosanct ceremony.

But Mfanozelwe Shozi, of the Commission on Gender Equality, said this matter raised critical issues relating to the freedom of choice and freedom of association, which needed "to be looked at".

This article was originally published on page 3 of The Star on September 07, 2007

http://www.mg.co.za/articlepage.aspx?area=/breaking_news/breaking_news__africa/&articleid=249482

Partying Swazi princess casts pall over reed dance

Thulani Mthethwa | Mbabane, Swaziland

30 August 2005 01:27

A drinking and dancing celebration by the king's daughter shocked a Swazi traditionalist enough for him to deliver a spanking to the teenage princess, and cast a pall over Swaziland's annual royal bride-choosing rites.

Royal officials had tried to keep word of Princess Sikhanyiso's party quiet, but acknowledged late on Monday that it had occurred on Friday, and Swazi papers reported the story for the first time on Tuesday.

The kingdom's annual reed dance, featuring 20 000 girls in beads and traditional skirts, ended late on Monday with no public indication of whether King Mswati III had chosen a bride from among any of the dancers.

Royal officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the issue is considered sensitive, said on Tuesday the king had privately chosen three potential brides and might unveil one at a ceremony in southern Swaziland this weekend.

According to tradition, the king is meant to select a bride at the reed dance, the culmination of a rite of spring at which girls gather reeds to build a wind break for the queen mother. But in recent years, the king has increasingly made his choice in private, after a thorough screening by palace aides and his mother.

Days before this year's reed dance, the king announced he was ending a ritual banning sexual relations for girls younger than 18 and symbolised by the wearing of woolen tassels. The king revived the ancient umchwasho rite to fight Aids, which is at crisis levels in Swaziland, but ended the rite a year earlier than scheduled because it was ridiculed as old-fashioned and unfairly focused on girls.

His eldest daughter Princess Sikhanyiso, a 17-year-old who was rarely seen in the umchwasho tassels herself, threw Friday's party with loud music and alcoholic drinks to celebrate the end of the chastity rite.

"We were so shocked that the girls decided to turn the reed-dance ceremony into a drinking and dancing spree," Ntsonjeni Dlamini, who is in charge of overseeing traditional affairs, said on Monday.

Dlamini said he was compelled by tradition to beat the celebrating girls -- including the king's daughter -- with a stick.

"I was so surprised to see Princess Sikhanyiso drinking and dancing when I expected her to lead by example by respecting herself as a leader," said one of the girls involved, Nonhlanhla Dlamini, who is not related to Ntsonjeni Dlamini.

The king and his family are no strangers to controversy.

Princess Sikhanyiso has raised eyebrows in this conservative kingdom by wearing Western-style skirts and jeans. Her father has come under international pressure for resisting reforms to introduce more democracy in the country. His lavish lifestyle, including indulging a love of top-of-the range cars, contrasts with the absolute poverty of most of his subjects.

The Aids crisis has compounded the poverty, with estimates that about 40% of the country's one million people are infected with the HIV virus.

According to Swazi tradition, the king is always meant to have a bride in waiting. He can only marry her when she is pregnant.

Mswati's late father, King Sobhuza II, who led the country to independence from Britain in 1968, had more than 70 wives. -- Sapa-AP

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Swazi girls offer reeds to King Mswati
Benita van Eyssen | Ludzidzini, Swaziland

29 August 2005 12:11

Tens of thousands of unmarried Swazi girls gathered at the royal residence on Sunday to lay down reeds as part of a week-long celebration of national pride that will culminate in King Mswati III selecting a new virgin bride.

The bare-breasted girls in brightly coloured traditional fabric and clutching clumps of reeds sang and stamped their feet as they edged along a snaking queue toward the thatched dwellings at Ludzidzini that is the home of Africa's last absolute monarch.

"This is their pride and this ceremony is a way of preserving their livelihood as girls," explained .

The 37-year-old king who already has 12 wives, but is expected to identify another "fiancé" from among the estimated 50 000 girls registered to take part in the celebration this year, did not make an appearance.

Swazi royal police, military and palace officials were at hand to control the event that drew a stream of curious foreign tourists, photographers, journalists and onlookers.

The procession, part of the mountain kingdom's age old annual "reed dance", coincided with the premature lifting of a five year ban on pre-marital sex, known as "umcwasho".

The ban applied to girls under the age of 18, who were required to wear brightly coloured tassels to denote their chastity.

The royal palace has given no explanation for dropping the custom that was revived after more than a decade amid rising HIV/Aids infections.

But it is widely accepted that many in the impoverished landlocked country of about one million people were not pleased with the fact that girls were being singled out in the bid to curb the sexually transmitted disease.

Shortly after imposing the ban in 2001, King Mswati III was fined one cow for selecting a teenager to be groomed as a future wife and this fuelled the negative sentiment.

The king's teenage daughters, participating in the week's events, have also come under fire over their apparent disregard for "umcwasho".

Pictures of a scantily clad Princess Sikhanyiso were splashed across the front page of The Sunday Times with details of a beating the 17-year-old received for partying on a day set aside for the "maidens" to rest.

The princess, in an interview with the newspaper a day after girls from across the country engaged in preparation for Sunday's procession -- including cutting the four-metre long reeds -- denied any wrongdoing.

"Once we have cut the reed, what should we do next, are we in mourning?" she was quoted as saying while denying allegations of drinking among the girls who were being accommodated in tents outside the grounds of the royal residence.

At Ludzidzini on Sunday meanwhile, ordinary Swazi girls, for the most part seemed excited at the prospect of paying their respects to the king and contributing to a significant Swazi cultural event.

One 15-year-old who described herself as hungry, appeared more than ready to exchange her traditional cloth with a western item of clothing when she encountered a woman in need of the obligatory skirt for those wanting to witness the event.

The balance of power in Swaziland lies between King Mswati, who took the throne at the age of 18 in 1986 and the Queen Mother, Queen Ntombi.

The father of more than 20 children rules by decree in the country where political parties are banned, unemployment is high and around 40% of the nation is infected with HIV/Aids.

His wives, known as "inkhosikati" reside in a number of palaces or modern homes across the kingdom and appear to be the envy of most young Swazi girls for having been chosen by the king with a reputation for providing a lavish lifestyle. - Sapa-DPA

http://www.mg.co.za/articlePage.aspx?articleid=248731&area=/breaking_news/breaking_news__africa/

Swazi girls end ancient chastity rite

Thulani Mthethwa | Mbabane, Swaziland

22 August 2005 03:37

At dawn on Monday, thousands of Swazi girls removed tasselled scarves symbolising their chastity, abandoning an ancient rite revived to combat the modern scourge of Aids.

King Mswati III, Africa's last absolute monarch, in 2001 reinstated for five years the umchwasho rite, banning sexual relations for girls younger than 18. But the move was ridiculed as old-fashioned and unfairly focused on girls -- and the king himself was accused of ignoring it.

With criticism mounting, Mswati decided to end the ban a year early.

The girls arrived at the queen mother's residence at Ludzidzini singing: "Saphose safa ngumchwasho [We were sick and tired of umchwasho]."

They dropped their woolen tassels in a heap, which state radio said would be burned at a public celebration on Tuesday marking the official end of the chastity rite. They then bathed in a river in a ritual intended to purge the bad omens associated with wearing the tassels, the radio station reported.

Mswati and his mother, Ntombi Thwala, are expected to attend the festivities on Tuesday, which will be marked by dancing and the slaughtering of cows in honour of the girls, some of whom kept their chastity vow for four years.

The abandonment of the rite comes days before the annual reed-dance ceremony at which Mswati traditionally picks a new bride from thousands of young girls who dance before him dressed in little more than beads and traditional skirts.

Nkonto Dlamini, head of a traditional regiment made of unmarried girls, said Mswati is expected to send them to gather the reeds used to build wind breakers for the queen mother's compound on Wednesday. When they return, there will be dancing on Sunday and Monday, which has been declared a public holiday in Swaziland.

More than 20 000 Swazi girls have registered to take part in the reed dance, with more expected to come from the Zulu kingdom in neighbouring South Africa.

At 36, Mswati already has 12 wives, one bride-to-be and 27 children. His late father, King Sobhuza II, who led the country to independence from Britain in 1968, had more than 70 wives when he died.

Aids has hit Swaziland harder than almost any country in the world, with roughly 480 000 people in this nation of more than a million estimated to be infected by HIV.

During the five-year ban, Swazi girls were instructed to wear a tasselled scarf as a symbolic badge of virginity. If an umchwasho girl was approached for sex by a man, she was expected to throw her tassels at his homestead, obliging his family to pay a cow.

When Mswati chose a 17-year-old as his ninth wife in 2001, about 300 young women marched to a royal residence, laying down their tassels in protest.

His aides argued the ban was designed to discourage casual relationships, not marriage. But Mswati surrendered the cow, which was roasted and eaten by the young women. -- Sapa-AP

<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=56096>

SWAZILAND: The role of women stirs debate at the reed dance

- Throngs of young Swazi women and girls gathered on Sunday to deliver bundles of reeds cut a week earlier and transported on foot to the Queen Mother's residence in Eludzidzini.

Wearing little more than the short, beaded skirts and tasselled scarves that traditionally denote virginity, the girls danced and chanted their way through cold, drizzling rain to the Queen Mother's quarters, pausing only to mug enthusiastically for tourists' cameras.

