

# **Women's Leadership in Peace Building**

**Part 2 (p. 185 – 394)**

# **WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN PEACE BUILDING: CONFLICT. COMMUNITY AND CARE**

**Edited by Mirjam van Reizen**



# **Women's Leadership in Peace Building**



# **Women's Leadership in Peace Building: Conflict, Community and Care**

**International Colloquium on Women in  
Peace-building  
From Monrovia (2009) to Harare (2014)**



Edited by:

Mirjam van Reisen,



**AFRICA WORLD PRESS**

TRENTON | LONDON | CAPE TOWN | NAIROBI | ADDIS ABABA | ASMARA | IBADAN



**AFRICA WORLD PRESS**  
541 West Ingham Avenue | Suite B  
Trenton, New Jersey 08638

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Book and cover design: Lemlem Taddese  
Front cover picture courtesy of Milly Buchanan  
Copy Editors: Simon Stocker and Catherine Schook

In Acknowledgment of the generous support from Cordaid



ISBN: 978-1-59221-994-0 (PB)

# TABLE OF CONTENTS



FOREWORD ..... XI  
*Ellen Johnson Sirleaf*

INTRODUCTION.....XIII  
*Mirjam van Reisen*

## **PART I – WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY PEACE BUILDING IN AFRICA**

CHAPTER 1. TO OFFER A GLASS OF MILLET-MILK IS TO  
OFFER YOU MY PEACE: THE RELATIONAL RELEVANCE OF  
FOOD IN ORGANIZING COMMUNITY PEACE..... 3  
*Primrose Nakazibwe*

CHAPTER 2. WOMEN’S PROTECTION AND MECHANISMS OF  
CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN ANKORE FAMILIES ..... 17  
*Clementia Neema Murembe*

CHAPTER 3. UBUNTU AND PEACE: WITHOUT A MOTHER,  
THERE IS NO HOME..... 37  
*Gertjan van Stam*

CHAPTER 4. WOMEN HAVE ALWAYS HAD THEIR SPECIAL  
PLACE IN HISTORY AS PEACE-MAKERS: WOMEN AND  
PEACE BUILDING IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION ..... 55  
*Pamela K. Mbabazi*

CHAPTER 5. THE POLITICS OF THE BODY IN CONFLICT:  
FOLLOWING WOMEN'S FOOTSTEPS: A HOLISTIC RESPONSE  
TO END SEXUAL VIOLENCE ..... 65  
*Ruth Ojiambo Ochieng and Sandra Tumwesigye*

CHAPTER 6. AGEING AND CHANGING COMMUNITY  
DYNAMICS IN AFRICA ..... 83  
*Antony Ong'ayo Otieno*

**PART II – WOMEN'S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP**

CHAPTER 7. THE STRUGGLE OF THE SOUTH SUDANESE  
WOMEN ..... 99  
*Betty Achan Ogvarro*

CHAPTER 8. REVOLVING REVOLUTIONS: THE INCLUSION  
OF WOMEN IN PEACE BUILDING IN NEPAL AFTER THE  
WAR ..... 113  
*Susan Sellars-Shrestha and Leena Rikkila Tamang*

CHAPTER 9. TOUGH CHOICES, LIMITED SPACES AND  
CONFLICTED LOYALTIES: WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN  
GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA TODAY: THE KENYAN  
EXPERIENCE ..... 131  
*Stella Maranga*

**PART III – GENDER IN THE CONTEXT OF SECURITY  
CHALLENGES**

CHAPTER 10. "BRING BACK OUR GIRLS": CONFLICT AND  
INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA ..... 147  
*Obadiah Mailafia*

CHAPTER 11. OF MULLAHS, RADIO AND RELIGION: THE  
TALIBAN AND TRIBAL SWAT'S WOMEN IN PAKISTAN ..... 181  
*Syed Manzar Abbas Zaidi*

CHAPTER 12. NATIONAL SECURITY: NAVIGATING THE  
COMING ROUGH SEAS BETWEEN THE USA AND CHINA ... 197  
*Andre Zaaiman*

**PART IV – WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP IN RE-INVENTING A  
GLOBALIZED WORLD**

CHAPTER 13. TECHNOLOGY AND THE POWER TO CONNECT:  
PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES  
THROUGH INTERNET COMMUNITIES..... 213  
*Gerard van Oortmerssen*