In recent years Swaziland's annual reed dance has become a focal point for criticism of King Mswati III's handling of his country's HIV crisis and the rights of his female subjects.

The dance is often framed in the international media as serving little purpose other than a showcase of virgins, from which sub-Saharan Africa's last absolute monarch can select yet another new bride.

Controversy was fuelled by the King's announcement last week that a traditional five-year chastity rite for teenage girls, known as the "umcwasho" and reintroduced in 2001 to combat the spread of HIV, would be abandoned a year early.

Swazis interviewed at the event insisted that international portrayals of the ceremony had mischaracterised a centuries-old ritual that, far from being an exercise in exploitation, was a celebration of girl-power.

Mpumi Mdlalose, an information officer with the Swaziland Tourism Authority, participated in the reed dance 11 times before she hung up her tassels.

"I know some people think we're forced into it, but we love it," she told IRIN on Sunday. "It's showing off your beauty as a woman and as a virgin, but also paying your respect to the Queen Mother."

According to figures reported in the Swazi Times, the number of young women and girls choosing to participate in the eight-day ceremony, otherwise known as the "Umhlanga", has risen in recent years.

This year's ceremony, which culminated on Monday with a day of dancing before the King, attracted an estimated 50,000 girls. For most, the possibility of being chosen as the King's next wife is less of an incentive for participating than the opportunity to socialise with other girls in a rare outing away from home.

At the age of 13, Lindelwa Zwane has already taken part in three reed dances. She keeps coming back, she says, because of the fun she has with the other girls.

"I wouldn't want to marry the King," she added. "I've got so many other things I want to do - I want to go to university and be an administrator."

Most of the girls were unaware that a new national constitution, signed by the King this month, will elevate the legal status of women from minors to adults. In January 2006 women will have the right to own property and businesses, and to refuse to comply with customs they disagree with, such as one that requires a widow to marry her brother-in-law.

Mdlalose believed the constitutional changes were in keeping with the general trend of Swazis becoming "more westernised" and women feeling more powerful, but Philile Mlotshwa, a member of Swaziland Media Gender Watch (SMEGWA), argued that the new constitution does not go far enough.

"According to the changes, women have a right to refuse a custom they don't like, but the question is: are women empowered enough to refuse and, in any case, why can't we just abolish all customs that are detrimental to women's rights?" Mlotshwa asked.

She also feared that the changes would have little impact if women were not educated about their new rights. She claimed that efforts by local NGOs to spread the word had been curtailed by the government, which has insisted that only its officials can interpret the constitution.

The traditionally low status of women in Swaziland has been linked to the country's spiralling HIV/AIDS epidemic. Forty percent of the adult population is estimated to be infected with the virus - the highest incidence in the world.

Customs like the reed dance have received negative press in light of the crisis, but Mlotshwa asserted that the ritual could have the potential to be a forum for women's empowerment and HIV prevention, were it not for the current King's "abuse" of the event.

"Internationally it's now known as the forum for the King to pick a new bride, but it's not about that; it's about celebrating the girls' chastity," she said.

Celebrating chastity was a cause many HIV/AIDS activists had no problem getting behind: volunteers from the AIDS Information Support Centre (TASC) were out in force at the event to drive home the abstinence message.

"The reed dance is a positive thing for HIV prevention," said TASC counsellor Gcinile Nyoni.

Precious Mkhathshwa, a participant, agreed: "Right now, they [the participants] will abstain, because they want to come back next year."

Mkhathshwa told IRIN that most people in her village knew about AIDS, but had not changed traditional attitudes and behaviours. "When the wife dies, the husband takes another wife and they don't check their blood [have an HIV test]," she said.

For her part, 18-year-old Mkhathshwa planned to delay marriage until she was 25 and then find a non-Swazi husband. "Swazi men are too traditional," she complained.

While refusing to be drawn on the subject of the King's 12 wives, Nyoni conceded that certain Swazi customs, such as the acceptance of polygamy and men's

extramarital affairs, were contributing to the spread of HIV. However, she attributed the country's high infection rate to worsening poverty rather than to the persistence of such customs.

The health ministry reported recently that the number of HIV-positive pregnant girls aged 15 to 19 years had declined slightly from 33.5 percent in 2002 to 29.3 percent in 2004, but it is not known whether the credit lies with AIDS awareness campaigns or with the official emphasis on customs such as the reed dance and umcwasho.

Traditionalists like Nomsa Vlakati, who busied herself on Monday scolding girls for wearing underwear beneath their beaded skirts, have claimed that participants' enthusiasm for the reed dance has more to do with their love of partying than their devotion to chastity.

Times had changed since she took part in the ceremony 30 years ago, Vlakati said. "We weren't falling in love with boys, unlike today. Girls were more pure; they were not doing those immoral things. Now they don't like the chastity tassels. Some of them pretend to be virgins but they're not."

Male chaperones, known as "tindvuna" [NOTE], accompany groups of girls from their villages to the reed dance to protect them from harm but, according to reports in the local press, their presence was not always enough to prevent girls from making the most of their week of relative freedom. According to the Swazi Times, the King's daughter, 17-year-old Princess Sikhanyiso, was whipped by an [NOTE] induna [an elder] for throwing a party for her fellow participants and refusing to relinquish a radio.

Walking beside a lively group of girls from his village, brandishing a stick at any sign of mischief, Canaan Hlatjwako took his responsibilities as an [NOTE] induna seriously. This was his eleventh year of accompanying the girls from his village to the reed dance. "They won't come if I don't come," he said.

On the subject of gender equality, Hlatjwako shared Vlakati's view that, according to Swazi tradition and the Bible, women were not meant to have the same rights as men.

"When a woman is sick or hungry, her husband is supposed to provide for her, so everything that belongs to the woman, belongs to the man," he said.

Hlatjwako mourned the fact that Swazi men were taking fewer wives than in the past as a result of poverty. His father had four wives, while Hlatjwako can only afford to support two.

Swaziland's rising poverty may also play a role in the popularity of the reed dance - participants get two square meals a day and a kilo of meat to take home to their families.

For 15-year-old Calsile Matsebula, whose parents are both unemployed, that was a significant improvement on her usual diet of ligusha - a traditional vegetable dish.

Sixty-six percent of Swaziland's 1.1 million people live on less than a dollar a day, and a third are dependent on international food aid.

Theme(s): (IRIN) Gender Issues

[ENDS]

Swaziland: Swaziland: The Role of Women Stirs Debate At the Reed Dance

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200508300658.html>

UN Integrated Regional Information Networks

30 August 2005

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Eludzidzini

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Kenya: Gender Activists Castigate Tanzania's First Lady for Endorsing Reed Dance

The East African Standard (Nairobi)

17 September 2006

Posted to the web 18 September 2006

Ernest Mpinganjira

Nairobi

Gender activists have condemned Tanzania's First Lady, Mrs Salma Kikwete, for supporting the Swazi cultural ritual, umhlanga (reed dance).

"The reed dance encourages girls to abstain from sex because they know if they are not virgins they will not be allowed to participate. This prevents them from contracting HIV/Aids," said Mrs Kikwete in her address to an audience in Mbabane.

During her weeklong visit, Mrs Kikwete exhorted African governments and leaders to emulate Swaziland and protect indigenous cultures. She singled out the reed dance.

During the annual event King Mswati III usually selects a wife from a group of young virgins participating in the event. The participants undergo virginity tests. This year the king married his 14th wife.

In a statement released through the Tanzania Media Women Association (Tamwa), FemAct, a coalition of civil society of organisations, said the First Lady was condoning the king's actions.

The activists say that instead of supporting the ritual, Mrs Kikwete should have condemned the king for depriving young girls of their right to education, sex, economic empowerment and socialisation.

They accused her of reducing African women to sexual toys.

This is the first time Mrs Kikwete has attracted such widespread and stinging criticism.

Since President Jakaya Kikwete came to power last December, his wife has ridden on the crest of his immense popularity. Her Swaziland outing was her first unaccompanied official visit outside the country.

Critics say it was an opportunity for her to show her intellectual mettle but she failed miserably.

Her backing of the reed dance reignited a debate on the role of African First Ladies. Comparisons were drawn between her and former US First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton and Britain's Cherie Blair.

Mrs Clinton, Mrs Blair and Mrs Graca-Machel, wife of former South African President Nelson Mandela, are famous for using their influence to champion for gender equity and advocate for issues that affect women and the girl-child.

During debate over Tanzanian First Lady's alleged misadventure, it was alleged that African first ladies (in their materialistic pursuits) relegate women's rights.

Citing a study that was conducted in Kabaha District, President Kikwete's hometown, gender activists questioned the First Lady's assertion that the reed dance protects girls and young women from HIV/Aids.

The study finds that girls who get married at the same age as King Mswati's virgins are more vulnerable to HIV/Aids because they lack control over their sex life and education. They are financially dependent on others.

The research finds that HIV/Aids prevalence among girls aged 9 to 15, who have dropped out of school and have been married off, was on the rise.

The research blames cultural practices for the rapid spread of the pandemic.

During her address, the First Lady said she liked the Swazi culture because it "unites maidens from rich and poor families by giving them an opportunity to socialise and work together and teaches them to adhere to their traditional tribal values and norms".

She added that she was impressed to see a princess, the king's daughter, leading the girls in the reed cutting ceremony.