CHAPTER 14. WOMENLEADERS4PEACE: FINDING AN  
AUTHENTIC AND MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTION IN A  
CONFLICTED AND SEXIST GLOBALIZING WORLD ..... 229  
*Ineke Buskens*

CHAPTER 15. A RELIGIOUS DEDICATION TO COMMUNITY:  
THE LASTING PROMISE OF THE CONCEPT OF CARITAS IN A  
PLURALIST WORLD ..... 249  
*Erik Borgman*

CHAPTER 16. DIGNITY AS A BASIS FOR THE POST-2015  
DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: THE RELEVANCE OF THE LEGACY  
OF MARGA KLOMPÉ FOR A UNIVERSAL POVERTY  
ERADICATION PROGRAMME..... 261  
*Mirjam van Reisen*

**PART V – WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP IN GLOBALISED  
COMMUNITIES AS PEACE-BUILDERS**

CHAPTER 17. REDEMPTION IN SINAI: A STORY OF SLAVERY  
TODAY ..... 279  
*Mirjam van Reisen*

CHAPTER 18. DESERTS, HIGH SEAS AND HOPE..... 289  
*Selame Kidane*

CHAPTER 19. A PLACE CALLED HOME: THE  
MARGINALISATION OF ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN..... 301  
*Grace Kwinjeh*

CHAPTER 21. "GIRLS MAKE MUSIC, WOMEN CREATE CHANGE": ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO FIGHTING FOR A LIVING WAGE IN LONDON ..... 313

*Robyn Stocker*

CHAPTER 22. HOME-BASED CARE: THE POWER OF WOMEN TO CONNECT VULNERABLE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY ..... 321

*Catherine Schook*

**PART VI – A REFLECTION ON THE CHALLENGES OF REBUILDING POST-CONFLICT LIBERIA**

CHAPTER 23. INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY... 331

*Ellen Johnson Sirleaf*

CHAPTER 24. LAUDATIO ..... 337

*Mirjam van Reizen*

CHAPTER 25. "SHOW ME YOUR FRIENDS, AND I WILL TELL YOU WHO YOU ARE": THE ROLE OF REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES IN REDUCING RECIDIVISM AMONG PRISON INMATES..... 343

*Vickie Wambura*

CHAPTER 26. THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE IS THE HAND THAT RULES THE WORLD: WOMEN'S ROLE IN IMPROVING COMMUNITY SECURITY ..... 353

*Agnes Dinkelman*

CHAPTER 27. CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO AND UNLEASHING THE HIDDEN POWER OF WOMEN: THE ZIMBABWEAN EXPERIENCE..... 363

*Chikomborero Mafuriranna*

CHAPTER 28. ONE HAND CANNOT TIE A BUNDLE: PEACE BUILDING IN SECULAR AND FAITH-BASED COMMUNITIES IN UGANDA..... 371

*Angeline Nguedjen-Momekam*

CHAPTER 29. CONFLICT, CONTRADICTION AND  
CONSCIOUSNESS: AN ARTIST'S EVOLUTION ..... 377

CHAPTER 30. COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY CARE IN  
RURAL REALITIES THROUGH THE LENS OF JANNEKE VAN  
DIJK ..... 379  
*Mirjam van Reisen*

ABOUT THE AUTHORS ..... 389

Minister of NWFP, mentioned at the time that 64 girls' schools had been destroyed in Swat valley alone.

As the only alternative, parents of female students in these agencies and Swat sent their daughters to private schools using their own resources, some moving to suburban cities like Peshawar. There was continuing blackmail on the part of the militants, through handbills thrown in girls' houses and schools warning that "we have decided to bomb the school building. If any student shows up, she will be responsible for her own death" (Ansari, 2008). In the face of such threats it was not possible to resume any semblance of female education, though militants sometimes showed discretion to the extent that they did not kill the students, often only tying up watchmen and setting the buildings on fire. There are many harsher instances as well. In one such instance, a female teacher in Mohmand Agency was shot at random for not covering herself from head to toe. She was in a Hijab at the time, which completely covers the hairline.