"The reed dance is an example of traditions that oppress Swazi women. Where the king is given the power every year to choose a young virgin woman to be one of his many wives," FemAct said.

The statement also criticised Tanzania's traditionally tame media for "gleefully" carrying the remarks without the slightest criticism of the event where "young half-naked girls are paraded in front of the king and other guests for their pleasure".

Activists say the dance represents the most retrogressive aspects of African culture that tends to degrade and devalue women by objectifying them.

FemAct reminded the Tanzania Government that it is a signatory of Southern Africa Development Community (Sadc) Declaration on Gender and Development, which calls upon member-states to abolish all cultural practices that undermine women's rights and dignity.

When President Kikwete formed his cabinet, he appointed seven women ministers, who have acquired the nickname "Kikwete Babes", for their outstanding performance. He also named 15 women deputy ministers.

Kikwete has made promoting gender parity in governance and decision-making a priority.

For years, Swaziland, a landlocked country of 1.1 million people, has attracted global criticism for stifling women's liberation and abetting HIV/Aids spread. However, the

kingdom's government argues that its actions reflect a traditional society grappling with an epidemic that had orphaned 35,000 children, under 15, by 2002.

The Umhlanga festival is used by NGOs to promote safe sex and gender rights. In the HIV/Aids-ravaged southern Africa region, the pandemic is blamed on low condom use and multiple sexual partners - like King Mswati III's.

Against this backdrop, said FemAct: "It behoves Sadc heads of state - and their wives - to act as role models in promoting women's dignity and human rights. As such, they would not be expected to participate in such a backward custom."

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**WOMEN NEGOTIATORS: THEIR ROLE IN THE PUBLIC SPHERE,
WAR, PEACE BUILDING AND THE TRC**

Introduction to Women and Negotiating the Public Sphere

This report so far has tried to illustrate how the public sphere is not an easily contested arena where women can speak and act freely. It is an arena that is affected by a multitude of conditions and ideologies that shape communities and democracies. This is why this paper will discuss the role of citizenry and its effects.

The definition of citizenry and how that is experienced is also another arena that has to be looked at through a gendered perspective as suggested by Nira Yuval-Davies in her article '*Women, Citizenship and Difference*' (1997). Citizenry is a state that is both active and passive respectively 'whether the citizen is conceptualized as merely a subject of an absolute authority or as an active political agent'. (Yuval-Davies 1997:15) Women over time have been able to move from being passive citizens, where even their right to vote was challenged, to being active citizens where they can partake in creating policy that helps govern the citizenry as shown by the examples above of the ANC Women's League. This move has always and continues to be contested.

The main collective this report has so far analysed is that of women's organisations and feminist movements and their role in helping women's become better rhetorical agents for stability, in other words looking at how women encourage notions of good citizenry. Yuval-Davies uses T.H. Marshall's (an influential theorist of citizenship in Britain) definition of citizenship as 'a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community'. This is inclusive of civil, political and social rights and obligations. This enables us to do two things, firstly, link citizenship to membership in a community rather than to isolating it to just the state, as many definitions of citizenship do. Secondly, this aids in analysing the relationship between 'the community' and the state and how this affects people's citizenship. Yuval's argument is that this definition enables us analytically to discuss citizenship as a multi-tier construct, which applies to people's membership in a variety of collectives. (Yuval-Davies 1997:5)

Yuval-Davies uses the example of military participation and war to explain how the legitimacy of citizenry can be a gendered debate. If one connects the ideas of how one is sexed and the duties they are expected to perform as a result of this, it is easy to distinguish why women are not expected to participate in the military especially in combat. However, in the light of the pursuit equal citizenship, "some feminist organisations such as NOW in the USA, ANMLAE in Nicaragua, have fought for the inclusion of women on equal footing to that of men in the military, arguing that once women share with men the ultimate citizens duty – to die for one's country, they would be able to gain equal citizenship rights to those of men." The results of this campaign got women to fight in the Gulf War. Yuval argues that example failed in many ways to create equal citizenry because in the first instance, feminists have created pressure rather than advanced the rights of women, as women too have to leave their children to their mothers for them to be looked after. Secondly, being involved in the military does not automatically equate women and men, because even in this institution women are treated differently than men, and are also subject to issues such as sexual harassment and the negation of their reproductive rights. Finally, Yuval points out that this argument "ignores the general social and political context of the military and its use (Yuval-Davies 1997:20).

This has links to the South African context, in that women were involved in the liberation movement both overtly and covertly in order to appeal to the nationalist concerns of the country at the time, and to also secure a future for themselves as active citizens, whose rights and concerns were legitimate. The debates that surround 'women's issues' around the time of heated nationalist struggle I argue were one of the first steps made in asserting that the new government, was a government that catered to the needs of all of its citizenry and all the issues presented before it were important. These arguments were anticipatory strategies towards building future stability within the country. Unfortunately this was not the argument that was neither clearly present nor was it understood, as these papers will show.

Considering Pragma-Dialectics ‘A Festschrift for Frans H. van Eemeren on the Occasion of his 60th Birthday’

Edited by Peter Houtlosser and Agnes van Rees (2006)

Chapter 19 ‘Gender Aspects Concerning the concept of “Strategic Manoeuvring”’ by Brigitte Mral.

Summary

- Challenges the ideology of democracy (Mral 2006:223) “In a democratic sense dialectics and rhetoric have been taught as if every agent has the same right to speak; only he follows the rules.” However the rules are not the same for men and women.
- Mral questions how to handle a situation where the one who wants to speak is not automatically given the opportunity nor are they invited to share the discursive community, like women so often experience.
- This paper makes a strong case by asking how women can be legitimised in public life when they are more or less from the start questioned as rhetorical agents.
- Three main questions are answered by this paper
 - What rhetorical agency do women have?
 - How is this expressed?
 - How is this challenged?
- Paper talks about the act of establishing initial ethos and the act of gaining credibility.
- Looks at how style (performance) influences credibility. Mral gives the example of Margret Thatcher, and how she almost had to engender a masculine personality in order to function and legitimised in public life.
- The paper looks critically at the media and the role it plays in creating and destroying rhetorical strategies for women who are engaged in public discourse. Particularly if we evaluate the influence of style, and how pathos is built and how logos is executed through the method of delivery.
- (Mral 2006:227) “At the end of the 19th Century, a woman in the public eye was regarded equal to a prostitute.” We now have to assess how and if these attitudes have changed over time. The dilemma or rather the balance women have to strike in very tradition societies in needing to be seen and simultaneously not seen. Women also have to make sure they reinforce the idea that a man has to lead.
- Mral argues that women’s strategies in public participation cannot be studied in isolation from cultural patterns and structures (Mral 2006:228).
- Highlights the common threads of all women who participate in public discourse. (Mral 2006:229), “nearly all parties with the exception of the most conservative ones claim to be feminist. A claim which broadly speaking means that they are for ‘equal opportunity’. What is more interesting than the statements of politicians however is the public opinion, and common values and even prejudice concerning women’s standing.”
- Mral’s paper also talks about how female politicians create virtue. She takes evidence from media events and came to the conclusion that “today’s virtue for woman politicians is that they should keep both feet firmly on the ground. Be

responsible, motherly, honest and not show-off. It is the art of being just right” (Mral 2006:228).

- Tackles the cognitive responses of viewers and people in society have in order to create a sense of connection with a public figure.

Discussion

Firstly, we need to tackle the issue of ethos and the challenges women face in creating it. As discussed by Mral, women’s initial ethos has been historically weaker than men’s. It is an ethos that has to be negotiated and carefully chosen, whereas for men it is automatically granted. This attitude also has to be contextualised in traditional societies like in South Africa. In essence, strategies that work well in Sweden and Germany cannot automatically be applied to South Africa. The paper does not look particularly at South Africa, but it raises the issue of needing to identify the stumbling blocks for South African women when they attempt to build credible ethos. How is the status established and maintained?

Building ethos, integrates succinctly with the attributes of virtue. This is interesting particularly for South Africa when you look at personalities of the women leaders, such as Manto Tshabalala Msimang, or Nosizwe Mdalala-Routeledge and Winnie Mandela or Albertina Sisulu. These women’s public personas have been shaped pejoratively or positively by the influence of the media. South African’s are able to assign to anyone of these women a title of ‘villainess’ or ‘do gooder’ and to juxtapose them. Albertina Sisulu and Winnie Mandela through their participation in the TRC have had virtues thrust upon them. They have either proved to live up to these virtues or failed against their measure. Manto Tshabalala Msimang or Nosizwe Mdalala-Routeledge have been studied through their roles in the Health Ministry, and their attitudes to HIV/AIDS policy and the care of children in hospitals.

On the other hand, male politicians have greater flexibility when it comes to displaying attributes of virtue and are forgiven far more easily if they fail to be virtuous. In fact in extreme situations this lack of virtue can be seen as strength in character. The implication is that this man can get the job done no matter the circumstances. For instance, former Vice President Jacob Zuma has a media personality that gives him unwarranted permission to dance in public, popularise war songs, joke and be unapologetic about his sexuality. One could argue that these exact antics would not be easily forgiven by the public if they were performed by a woman.

Mral argues that women in public life need to have a special sensitivity and decorum and this can be considered as manipulative; however there are reasons are given to justify this claim. One of which is because, women’s voices have been suppressed for such a long time, that some of these attitudes have become ingrained psychologically in women, so much so that when they are in public they try to remove attention from themselves. For example, a female politician cannot be seen as attractive later on sexy. If we look at South Africa’s current Vice President Phumzile Mulambo-Nguka, she is seen as motherly, wise, reserved, not as attractive or sexy.

"No Freedom without the Women": Mobilization and Gender in South Africa, 1970-1992

Gay W. Seidman

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Summary

- Looks at the move of South Africa from apartheid to majority rule, and how the new government is more likely to be held accountable by “urban popular movement, not movement based in the peasantry”. This premise is then contextualised for the function of assessing gender-relations, and the evolving role of women in the public sphere prior to a post-apartheid South Africa.
- Article argues that industrialisation and urbanisation have affected black men and women (black here is defined as those who were previously disadvantaged or defined as ‘non-white’) differently in that there are “Changes in the organization of work and family, coupled with changing forms of political organization, mean that a post-apartheid state is likely to face gender-specific demands, articulated by women who may not explicitly accept feminist labels but who may refuse to subsume questions of gender subordination under appeals to national unity” (Seidman 1993:293).
- The article puts South African women in the foreground of political change within the realm of gender relations.
- Like the other articles that challenge the practice of Female Circumcision, the idea that economic independence and migration, education, and the erosion of a peasant system has had a knock-on effect resulting in destabilising the male-dominated household archetype that other nationalist movements have reinforced.
- Highlights that the feminist movement shaped women’s participation in liberation and created a space for ‘gendered demands’ (Seidman 1993:294) even though the feminist movement was contested and continues to be contested. Even so, women were now far more vocalised than in other countries that experienced the similar political situation.
- Seidman gives evidence for the contestation by women involved in the liberation struggle. For example look at the following quotes highlighted by Seidman from pages 296-297.
 - In 1989, a woman writing in the South African Communist party's journal insisted, “Our immediate task is the liberation of the black people, not raising gender-specific demands.” [She viewed] attempts to politicize gender or family relationships as arising from “bourgeois” or “Western” feminism. Spokespeople for any of the major organizations struggling against white minority rule tended to suggest that “the woman question” was best left unasked.
 - In 1985, an ANC spokeswoman told the Nairobi Women's Conference, “It would be suicide for us to adopt feminist ideas. Our enemy is the system and we cannot exhaust our energies on women's issues” (Work in Progress 1985, 31). In 1986, ANC activist Frene Ginwala slightly revised the theme but echoed its basic thrust: “Women's liberation in South Africa cannot be achieved outside of the context of the liberation

struggle" (Ginwala 1986, 13). {Frene Ginwala became the Speaker of Parliament under the new ANC government}

- Looks at the role that COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions) tried to play in reconciling women's issues together with the liberation movement. However, these issues were always hidden under the banner of "household responsibility". This was also the excuse supplied for women's failure to attend meetings. Seidman sees the attempts by COSATU to have a "'Resolution on Women" [as recognising] the "equal right of men and women to work," the sex-segregation of the labour market, and the dangers of sexual harassment on the job (COSATU 1985). Nonetheless, COSATU's education officer, Chris Seopesenge, acknowledged three years later that this had remained "a paper resolution," because "there is little sympathy for women's problems" within the labour federation's leadership (COSATU, 1988)." (Seidman 1993:304)
- Seidman, however, argues that by the 90s this attitude had changed, because there was a "'rhetorical shift reflecting growing awareness and acceptance of gender concerns." This was perpetuated by women who were now getting involved in broader array of organisations. As momentum gained this allowed women to gain a better footing within the organisation of COSATU to the point that, In 1988, when the labour federation COSATU held its first "women's conference," the debate around gender-specific demands had moved past maternity benefits and equal pay to focus more directly on how to organize women workers separately so that they could formulate and articulate their needs in an atmosphere less dominated by male unionists" (Seidman 1993:308).
- Women capitalised on the power of international organisations and their need to provide for the needs of women's organisations. This had not been an agenda previously up for debate in the public sphere.
- The paper looks at how the attitudes of the ANC Women's league changed regarding when women's issues should be integrated to the public sphere. Rather than waiting for the success of the liberation movement to take affect as the sentiment was before, "liberation activists have insisted on raising gender issues during negotiations toward majority rule." (Seidman 1993:312)
- The paper concludes by summarising the main movements' women in South Africa have made in the public sphere to get women's issues to be publicly debated. This issues range from how they are treated at home right through to how they are treated at work - primarily concerning quotas and sexual harassment. "As women activists organise a broad constituency for gender-specific demands, it seems increasingly probable that the demands they make on the post-apartheid state will seek to create an unusual degree of support for women's economic independence and personal autonomy." (Seidman 1993:316)

Discussion

This paper was published in 1993 at the cusp of South Africa's declaration of independence from apartheid regime and white rule. It gives a hopeful assessment for the future of gender empowerment in post-apartheid South Africa and supplies various justifications for this claim. However, the author looks at the patterns of how nationalist movements are known for "promises... to end gender based subordination," (Seidman 1993:292) and to improve the status of women prior to being politically victorious. However, in most cases these promises have been left unfulfilled. Seidman looks at the nationalist movements in China, Zimbabwe and Nicaragua and points out that even though there was political independence the subordination of women remained intact. This is further justified by claims made by other feminist authors such as Partha Chatterjee, and Nayereh Tohidi, who agree that "... [That] in anticolonial, or anti-Western struggles, nationalist leaders have avoided explicit challenges to gender subordination because they viewed the domestic arena as the source of an autonomous national identity that must be protected." The process involves taking women's issues off the agenda and these are replaced by the concerns of the nation. In essence here, the argument is that women have to reconcile themselves to being in a subordinate position for the sake of the advancement of the nation.

Seidman also shows how these attitudes changed in South Africa, but that change was not a simple shift of mindset, but a 'rhetorical shift' that enabled an awareness of the power of investing in gender-relations. What is interesting to note is how women themselves justified a subordinate position for the sake of the liberation movement as highlighted by the quotes from some of the leadership in the ANC Women's League. "Our immediate task is the liberation of the black people, not raising gender-specific demands." In terms of looking at how women behave in the public sphere especially when under the leadership of men we begin to see some of the rhetorical instruments women use in order to justify the status quo that has been established by men and the role of patriarchal tradition. The quote also emphasises the role that women play in society, they are supposed to put themselves second, not for their good but for the betterment of others. A motherly role of sacrifice 'for the sake of the children' is a metaphor that is evoked, and is practised. This is the underlining ethos of that quotation.

Yet again the rivalry between African feminist ideology and Western feminist ideology is put to bear and this is at the risk of retarding fundamental issues that need to be addressed for women in South Africa. The implied resolution of this apparent dichotomy comes from women's organisations in South Africa realising that international community of donor agencies help empower their cause. A somewhat cynical view, but one that cannot be ignored as this money helped position women into a position of activeness as opposed to that of defence. Seidman further echoes this sentiment, "But international donors' interest in gender issues clearly helped make gender-specific programs more acceptable. As one community activist concluded, "Access to that kind of money does affect the way people think about issues.'" (Seidman 1993:311)

Gendered Citizenship: South Africa's Democratic Transition and the Construction of a Gendered State

Gay W. Seidman

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Gender and Society is currently published by Sage Publications, Inc..

- This article is a complex look at women and the role feminism played in South Africa and its effect on the public sphere. However, the interesting part is the way the author interprets these events as a feminist herself. Granted she is an outsider, (i.e. From Wisconsin America), she legitimises her position by stating the length of time she has been studying this dialogue between women and men within the complex nature of government structures.
- Highlights the surprising aspects of South Africa's transition to democracy there was an overlooking of the role of gender in the construction of a new state. Women activist played a pivotal role in the negotiations, elections and designing a new state, women's participation was leading to new approaches to policy making.
- Sees that whenever gender is discussed now it is always about women and how they are affected by transition, but women are never put in the role of agents thereby restricting "new gendered possibilities for political participation." (228)
- Presents the role of feminist activists in getting women in South Africa to be involved in shaping democracy and the contradictions that this group of women presented within their organisation and in public sphere.
- Article challenges the following questions in relation to the South African experience : pp228
 - When and how do gender differences matter?
 - What are women's interests?
 - How should they be incorporated in the state?
 - This article asks why and how gender issues became so prominent in the construction of a democratic South African state.
 - What difference it makes to the experience of citizenship for South African men and women?
 - Whether men and women experience democratic citizenship differently?
- The paper is a qualitative report based on interviews and informal discussions with a range of political activists; and articles published in newspapers, community publications, and feminist journals in South Africa. Seidman has also used direct quotes from published materials. The reasons Seidman gives for the way she conducts the research is important when looking at how women tend to give each other legitimacy especially if they have an agreed upon cause, this will be later unpacked in the discussion section. "It seemed unnecessary to rely on my notes and tapes when South African feminist activists are quite able to articulate their own ideas, in the format of their own choosing. In the 1990s, feminist activists in South Africa are generally self-reflective and very literate; recognizing that fact, I think, makes it easier for observers to allow individuals to choose their own words." (Seidman 1999:290)

- Article concludes by, asking the reader to consider as an alternative to focusing on negotiations or elections, to verify and legitimise women's participation perhaps we must also look at how women in particular are mobilized as a collective identity during democratization. Also to look at how activists seek to build their vision of citizenship into the structures that will define political participation in the future. (Seidman 1999:304)

Discussion

This paper looks at arguments presented in the 1990s, from women who now define themselves as feminists even though during anti-apartheid campaigns, they avoided raising gender issues publicly "because they feared creating internal divisions in an already embattled anti-apartheid movement; moreover, some women said that in townships, they faced physical threats from male activists if they raised questions such as reproductive rights" (Seidman 1999:291). This is important when we look at how women in South Africa have had to historically negotiate their entrance into the public sphere. There is an assumption that the male activists would play the role of protectors, and encouragers for these women, but ironically the women most feared these men. What this paper does not explicitly discuss the details of why men had this reaction, but it is implied in both Seidman's papers that the issue of nationality came before the concerns of women as reproductive members of society. The links of nationality and reproductive rights were seen as mutually exclusive. Still to this day I would argue that these aspects are seen as mutually exclusive. Women are unable to argue the point that their reproductive labour permeates into every other aspect of how they perform as citizens and nation builders.