Initially, the Taliban in Swat denied that they were involved in these attacks on women's institutions. Mullah Noor Allam, an earlier spokesman for the Taliban in Swat, reiterated many times that the militant group was not responsible for destroying the schools. "We did not burn schools in Swat; that was someone else, probably splinter groups. They certainly do not fight for Maulana Fazlullah," he said in a propaganda video (TTP Swat No. 3, 2006). "In fact we support women having an education, such as nurses and doctors. But there are some fields in which a woman should not work, like the armed forces and engineering." The Pakistan Taliban movement blamed "foreign elements" for the school burnings, which they said were calculated to discredit them as a political movement. "We don't oppose education for women, but (we) want a favourable environment for them. We don't want Western-style co-education without dupatta (veil)," Noor Allam said (TTP Swat No.5, 2006). However, the school destruction campaign was wholly owned by the militants later. Malala Yousafzai, the now universally famous child education activist from Swat, was also shot at by the Swat TTP Chapter who initially denied that they had done it. Later, Adnan Rasheed, one of the major commanders, 'sent' a letter to Malala explaining why she 'had to be shot' (Khan, 2013).

## **In the grip of fear**

This had a deep psychological impact on women throughout Pakistan's tribal areas, even in regions not controlled by the Taliban. "There are no Taliban here (but) I'm afraid to go to school," explains 10-year-old Sehrish, a student at Chukdar High School in the Kurz area of Dir Agency, a tribal area controlled by the government that lies half an hours drive south of Swat. I interviewed Sehrish during the Swat White Paper study. "What if they burn the classroom while we are inside?" he said. It is not just the students who

are risk; the teachers that I interviewed shared the same terror. "Once a young man jumped into our class with his face covered. We all screamed in panic, we thought he was Taliban," recalls Mrs. Nizhad, who teaches fine art at Chukdar. "In the end it was just a local boy doing some silly practical joke but he got us very worried. I've been teaching for nine years and I've never felt this scared," she says. "I don't enjoy my job very much anymore. After the school burnings (in Swat) we have all been very scared."

Many other students that I interviewed in different localities in Swat shared similar sentiments. Sara, a high school student from Swat now living in Kurz Dir, says she doesn't know who is trying to stop girls going to school. "The conflicts in Bajaur and Swat will only be stopped if the terrorism is eliminated. But to do that (the Pakistan authorities) need to address the root causes," she adds. Sara complains that the most difficult thing about life is going outside to work "especially because you have to wear the Burka and there are strict rules (about where women can go and with whom)."

Fazlullah also regularly ordered the murder of adulterers by stoning. This 'punishment' was being regularly meted out by FATA based TTP militants, and Fazlullah ostensibly wanted to emulate them. There are a few quasi-judicial channels in the FATA region run by Pakistan government, but their services have seldom been used by the Waziristanis who preferred approaching TTP for the dispensation of primeval forms of justice. In these areas, these men were the law. Fazlullah wanted to be seen as upholding these values in Swat as the supreme commander from the area.

Unfortunately, the brunt of these adultery punishment decisions fell on women. Most of the so called adultery cases were instances in which an adult man and woman had decided to marry each other, which purportedly went against the tribal customs as perceived by their family. Even though the married couple had carried out a nikah (Islamic consecration of marriage), were of adult age of consent, and had formally and legally married according to the country's legal systems, such marriages were abhorred usually by the woman's family. This is the long standing debate in Pakistan whereby the male patriarchs of the family consider it only their privilege where and with whom a woman would be married, sometimes much like a commodity to be exchanged for position or kinship alliance making (termed the 'biradri' system). When the male patriarchs in the family oppose such a marriage, many women decide to get married themselves, and many have perished at the hands of 'honour killing' because of the 'affront' to family honour. In Swat, many families would approach Fazlullah saying their daughters had affronted family honour by getting married by themselves. A sham court would be convened by the terrorists, in which the nikah as above would be declared null and void. The couple were not considered married because permission had not granted by the male patriarchs (wali). The couple would

then be deemed adulterers because they would have presumably had sex without 'being married', and then stoned to death.