Seidman looks at how women in South Africa first began to tentatively negotiate the public sphere and create legitimacy the following quotations illustrate this process;

- First, South African intellectuals began to discuss the ways in which apartheid had treated Black women and men differently and to consider how women's needs might thus differ from those of men during reconstruction. Increasingly, feminist intellectuals, mainly women, began to argue that unless gender concerns were considered during the course of democratization, new political institutions would re-create and reinforce inequality (Hassim 1991; Hassim, Metelerkamp, and Todes 1987; Horn 1991; Serote 1991). (Seidman 1999:292)
- Second, antiapartheid activists began to develop separate women's forums, hoping to increase women's participation in the grassroots movement against apartheid. Women whose husbands objected to their political activities might feel more comfortable going to all-women meetings, it was argued; moreover, women might speak more freely if no men were present and could thus gain valuable experience and confidence in public speaking. These forums represented the first explicit recognition within the democratic opposition that women and men might have somewhat different agendas. In a highly politicized environment, women mobilized within separate women's groups often analyzed their lives not only in terms of race and class but also in terms of gender inequalities (Seidman 1999:293).

The argument that is implied by the first quote is about the powerful role of the intellectual. Not everybody has access to the public sphere until they have been endorsed by some person or organisation. Intellectuals fulfil the role of endorsing ideologies and agendas of the disempowered to be heard and validated. In fact it could be argued that in the South African example, women who managed to appeal to an ethos of intellectual merit first had an easier time to integrate themselves in public life. This is how feminist activists managed to vocalise and empower their agendas. They were intellectuals first who appealed intellectually to the plight of women.

The article also looks at how the ANC, now the governing party changed its rhetoric slogans to incorporate women or rather gender dynamics for the new South Africa.

- “After its unbanning in 1990, ANC slogans increasingly demanded a “nonracial, democratic, and nonsexist South Africa,” and ANC meetings increasingly involved some discussion of what that goal might entail...” (Seidman 1999:292)

There had to be gradual consent from those who were the elite, who began to appreciate the role that women would play in the new democracy. Seidman gives evidence of this and how other authors such as Fidela Fouche, feminist author of “*Overcoming the sisterhood myth. Transformation*” also had similar interpretations. (Seidman 1999:293)

- “Gradually, the principle of gendered representation at the national negotiations for democracy became accepted within the country’s political elite. As national negotiations proceeded, women activists grew increasingly visible across the political spectrum, and women activists of all political views began to agree that gender issues should be taken up during, rather than after, the transition, insisting that women’s voices be heard-although generally acknowledging that those voices would be multiple and often contradictory (Fouche 1994,79).”

Seidman discusses that the process of creating a quota system for women representatives was not so much as a negotiation between men and women, but rather that in “March 1993 in a little-publicized event, women ANC activists stormed the negotiation chambers, blocking talks until women were literally given places at the table” (Seidman 1999:294). Amazingly, all parties participating in the negotiation process accepted a gender quota-a decision that reflected the extent to which women on all sides had already raised issues of gendered representation in the construction of democracy. As a result Fifty percent of each two-person team had to be female; thus, half of the negotiators who finally accepted a provisional constitution and set the elections in motion were women- a composition that had real implications for the kinds of institutions created under the new constitution.”

However, this move was met with much scepticism from other female activists, as noted on page 294;

- Who do the women now in the talks really represent? Many are loyal to their parties, not to women. And many of those parties are not gender-sensitive at all. So can we really say that women are represented in the talks? (Mthintso 1993, 32)

A women’s caucus was created were women did manage to agree on most issues. It comes to the forefront that women had to act as a group in order for their needs to be addressed this is highlighted by the following quote from Nozizwe Madlala, who at the time was an ANC feminist and had recently become a Member of Parliament.

She concluded that the most urgent task was "for women to organize themselves into a strong mass-based women's movement," which would monitor the new government's policies. (Seidman 1999:300)

The struggle for emancipation depends on one key tool: organization. . . . We cannot assume that the government will automatically be sympathetic to our demands as women. In fact, we will have to apply our united power to make sure the government heeds them. (Madlala 1994, Building a women's movement. Work in Progress no. 96 (suppl.pp6))

This article when framed within the discourse of rhetoric and how women conduct themselves in public life, we see the groups and mobilisation are rhetorical tools in creating pathos and ethos for women in South Africa. Many of the arguments presented in this paper are an appeal to values and choice, making them both epideictic and deliberative arguments used in order to gain legitimacy in the public sphere.

Government Documents on Gender in Public Sphere

Gender Mainstreaming initiative in the Public Service

Website: www.psc.gov.za

http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2007/psc_gender_mainstream_initiatives.pdf

Date Accessed: 9/7/2007

Summary

This paper is a comprehensive study done by the government on the access and mobility women have within government structures, this report was published in November of 2006. The report was both quantitative and qualitative assessment of government departments, where women's involvement was not only assessed according to their position in the department, but also according to racial and income categories in each province. Nonetheless it should be noted that this is not just about setting targets and setting policy. The paper calls to challenge attitudes about gender empowerment and to create a new culture of accommodation for our differences that are in line with the constitution and international standards.

Gender mainstreaming is defined as:

“Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as of men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality.”(PSC 2006:5)

From UNESCO's Gender Mainstreaming Implementation Framework (GMIF) for 2002-2007.

- Issues discussed include sexual harassment and how its outcome is negotiated between perpetrator and victim.
- Recruitment - including what type and the actual percentage of women who have been recruited and the targets that still need to be met.
- Promotion - the policy, women in positions of senior management, targets that are meant to be achieved and how upward mobility is negotiated.
- The provision of child care facilities at work.
- Women's involvement in executive positions and the process of decision making.
- Management skills of men and women - An interesting finding stated in the report has implications for not how women are viewed but how they act as rhetorical agents in public life;

“There was no uniformity of responses to the question about differences between male and female managers across the departments. Some men and women agreed that male managers were better to work for as they were more predictable and less moody than female managers. What was most significant was that the majority of women said that when women are in leadership “they do not support other women; they do not encourage mobility of other women and generally behaved more like a man than men did”. However this argument was countered by many female managers who said that it was harder for women to be managers as it was sometimes expected that women had to act like men.

In a number of departments where gender mainstreaming was receiving more attention than in other departments, it was significant that the Director-General or Head of Department was a woman. Staff members ascribed the commitment to gender mainstreaming in these departments to the women in leadership positions.” (PSC 2006:39)

The report acknowledges that there has been an improvement of women’s access to political power and decision-making has improved since the 1994 elections as much as the other papers have implied and proved. This report states that there is a strong representation of women in the national, provincial and local legislative branches of government and in some governments departments. However, the hurdle that needs to be overcome is that there seems to be a culture instilled within Public Service institutions to be more responsive to women civil servants and their needs - even though there are women in senior managerial positions.

The report finds that, “In general the empowerment of women is not happening in any significant or meaningful way in departments. Apart from general policies and practices that affect all staff, there are no specific programmes that recognise women as a separate interest group with specific interests and needs. This includes issues related to recruitment, training and addressing the practical needs of women. Participants at senior management level argued that the predominantly male culture has made it difficult for their voices to be heard.” (PSC 2006:54)

Women and the challenges of Public Deliberation.

Iris Marion Young in her essay, "Communication and the Other: Beyond Deliberative Democracy" (1996) presents an argument to show that there is a difference between democracy and deliberative democracy. On the one hand democracy is purely the "outcome of successful completion of ideas and coalitions for the self-interested voter. Individuals or interest groups determine and vote for policies that will best serve them". In this case democracy is just seen as a functional measure towards an end, but it is a definition that does not supply an explanation for how one is convinced about a policy so much so that they vote for it, nor does this definition illustrate what democracy is really about – differing opinions contesting each other publicly for an individual vote. It is here that Young provides us with the definition of deliberative democracy, which is "one that conceives of democracy as a process that creates a public, citizens coming together to talk about collective problems, goals, ideals and actions. Democratic processes are orientated around discussing this common good...participants in deliberation do not rest until the 'force of a better argument' compels them all to accept a conclusion" (Young 1996:120-121). The question that arises then is, whether or not women engender a better way of presenting compelling arguments in deliberative democracies and what are the tools they use to do this.

Parliamentary debates, or arguments in courts are not simply free and open public forums in which all people actually have the right to express claims and give reasons according to their own understanding. Speech that is assertive and confrontational is here more valued than speech that is tentative, exploratory, or conciliatory. In most actual situations of discussion, this privileges male speaking styles over female. The growing literature claims to show that girls and women tend to speak less than boys in speaking situations that value assertiveness and argument competition. When women do speak in such situations, moreover, they tend to give information and ask questions rather than state opinions or initiate controversy. Deliberation is a competition. Parties aim to win the argument, not to achieve mutual understanding. (Young 1996:123)

Lynn Sanders (1992), in a paper "Against Deliberation" a paper presented at a meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 1992; she cites studies that show in juries men talk considerably more than women and are leader more often. Jane Mansbridge (1991) cites studies that show that female legislators speak less than their male counterparts and that in public meetings women tend to give more information and ask questions, while men state opinions and engage in confrontation.

Young highlights the influence that cultural politics has played in society, particularly in the case of America and how deliberative democracy worked in an unequal society. That is they were racially segregated and women still had not negotiated much of the political clout that have gained now. It is in this society that research found that the delivery of the speech also forms part of its argument. The aspects of delivery fall in to the categories of 'articulation', 'literal language over figurative language' and 'body expressions'. Accordingly, audiences seem to assume that there is an opposition "between mind and body, reason and emotion. They tend falsely to identify objectivity with calm, and absence of emotional expression". This

formula of public address was reiterated in apartheid South Africa, where the occurrence of all forms of public address or debate within the arena of government/judicial institutions were given by a privileged class; specifically, “white middleclass men who [were] more controlled, without significant gesture and expression of emotion.” They functioned in creating a mould or an archetype of what deliberation should look like. If you were going to deliberate and if you chose not to do it in this way you as a speaker diminished the ethos and the pathos of your speech.

This argument reduces public deliberation to one that is ethnocentric and gender biased. This is a point Young echoes from other authors such as Charles Henry and Anthony Cortese, who debate ethnicity and the deliberative styles of African-American politics. “The speech culture of women and racial minorities [in South Africa it would be all those who were considered none white] tends to be more excited and embodied, more valuing the expression of emotion, the use of figurative language, moderation in tone of voice, and wide gesture.” In essence, in order to build ethos, women and the less privileged are asked to put aside the expression of their experience, or their claims of entitlement or interest must be put aside for the sake of common good whose definition is biased against them. (Young 1996:126)

Another obstacle women are faced with when delivering a public address in government/judicial spheres, is that their audience is mostly male. So if they are to construct a speech in a way that is supposed to relate to the audience and appeal to the particular attributes or experience of the audience, by virtue of being a woman, some of these experiences have a diminished meaning. The challenge is for the speaker to relate her own particular location in relation to the audience, how is that achieved when the audience is mostly male? How do women get and keep attention in public deliberation? How do women become persuasive without involving seduction?

In order to answer these questions, one needs to look at the methods women have used to change public perception and garner support for their causes. According to a report done by the UNRISD United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (2005), since 1995 there has been an increase in women’s visibility and impact on public life internationally and the proportion has reached 30% or more. The idea is that women in office “can change the culture, practice and outcomes of politics to respond better to equality concerns.” This increase in participation has been measured by looking at the electoral systems of various countries, and those with electoral systems based on proportional representation “tend to return assemblies with a higher average of woman politicians than those with plurality/majority systems.” This alone is not the determinant but other factors such as

1. Affirmative Action (presence and type) – works in boosting the numbers through the use of quotas. Parties adopt quotas as a result of pressure from women members. Or it may be a required mandate by law.
 - Reserved seats for women – however these may function in reducing the legitimacy of the women who fill them
2. Party systems and ideologies.
3. Presence of women in the executive.
4. Responsiveness of the bureaucracy to women’s interest.
5. Women’s interest in a wide variety of civic associations.

6. The myth of voter hostility. – There appears to be less resistance among voters to female candidates, “Since 1957 female candidates have enjoyed a consistently higher success rate than male candidates; on average a woman is twice as likely to be elected as a man.” (UNRISD 2005:155)

Efforts by women to cause this effect has included mobilisation, through female collective action or women’s movements. Women have managed to create linkages with other associations whose principle agendas lie in various fields such as the environment, peace, globalisation and human rights thus strengthening their legitimacy.

In Southern Africa, much progress has happened for enabling women to participate in politics. “The SADC Gender Declaration was a regional success for women lobbies even though only a few SADC member states will be able to meet the target of 30 per cent representation of women by 2004.” (Geislar 2004:214)

Assessing Women’s Political Effectiveness

UNRISD report notes that “Women legislators are divided on a lot of issues, including those connected to their party, class, ethnic group or religious affiliations, and their legislative impact in the area of gender equality can therefore be uneven” (UNRISD 2005:162). This division is a pattern that has also been noted by various other researchers on this topic, for instance Gisela Geislar in her book “Women and the remaking of politics in Southern Africa: negotiating autonomy, incorporation and representation.”

However, before we begin to unpack her arguments. I find it of concern that the mere process of recognising and critiquing of this pattern has an effect of making women ubiquitous. It can be agreed that women tend to work as collectives to get their agenda recognised, but this does not mean that they are not individuals who all have separate beliefs and ideas. This is in stark contrast to men who are allowed to be individualists and renegade and maintain their authority. If women try to separate themselves from a group, they are rendered emotional and ineffective.

Geislar points out that “antagonisms between women politicians and women’s movements [are] dominant in newly independent states. Using South Africa as an example she argues that there are many women leaders who exchanged activism for parliament in 1994. Their departure has left a void in grassroots leadership and they have become more distanced to ordinary women. Women’s movements have become disappointed by politicians who seem to have put party loyalty above ‘sisterhood’. Whereas, the female politicians have “dismissed the expectations of the women’s movement as unrealistic, suggesting that they [politicians] represent the party rather than a particular lobby...women continue to have a hard time rising in the party ranks at the best of times, and being a gender advocate is considered a liability.” This often means that they tone down whatever feminist beliefs they might hold (Geislar 2004:212).

Although quotas and mandates help in creating mobility for women to be in policy-making positions that promote women’s concerns, their effectiveness in ensuring that policy is translated into new patterns of service delivery directly impacts the

reputation and the standards that bureaucrats and officials are held to account. Accountability is assessed on several factors that include:

- The ideological environment and its openness to gender concerns
- Institutional leadership positions to which women are elected or appointed once in office
- The responsiveness of political parties to gender-equity concerns
- The relationship between politicians and women's movements
- The capacity of public institutions to implement policies to regulate private providers so that they respect national gender equity goals.

Women who have feminist agendas within parties and government have to be able to sustain pressure on the leadership or else risk being sidelined. As noted by the UNRISD Report, in South Africa, within the ANC where feminists have a significant presence both in the leadership of the parliamentary party and among the grassroots membership, the party's commitment to gender equality can never be taken for granted. ANC women leaders had this lesson pressed home when, in 1998, the financial allocation for their Domestic Violence Bill was sidelined by ANC in favour of a new arms deal" (UNRISD 2005:157)

Women rarely become heads of state but it is common for them to become deputy heads or speakers of parliament. Beyond this, it is rare to find women in powerful ministerial positions such as foreign affairs, defence, finance, trade and industry and justice and labour. Women tend to be relegated seemingly feminine ministries such as arts and culture, health, education, family affairs, social affairs and women's affairs.

To conclude this section, there are many dynamics that need to be considered when women approach the public sphere. One could suggest that they perform a kinder way of public life because they are put in ministries that deal far more with domestic seemingly none threatening issues, rather than being put in ministries that are traditionally viewed as masculine and tough. Women also have to negotiate the idea that they are usually forced to work as a collective that needs to lobby their agendas or policies. If they do not work as a collective it threatens the impact of that policy or the policy reform. I would also like to suggest that by having to lobby and work with the community, women have to talk differently they need to convince more people to support their ideas. They position themselves in such a way that a community not only empathises with them, but the community sees itself through their actions, thereby conceding to the agenda because affects them personally. By-laws and legislation and quota systems also enable women to be representatives for their communities. However, it is not always a united agenda or a united group there are fractures with the coalitions, thus affecting policy making and implementation.

This section of the Report is going to look at how women participated in public events such as the TRC, and the impact of that participation. By doing so we will be able to see how some of the perceptions we have about women being 'better' peace negotiators are inherited, and by virtue of that, the action is fulfilled. WE will also see what institutional structures are in place or have been put in place to allow women to be better negotiators. However, I also seek to highlight how this perception is challenged, as women do participate in the military and in war. These seemingly contradictory roles that women have, affects their public participation especially after the event of war or during the process of peace building.

Women tend to be given greater authority in the role of peace making and conflict resolution goals; in some cases they have helped reduce hostilities or bring them to an end. There is added international support system that allow for this situation to happen such as the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 that gives women agency in being involved in the peace process. Women often supply humanitarian relief at considerable risk. They are beginning to win places at the peace table and in the negotiation of 'gender friendly' peace. However, the male preserve of violence can also be associated with women who identified with the cause in which a war is being waged. Their participation is not limited to revolutionary causes but also chauvinist and national movements include women among their principle cheerleaders.

Gender Equality: Striving for Justice in an Unequal World. Geneva, Switzerland United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) (2005)

Summary Chapters 9-14

UN SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325

Resolution 1325 urges member states to ensure increased representation of women at all levels of decision making in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict
It calls on:

- All actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including inter alia:
- (a) the special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement for rehabilitation, re-integration and post-conflict reconstruction;
 - (b) measures the support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous process for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of implementation mechanisms of peace agreements;
 - (c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the Constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary.