It was only after some time that it was realized by the Policy echelons of Government that a FATA type situation was developing in Swat. Ironically, it was the plight of women as identity markers of extremist violence in Pakistan that highlighted the extent of pervasive extremism in Swat. The Swat Taliban released a video in 2009 in which a young woman was shown as being whipped, which stirred up huge anti Taliban sentiment in Pakistan. Even though there had been rumblings, this video aroused a huge domestic and international outcry, and is presumably one of the main reasons that lead the state to mobilized its forces against the Taliban in Swat. Even more surprisingly, it has been clearly documented that despite all the atrocities on women by terrorists in Swat, support from local women was one of the primary reasons why Taliban became entrenched in the area. This will be considered below.

## **Pashtun Code of Conduct**

There have been many pieces of research into the causes of growth of militancy in Swat, identifying a number of factors that were responsible for the breakdown of governance and the loss of control that promoted a fully-fledged Taliban insurgency. However, before examining this cause in detail, it is important to grasp some nuances of tribal system of Pashtunwali, tribal honour, and its dynamics. This is because this tribal code has been merged into the Taliban worldview, which affects women directly.

Pashtunwali is the pre-Islamic Pashtun code of conduct that regulated the intra and inert tribal dynamics of the tribal Pashtuns. It is more a set of principles, rather than codified laws. Honour and chivalry occupy a central theme in this tradition, along with undying loyalty to the tribe, and fierce opposition to occupation. This code consists of core elements of Nang, Badal, Melmastia, Nanawatay and Hamsaya. Nang (honour) implies the use of every conceivable means to shield and protect the tribesman's honour and the honour of his family. The 'honour' rests upon a multitude of codes of conduct demanded of others in the community and outside, which, if infringed, are to be avenged at all costs, even at the costs of one's own life. Badal (revenge) refers to vendettas arising from a family member's death, or the violated honour of a woman in the family. A "revenge killing" is deemed obligatory in order to restore the violated honour, which can be immediately carried out, or occur after generations if the victim family of the perceived dishonourable act is not in a position to react immediately to the infraction.

Badal is apparently a critical tool used by the Taliban to indoctrinate and recruit new fighters, alienated by counter insurgency operations or drone attacks in the tribal areas. Melmastia (hospitality) is the offering of unconditional hospitality to all visitors, without any hope of remuneration or

favour; protection is also to be offered unconditionally to any Pashtun by another. This is also has the advantage for the Taliban who can gain asylum in most places within the Pashtun belts. Nanawatay (forgiveness) is the only alternative available to Badal, in which a perpetrator goes to ask the forgiveness of the victim's family. The Hamsaya (neighbour) device is a broadly defined concept, which implied servitude for protection from stronger tribes, which is a kind of protection status accorded to an affiliated or neighbouring tribe from a stronger enemy, from which they are incapable of protecting themselves. This can include military service in exchange for land (mlatar). The rules of engagement cannot be defined easily in terms of 'you are either with us or against us,' alliances being in a constant state of flux in Pashtun society. Pashtun history is thus replete with heroes and legendary figures, which tended to play with both (or multiple) sides for the benefit of tribe, family, and honour. This code of conduct can compel a Pashtun to place all his hospitality at the door of the guest, while 'unwelcome guests' are treated with violence equally passionately. Revenge is a central theme in Pashtunwali, with honour demanding a vendetta sometimes lasting for generations, due to some perceived wrongdoing usually related to honour. Honour (perceived to be infringed) is in turn, unfortunately often related to women, if not most of the time, in Pashtun tribal society.

A woman is pivotal to the family structure of society, considered as a homemaker who raises the children. She is also the main focus of Badal. Badal in Pashtunwali is one of the central pillars of tribal Pashtun socio cultural values, but is also a very violent principle. Any perceived insult or 'Tor' to male honour generates the badal process, and only death of both the males and female who brought upon this perceived dishonour will satisfy the 'wrong'. Pashtunwali had been undergoing a metamorphosis in KP before the advent of the Taliban whereby it was getting more relaxed, allowing the women to go out, get education, do jobs and household chores etc. In time, consensual marriages might have been accepted into the fabric of Pashtunwali, though it would have been a long drawn out process. Talibanisation of the tribal belt has reversed all this progress, whereby militants have modified Pashtunwali by selectively mixing it with their own version of Sharia, which is much more stringent. Pashtunwali itself has morphed into an organic entity, which is called into play whenever the militants need a reference point. The literalist versions of Sharia that Taliban enforced in Swat and Waziristan was actually a hybrid of Pashtunwali as they understood it, and their own perception of religion as learnt from ideologues or seminaries. Thus, it is understandable that this would be unduly focused on regulating the personal and private sphere of women, since so much presumably hinges on honour, tor and the female.

## The Regime of ‘Replicate, Close, Capture’

However, even despite these brutal measures against women by Fazlullah's Taliban in Swat in the guise of enforcement of Sharia, many women still supported him and were in fact pivotal in elevating him to the position that he gained. This is the paradox that may confuse an observer of the phenomenon, but the answer perhaps lies in the regime of 'replicate, close, and capture' that is explained below.

The almost obsessive zeal of the Taliban in Afghanistan to start implementing penal laws and to control unruly elements in society was driven by using the jihad as a means to ‘correct’ society. The newer Pakistani Taliban have done the same. Even when Pakistani military operations were proceeding against them, they have engaged in organizing penal punishments against offenders. Baitullah Mehsud engaged in these tactics, and so has Fazlullah. It seems that the inherent structural imbalances in distributive social justice in Pakistan have left gaping wounds, which the extremists are quick to exploit.

People in KP province as a whole and FATA in particular, have tended to feel left out of Pakistan's development processes. With clearly documented widespread poverty, a provincial GDP that is only 60% of the national GDP, and achievements in the education and health sectors well below the national average, KP had the highest infant mortality rate in Pakistan of 56 deaths per 1,000 live births. Only 58% of the total households received clean drinking water. The NWFP seemingly does not get its fair share even in judicially determined shares of governmental gross net profits. One of the reasons for militancy in tribal areas may very well be the lack of legitimacy felt towards both the political and economic fronts; for instance the unemployment rate for the age group 15-25 years in Waziristan is above 80%. With such abysmal statistics, it hardly needs a huge stretch of imagination to conceptualize that unemployed youth may be attracted towards militancy as a way of venting their grievances. It also partly explains how the extremist project was able to capture their target audience by 'replicating' the state processes of providing justice, when the state seemed incapable of doing so.

Real life examples illustrate how the militants try to fill in the socio-economic vacuum. “He has restored law and order in the area. Dacoits and thieves have left the area fearing harsh punishments,” Hussain Khan, a local told us. According to him, “Some people also believe that there are many bad people in his militia”, citing the killing of 13 family members of the federal government's political agent in Khyber agency, an adjacent tribal area, in an armed attack by Baitullah's militia about four months before. “He (Baitullah) publicly apologized for the incident,” Khan said. “The Taliban involved in the attack have been languishing in (his) jail for the last four

months. They would have been punished if anti-security sentiments against military action had not been aroused and military option had not been exercised.” (Latif, 2008).

Aslam Awan, a journalist working with the Jihadi publication Weekly Takbeer, cites the setting up of a ‘special task force’ in June 2007 to purportedly crack down on criminals in South Waziristan. “This force launched a number of crackdowns and successfully urged a feared kidnapper Abdul Rashid Bakakhel to free some of his hostages. Baitullah also collected donations from the local people to establish peace. It was a kind of protection money,” Awan continues (Shehzad, 2006). Similarly, Fazlullah seemed to be playing out the Robin Hood theme too as mentioned above. Public lashings in Imamdheri resonated to the media images emanating from Afghanistan during the Taliban heydays. It is pertinent to mention here that many of these acts were at the time endorsed by the local populace. These were seen as non-discriminatory acts aimed at punishing criminals masquerading as Taliban and committing acts of robbery. In an area where the locals have traditionally complained of ineffective governance by successive governments, which allegedly indulged in nepotism and inadequate resource allocation, a heightened local sense of security may have been a driving factor swelling the ranks of Taliban. This supports the notion that an imbalance in governance in a ‘closed’ society (like Waziristan), where the mechanisms of the state are weak, may be one of the various causes of extremism in the area. In any case, this replication of roles of the state (whereby it was perceived not to be working properly) has been a hallmark of the entrenchment of Taliban insurgency both in FATA and Swat. It is therefore not surprising that this was the first phase of the Taliban entrenchment that usually preceded mass violence, and also the time when locals could be seen to be supporting the Taliban. The movement would inevitably turn violent, and the knee jerk local mass support would fade away. This process of replication would set the scene for the next stage, since it would have already aroused the interest of the masses.