Source: UN Security Council 2000

The International Criminal Court

Gender-based crimes are now also codified in humanitarian law in the International Criminal Court (ICC) Statute. In 1997 a Women's Caucus for Gender Justice was formed within the ICC, which brought together many groups and individuals who worked to ensure the centrality of the gender perspective in the procedures and functioning of the courts. Among its other provisions, the ICC ensures the protection for victims and it requires that both male and female judges have legal expertise on specific issues including violence against women. Pp246

Post-war Truth Processes, Reconciliation, and Women's Stories

The linking of "truth" and "reconciliation" has become very popular over the last decade. The most common understanding of "reconciliation" is that it is about restoring good relationships and involves some level of forgiveness; but different people mean different things, some focusing on what happens to the individuals, some on groups, and some on society as a whole.

Women are often expected to identify themselves with reconciliation and peacebuilding interventions, in the same way as the idea of women's inherent peacefulness may be co-opted or deployed to reduce hostilities during wartime. Some of these interventions could be interpreted as being about reconciliation between women and men

There have been 25 Truth Commissions in different parts of the world since 1974 in many areas of the world

The Commission put in place a gender programme to raise awareness of gender issues in the work of the Commission's interviewers and the rest of the officials in order to ensure that a gender perspective would be present in all its work.

Pp250

In deeply conservative environments such as Kashmir or Somalia, there is some recognition during wartime of the ways women exercise old forms of influence as power. In private, they may guide men's decisions (this brings to mind the old saying that while the man maybe the head of the household, the women is the neck); they may perform as public singers or poets; they may give direction as elders or leaders in cultural activities, or act as informal negotiators while visiting kin or engaging on trade. For such gradual accretions of responsibility, the opportunity may emerge for basic legal and political rights to be developed in a post-war setting

Where women have gained stronger political voice through the experience of conflict, they may be able to leap frog stages that elsewhere remain protracted. For instance, in South Africa the majority of ANC leaders at the transition to democracy were men, even though gender equality was much discussed. Women fought for national representation achieving 30 per cent of the seats in National Parliament.

Gender and the TRC

- Through its research by comparing the TRCs of Sierra Leone, South Africa and Latin America it found that in many instances women found it nearly impossible to speak out on the violent crimes committed against them even though they constituted the majority in that group.
- Women's activist groups lobbied for the TRC to create an environment where women could feel free to speak publicly on the sexual violations they experienced.
 - There were some women only hearings
 - Ensured that statement takers were trained in taking statements

Pp252

Women's roles in working to end conflicts are increasingly celebrated - even if other roles are downplayed. As a consequence, women participants in postwar peace building have been thrust into unprecedented prominence by certain international organisations. Yet for all this visibility, women remain marginal as a group, or as individuals, in peace negotiations, in consultations about postwar strategies, and in public life of postwar societies.

It is hoped that postwar governments will readily see the advantages in developing policies that not only support women's efforts to survive, but enable them to fulfil their potential in helping rebuild their societies in the image of gender equality and ender peace.

Characteristics and purposes of Truth Commissions

Four Main Characteristics:

- They focus on the past, and often on the recent past, but are not ongoing bodies such as the human rights commissions.
- They investigate a pattern of abuse over a set period of time rather than a specific event. The mandate of the TCs is time bound, and specifies the types of abuse the Commission can look at.
- TCs are usually temporary bodies, operating over an average period of six months to two years at the end of which they submit a report. Sometimes their time period can be extended if necessary.
- They officially sanctioned, authorised and empowered by the State; also sometimes armed by opposition groups as part of peace negotiation. In theory this allows them access to information, and should ensure that their recommendations are taken seriously.

Source: Hayner 2001:14

Six main purposes:

- To clarify and acknowledge the truth
- To respond to the needs and interests of victims/survivors.
- To contribute to accountability and justice
- To outline institutional responsibility and recommend reforms
- To promote reconciliation and reduce tensions resulting from past violence.
- To meet the rights of victims/survivors and society to the truth.

Source: Hayner 2001:28-31

WOMEN AND CONFLICT REFORM

Hunt Alternatives Fund Organisation website

Hunt Alternatives is an organisation that comprises of various women's organisations working together and advocating peace initiatives around the world. Their website has research papers done by various organisations and they monitor the progress of peace building initiatives around the world.

They are guided by various themes such as

- **Conflict Prevention** - (including non-violent transformation; early warning indicators)
- **Conflict Resolution** - (including negotiations and mediation; confidence building measures; cross community dialogue)
- **Negotiation and Mediation** - Peace negotiations involve the parties agreeing upon courses of action
- **Security** - (including demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR); peacekeeping; security sector reform)
- **Refugees and IDPs** - (including humanitarian response assistance) Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)
- **Transitional Justice** - (including reconciliation; truth commissions; tribunals; local transitional justice mechanisms)
- **Rule of Law**
- **Democracy, Governance, and Political Participation** - (including civil society development; elections; media; anti-corruption; formal governance)
- **Post-Conflict Reconstruction** - (including social (health and education); economic (infrastructure, macro-economic and micro-economic Reform)

The research report that will be summarised is a key paper that summaries some of the themes discussed in all the research papers that they have published namely;

Brennan, A (2003) *Winning the Peace Conference Report "Women's Role in Conflict Iraq" 2nd Edition. For the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars. Conflict Prevention Project Middle East Project.* Washington DC

Conaway, C (2006) "The Role of Women in Stabilization and Reconstruction" in *Stabilisation and Reconstruction Series 3 August 2006.* Washington DC.

International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW)
Gender Equity and Peace Building, From Rhetoric to Reality: Finding the Way
A Discussion Paper (2003)
Richard Strikland and Nata Duvvury

Shoemaker, J (2005) *Inclusive Security – "Women Waging Peace". Conflict Prevention and Transformation: Women's Vital Contribution and United Nations Foundation Conference Report (eds).* Conaway C. Washington DC

International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW)
Gender Equity and Peace Building, From Rhetoric to Reality: Finding the Way
A Discussion Paper (2003)
Richard Strikland and Nata Duvvury

SUMMARY

Women individually and collectively contribute to peacebuilding in many ways. Yet their contributions are often overlooked because they take unconventional forms, occur outside formal peace processes, or are considered an extension of women's existing gender roles. Conflict and its aftermath affect women's lives and men's lives in different ways. Therefore addressing gender norms is crucial since they so strongly influence women's options for action. Pp1

While women represent a population that is severely and distinctly victimised by conflict, the tendency to disproportionately portray women as victims perpetuates inaccurate assumptions about their contributions to war and peace. Women are not solely passive victims; they are often powerful agents. The portrayal of women as victims not only neglects the significant roles women have played in conflict and post-conflict, but also undermines their future potential as key participants in formal peace processes. Thus, the ability of international peacebuilding policy to incorporate a gender perspective takes on greater significance.

To repeat what has been said earlier that woman bodies are both symbolic and physical makers of a community, and if we take sexual violence inflicted during conflict – particularly when purposely coupled with the risk of HIV infection. These atrocities can be interpreted as a humiliation of an entire community, leading some activists to justify a violent response by women.

“Negative” and “positive” peace in relation to Peacebuilding pp5-9

Negative peace – refers to the mere absence of violence

Positive Peace – “includes not only the absence of war, violence and hostilities....but also the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equality and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within society” (UN 1993). This definition of peace was derived through women's perceptions about their lives and gender roles as affected by conditions of war and peace

Peacebuilding – is three tiered and interrelated objectives

1. Creating and strengthening democratic political institutions.
2. Encouraging sustainable, poverty reducing development.
3. Fostering collaborative non-violent collaborations.

The political, economic and social processes related to these objectives must be viewed through a gendered lens in order for peacebuilding to recognise and include women as full and equal partners with men in post-conflict societies.

Peacebuilding and Reconstruction and Women

If peacebuilding yields the institutional context, then “reconstruction” introduces measures that seek to operationalise and give life to peacebuilding goals.

Reconstruction entails

1. Revitalising political, economic and social structures following conflict
2. Protection of human rights, the development of necessary human resources, and the long term process of social integration.
3. Often women themselves do not recognise their activities as part of peacebuilding efforts, because they are in areas for which women are already responsible. For e.g. ensuring the safety of themselves and their families, or accessing and providing social services
4. It is because women lack political platforms, they often draw credibility and strength from a wider social base and promote their agenda at grassroots level. As a result, women’s contributions tend to be undervalued and not readily incorporated or sought by many practitioners of peacebuilding
5. In most conflicts, traditional division of civilian space – private as women’s space and public as men’s space – collapse. Men in communities under attack tend to abandon the public space to avoid being conscripted, attacked or even taken hostage. It is in this vacuum, women increasingly become the ones that manoeuvre through existing institutions and to provide for family welfare and security by taking on the roles traditionally assigned to men
6. Women being perceived as “not political,” are more able to access information and pressure authorities to provide services to minimise the impact of conflict.
7. It is far easier for women to occupy spaces to develop community-level initiatives for peace across ethnic and national identities

Rhetorical Agency and Peacebuilding pp8 -10

Leaders within a conflict situation often resort to singling out gender specific traits based on an assumed common essence shared by all women or all men; an example of essentialism is applied to gender relations

- Peace activists utilise these essentialist characteristics of feminine and masculine identity. They draw from the symbolic power of “Mother” and “War Widow” to mobilise support for dialogue across ethnic and nationalist division
- This strategy relies on stereotypes that men are equated with war and aggression and women are equated with peace and nurturing
- This polarisation denies the diversity of experiences and opinions among women or men as groups and limits the relevance of an essentialist argument.
- Symbols can also be co-opted for military purposes.