Perhaps the absence of distributive social justice and the remnants of feudalism in the shape of the ‘Maliks’ has also had an effect on the promotion of militancy. Some analysts suggest that the social vacuum was generated by the apathy of the Maliks of Swat towards the conditions of the peasant class. This apathy, and delays in obtaining speedy justice from courts, prompted the locals to look to TNSM as an organization that seemed to be at least agitating for reforms in the shape of Sharia. TNSM gradually became unpopular as the movement lost steam, and the Taliban neatly stepped into its shoes as an effective substitute (the replication phenomenon again, or rather a re-replication). This analysis is bolstered by the fact that the Taliban movement initially became popular in the rural areas of Khwazakhela, Matta and Kabal. All three areas are characterized by a strong feudal system and

what is widely considered to be downtrodden peasantry. It is only after the Taliban had consolidated their hold in these relatively less affluent localities, that they started turning in strength to other more prosperous areas like Babozai and Barikot. Thus, the Taliban seem to have started as a grass roots movement in feudal dominated areas, which is perhaps the main reason why they have not been able to gain a stronghold in the neighbouring district of Buner. Buner is characterized by an absence of Malik feudal system, and paradoxically, has a poorly developed system of agriculture as opposed to Swat. If poverty alone is considered as the main variable in generating militancy in these areas, then Buner should have been the district giving birth to the phenomenon of Taliban, since it is nearly identical topographically to Swat except for being poorer. However, the distinguishing feature of absence of feudalism has perhaps saved Buner.

## **The role of radio-broadcasting**

The Taliban set up illegal FM radio stations to campaign for funds and recruits to fight alongside the Taliban. These radio stations played an active role to gain followers of their ideology, inform on decrees, address rallies in support of the Taliban, and serves as a tool for fundraising. Maulana Fazlullah became known as "Mullah Radio" for his repeated use of radio for frequent broadcasting in the region. These broadcasts helped greatly insurgency to gain a foothold in the Swat Valley as they proved to be instrumental in gathering support for the militants. Other Taliban radio broadcasters, popularly known as "FM Mullahs", continuously transmitted anti-American and anti-government sermons, calling democracy "un-Islamic" and those practicing it "infidels". They encouraged local youth to rise for jihad against foreign forces and urged the elderly men and women to lend their moral and financial support to the cause of jihad. In their fiery speeches on radios, the Taliban demanded that non-Muslim minorities in Malakand pay the *jizya* (protection fee) or face jihad. In the same tone, they issued warnings to NGOs, musicians and anyone else involved in "anti-Islamic" activities. Later, those defying their orders were brutally murdered and daily announcements of the details of their death broadcasted on FM transmissions.

However, in the earlier phases of consolidation, these channels became very popular with women especially who tend to be at home most of the time. Listening to these stations became a favourite pastime with Swati women. Since women in these areas spend most of their time at home, watching television or listening to radio accounts forms a huge part of the entertainment and information based activities open to them. The Taliban were extremely active against the few TV cable channel operators in Swat, since according to their brand of Sharia, TV was 'haram' (sacrilegious) since it purportedly showed images of women. All the TV cable channel operators

and CD shops selling movies, dramas or other forms of entertainment were bombed or forced to shut down, many of the owners of such establishments assassinated. This resulted in a virtual shutdown of televised media for the Swat women, who were forced to resort to listening to FM radio. In this way, by 'closing' the options for the women in the area, the Taliban effectively set the stage for audience 'capture' of Swat's women.

Through these channels, the Taliban demanded that parliamentarians, security forces and other government officials should resign their positions as a mark of protest against the military operations, otherwise they should be ready to face 'jihad'. An important aspect of the radio broadcasts was its effect on women. The militants won loyalties of the women by presenting messages through religious interpretations. They were encouraged to give money and also put pressure on their families to join the movement. Many women gave away all their jewellery and money to the Taliban. Sometimes, the authorities tried to block broadcasts, but radios were back on the air after some time. Most people in Swat become regular listeners of FM radio stations as they wanted to know about new threats or decrees issued by the militants. Transmissions at night were also heard in some areas outside the district of Swat. This had allowed the Taliban to spread their influence into the regions of Upper and Lower Dir districts of Dir and Malakand.

FM Programs such as the one run by uber militant Shah-e-Dauran from Qambar exhorted the Swati women to force their husbands and sons to go for Jihad. The Taliban relied on a clever strategy; they did not underplay the importance of women in Islam, but on the contrary purportedly espoused it. Sermon after sermon stressed the importance of women in Islamic society, how staying at home was critical to the upbringing of their children and how women could play a critical role in society by carrying out their religious obligations to their husband and family. Women were enjoined to even forcibly send their sons and family for jihad, and in doing so they would fulfil their own obligations in lieu of actually going for jihad. This was deemed to be the jihad for women. A lady told us in one of our focus groups during the Swat White Paper Research: "I felt so important for the first time listening to him (the FM mullah) – I had always felt that I was just a useless part of society since all I did was stay at home and look after the family, which was not actually acknowledged by my husband at all. In fact he used to treat my contribution to the family chores with contempt. The (mullah) made me realize my importance, and even my husband was impressed when I started exhorting the principles of jihad to him. I felt elevated."

Other observers have observed this audience capture as well. In the Pakistani context, Ahmed Rashid in his authoritative book on the Taliban stated that the Taliban command preferred young men between 16-25 years of age who were unbound by 'family strings', or paradoxically, had spent most of their time with mothers. A recent empirically conducted

psychosocial analysis characterises these kinds of boys as being pulled by matriarchic strings, when mothers have the burden of raising these children in conservative and patriarchal societies where fathers are often absent.<sup>1</sup> The mothers pass on their 'burden' of despondency to these boys, who are prone to look for symbolic figures in order to join the mythological ranks of these heroes (Merari, 2005). The violent end to an otherwise unremarkable life becomes the final glorifying act of such individuals who go to their deaths imagining themselves to be achieving a kind of legendary status. Thus, there is no feeling of despondency in many of the 'will letters' of suicide bombers, which indeed seem to radiate even a positive jubilation at going to meet the creator. Not surprisingly, many such letters talk of 'making their mothers proud' (and not their families).

## Conclusions

Despite studies, which have been carried out, this is only the tip of the iceberg. Time will tell how future generations of young Swati boys under strong matriarchal influences will turn out. There are many different variables, which act upon individuals to radicalize them, and so the causality of extremism in Swat are numerous. If this is the case, any negative extremist influence which women exercise on the upbringing of young children may very well be offset by the now almost universal distaste for the Taliban times. People of Swat have just seen too much bloodshed in the name of religion to trust such radio mullahs again. Since the reasons behind the rise of militancy are many fold, an analysis utilizing any single variable would be nothing short of empirical, and largely misleading. Contemporary literature reviews have suggested that that the post 9/11 presumed link between a reduction in poverty, or an increase in educational attainment and a simultaneous de-escalation of international terrorism is quite tenuous. The connections between poverty, education and terrorism have been suggested to be ephemeral, inasmuch the recent profiles of terrorists suggest that they are not the stereotypical impoverished and uneducated youth as was generally presumed. Instead it is the result of years of frustrated political aspirations and indignity, which inculcates an acute sense of insecurity and consequently hatred towards those who are ostensibly perceived to have brought about these conditions. These findings may further vary according to the local socio-cultural contexts of the national or sub national theatre under consideration.

However, qualitative and quantitative studies still indicate nostalgia for

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1 There are many reasons for their potential absence, from having been killed in conflict, working away from the district, or simply just staying away from the house.

radio mullahs by a significant number of Swati female respondents. The Taliban attempted to win the sympathies of the target populations by exploiting the lacunae in distributive social justice, thereby bypassing the formal governance framework with improvised local economic 'pumps' catering to the masses, particularly the landless poor. Interestingly, this seems to have won them sympathy and a certain legitimacy amongst cross-sections of society, including many women. These women then became converts to the ideology, notwithstanding the fact that the Taliban seemed to be closing their access to education and media. Many women forced the males in the household to listen to these FM programmes, forcing children under matriarchic influence to conform to the transmitted Talibanized ideals. It seems incredulous that despite the clearly harsh anti women ideology of the Taliban there was still considerable support for the Taliban from women. These complex dependency relationships have just been elicited during the Swat White Paper Study but it is clear that much still needs to be done to analyse these pervasive phenomena.