Gender and the TRC World Bank Report

According to the Executive summary, this report was written through the initiative and collaboration of NGOs that advocate peace, conflict resolution, judicial reform and gender awareness together with the World Bank. Its function is to review the gender-related aspects of the work of TRCs in Peru, Sierra Leone, and South Africa,

- as expressed in their daily work,
- in the drafting of the commission's mandate,
- in the participation of civil society institutions,
- in the preparation of the final report.

The three country experiences were selected as informative examples.

This paper also provides general suggestions for the consideration of World Bank staff, particularly in the incorporation of gender issues into the Bank's post-conflict interventions in relevant sectors. Finally, the study reviews some basic indicators of progress and impact in Bank-financed interventions in post-conflict and transitional settings.

The South Africa case set an important precedent in the incorporation of a gender perspective in a TC. Thanks to the participation of NGOs and academics, the TC organized public hearings at which women were invited to tell their stories and express their demands for justice and reconciliation.

Recognizing the differences between women's and men's experience during and after civil conflict, the World Bank is attempting to better understand the gender dimensions of its work. This heightened focus stems from a three-fold concern on the part of Bank staff:

- (i) an ongoing interest in addressing the institutional and other developmental issues relating to the silence around gender inequality and gender-based violence;
- (ii) an emphasis on analyzing and addressing the special needs of women and girls during repatriation, resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration, and post-conflict reconstruction;
- (iii) a need to identify and disseminate lessons relevant to the Bank's work on governance, peace, and social reconstruction through a focus on the gender dimensions of conflict prevention, reconstruction, and gender-based violence.

Source: pages ix - xi Executive Summary

Gender, Justice and Truth Commissions 2006

- The inclusion of gender analysis in TC is helpful not only in giving gender sensitive approaches for repatriations of victims of human right abuses, but also for the prevention of other conflicts.
- Gender parity does not guarantee gender perspective but it implies recognition of the different voices and perspectives of men and women.

- The report reiterates that idea that women are generally seen as victims of violence and very rarely as perpetrators.

CASE STUDY SOUTH AFRICA

Report provides a methodology of work for the TRC pp11-13

Main contributor to the information on the South African Case study is Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela she is regarded as an expert who analyses different aspects of women's participation, according to her report done in 2005;

1. Women commissioners and staff developed emotional support for witnesses in a manner different from men.
2. Her interviewees noted the compassionate concern for victims shown by women at the TRC, in contrast to the focus of male workers on the letter of the TRC's implementing legislation
3. The report notes that Former Commissioner Yasmin Sooka discussed the difficult time that women commissioners had trying to convince male commissioners of the importance of Public hearings for women
4. Former commissioner Mapule Ramashala argues that the male structure of the TRC did not facilitate the collection of women's voices and narratives
5. Women witnesses approached the TRC to discuss the suffering of their sons and husbands. Male witnesses approached the TRC to tell their own stories as direct victims of human right abuses
6. Gobodo-Madikizela explains this attitude as a conscious means of generating empathy and taking on broader responsibility for the collective sense of national healing. (This occurrence however can be interpreted by others as women enforcing upon themselves a form of subordination e.g. Goldblatt and Meintjes (1996))

Discussion

Women are increasingly forming human rights organisations, and there are several that have taken up the challenge of retraining the police, judiciary and other institutions to contest the discrimination, culture and practices that are so deeply entrenched in the institutions of law and order. An organisation such as Hunter Alternative works in that its mandate is to research, report and deliberate on the consequences for women when they enforce these actions, and it also functions in creating support.

Women engendering a better way of discussing rape, helps to add to the debate that women engender a better way of peacebuilding as the seem to be mostly the victims of this savage act, and women seem to be more sensitive to the delicate nature of discussing this violation than men. If we then take the context of peacebuilding after a war that has seen so many women being raped, it is easy to understand how people can inherit the idea that women are better negotiators as women feel freer to talk to other women about these violations rather than men. However, highlights that women's experiences cannot be understood in isolation to men.

Sexual violence again is highlighted as a difficult topic for the women present at the TRC they tended to put the guilt and shame upon themselves instead of the attackers.

Lynne Sanders argues that story telling complements arguments in communicative democracies because it tends to be more egalitarian than a typical deliberative process. Deliberation can privilege the dispassionate, the educated, or those who feel they have the right to assert. However, in the experience of the TRC everyone had stories to tell, with different styles and meanings, therefore each could tell her story with equal authority. The stories had equal value in a communicative situation. (Young 1996:132) I would argue that this is one of the gendered methods introduced to the TRC. Instead of harsh questions and answers a situation was created to that not only women, but men could tell their stories with equal legitimacy. It is then up to us as researchers to take each narrative and interview and see how they work in terms of rhetorical guidelines. Are they persuasive in showing that justice needs to be served and the needs to be a form of repatriation? If so what sort of repatriation. This is an endless debate, but one can see the women activists and various other groups helped create space were they could be the active agents of reconciliation. In the same breath we can see that because women tended to not to want to tell their stories, especially of sexual violation and would rather discuss the sufferings of their sons and husbands they were passive actors of reconciliation.

Hunt Alternative Home Page

Home The Initiative for Inclusive Security About the Initiative Themes DIRECTORY OF
WOMEN PEACE EXPERTS
WHERE WE WORK
AREA(S) OF EXPERTISE

Themes

Inclusive Security's conflict-specific work focuses on the following themes, and the members of the Waging Network have expertise in one or more of these areas:

Conflict Prevention

(including nonviolent transformation; early warning indicators)

In order to prevent violence, it is necessary to address the hostile mistrust and belligerence before it reaches a point where each side believes that violence is their only recourse. The goal of prevention is to create a situation in which differences and conflicts can be addressed in a nonviolent and constructive manner. Conflict prevention consists of direct prevention, measures to address an immediate crisis, and structural prevention, which addresses a root cause of the conflict, such as poverty.

Conflict Resolution

(including negotiations and mediation; confidence building measures; cross community dialogue)

Conflict resolution is the multi-dimensional process of resolving an existing dispute. Successful conflict resolution often involves dialogue between opposing communities, non-violent demonstrations, empowering oppressed groups, and other peace building efforts.

Negotiation and Mediation

Peace negotiations involve the parties agreeing upon courses of action, bargaining for individual or collective advantage, and reaching a compromise to end the conflict. Mediation is a process of alternative dispute resolution that attempts to bring two states, sides, or parties together by having an impartial third party facilitate.

Security

(including demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR); peacekeeping; security sector reform)

The security sector refers to organizations and entities that have the authority and capacity to use force or the threat of force to protect the state and civilians, a power that they often abuse during conflict. The reform of this sector is important for promoting peace and good governance in the short and long term, in order to ensure that corruption is eliminated and the forces act as legitimate protection for all civilians.

Demobilization, Disarmament, and Reintegration are the three key activities that effectively transition a society from war to peace. DDR involves the removal of arms from pre-determined forces, the disbanding of military formations, and easing combatants back into their communities.

Refugees and IDPs

(including humanitarian response assistance)

Refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) were forced to flee their homes as individuals or in groups. Refugees crossed international borders and are entitled to protection

and assistance from the states into which they move and from the international community through the United Nations. IDPs are displaced within their home country and are not afforded specific protection by an international standard or agency. Women are important actors in situations of displacement. They often comprise the vast majority of adult residents of refugee and IDP camps frequently heading families in the absence of fathers and husbands. They can play a pivotal role as leaders and advocates for security, education, and health. Women IDPs and refugees also face particular challenges including the threat of sexual exploitation and gender-based violence.

Transitional Justice

(including reconciliation; truth commissions; tribunals; local transitional justice mechanisms)
Transitional justice refers to the short-term and often temporary judicial and non-judicial mechanisms and processes that address the legacy of human rights abuses and violence during a society's transition away from conflict or authoritarian rule.

Rule of Law

(including constitutional drafting; legislation; human rights; women's rights; access to judicial systems)

Rule of law implies that written laws adopted through an established procedure restrict government authority. Parties involved in violent conflict, of course, do not heed any such laws, and therefore countries emerging from war often have to completely reconstruct their constitutions, legal codes, and judicial processes.

Democracy, Governance, and Political Participation

(including civil society development; elections; media; anti-corruption; formal governance)
In a democracy, all citizens have the option of participating in the governance of their society. The term governance refers to the process of decision-making and the ways in which decisions are implemented. Through political participation and advocacy, citizens participate in the governance of their society. In a democracy, the participation of citizens and a plurality of views are encouraged. Women are under-represented in elected office and formal governing structures throughout the world for a number of reasons, including discriminatory social attitudes, lack of education and preparation, and structural barriers to their democratic participation.

Post-conflict reconstruction is the process of rebuilding administrative and governance capacities, repairing physical infrastructure, establishing functioning financial infrastructures and economic restructuring, establishing a credible and functioning judicial system, ensuring social well-being, and restoring internal security. Participants often include international organizations, financial institutions, members of civil society, and government leaders, both domestic and international.

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