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# CHAPTER 12. NATIONAL SECURITY: NAVIGATING THE COMING ROUGH SEAS BETWEEN THE USA AND CHINA



**Andre Zaaiman**

"The first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that the statesman and commander have to make is to establish [...] the kind of war on which they are embarking." (Clausewitz, 2007, p.61)

## **Will China and America cooperate, compete or go to war?**

The emerging geo-political great game between the USA and China is of great importance to the world in general, and to Africa and South Africa in particular. How this great power relationship unfolds will have a commanding influence on the 21<sup>st</sup> century. As it intensifies, it will remind us that ideology, politics, strategy, money and geography matter; that history has not ended.

The future cannot be known, but probability and prediction can be improved as well as surprise avoided if we are assisted by facts - by a proper understanding of what is going on - as well as by quality information, good theory and of course, secrets. However as the renowned Stellenbosch academic Paul Cilliers (1998) demonstrated, complex and dynamic contexts cannot be properly understood using the classic tools of analytic reductionism. Complexity science with its emphasis on the non-linearity of relationships between multiple components in a system may provide a

methodological escape and a way to deal with the uncertain, the unexpected and the sudden.

In statecraft, the purpose of intelligence is to provide a competent decision-maker with an informational advantage in the context of national security and the pursuit of national goals. As before, events and decisions made by others on distant shores will have a critical impact on Africa and South Africa. Since the world has become hyper-connected and interdependent, events elsewhere will reverberate across the system faster and more directly. The smooth and orderly flow and exchange of goods, information, money, food, energy and people is now of critical importance for the domestic stability of each country. Movement becomes as important as access and relationships. Albert O'Hirschman of *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade* (1980) made compelling arguments to demonstrate how dependency and domination can arise out of foreign trade relations and how the power to interrupt or disrupt commercial or financial flows or relations with other countries, is a determinant of a country's power position. In other words, a country trying to make the most out of its strategic position with respect to its own trade will try to create conditions which make the interruption or disruption of trade of much graver concern to its trading partners than to itself.

According to Hudson Institute naval expert Bryan McGrath in an article entitled "A new look at an old Maritime Strategy", he stated that the central proposition of the US Naval Strategy is:

That there is a global system in place that works to the benefit of the people of United States and all other nations who participate in it. The system consists of tightly interconnected networks of trade, finance, information, law, people and governance, and the strategy posits that U.S. maritime forces will be deployed to protect and sustain the system. (McGrath, 2014)

Some American maritime strategists already worry that the Chinese People's Liberation Army's (PLA) can now field robust anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) capabilities along their key maritime trade routes, that are threatening to make US power projection increasingly risky and, in some cases and contexts, prohibitively costly.

The control over these flows and exchange – until now enforced and policed by the USA and its Western allies through norms, rules and institutions created by themselves and backed up by the coercive power of the globally-deployed US Military – is increasingly contested and some would argue, breaking down. The launch of the New Development Bank (NDB) and of the Contingency Reserve Fund (CRF) by the emerging countries of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) in July 2014 is a powerful signal that developing countries are no longer willing to play second fiddle on the global stage. A senior official of the ruling African National Congress in South Africa, Obed Bapela, commenting in the ANC

Today newsletter noted that:

The Sixth BRICS Summit just concluded in the picturesque coastal city of Fortaleza. This was a historic and seminal moment in the post-Bretton Woods era since the BRICS Leaders witnessed the BRICS Finance Ministers signing the two founding agreements on the New Development Bank (NDB) and Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA). President Zuma has hailed the establishment of the NDB as ‘an everlasting legacy that will change the face of global economics and the face of all the developing world for better’. (Bapela, 2014)

The desired post-Bretton Woods era does not only contain different global financial institutions – not controlled by the USA – but some analysts believe also rests on different values. In an article published on The Huffington Post entitled, "New BRICS Bank a Building Block of Alternative World Order" Parag Khanna notices that:

The New Development Bank was therefore not just born out of resentment over the World Bank and IMF's main donors stubbornly clinging to their over-weighted voting shares. It also reflects a difference in philosophy over the need to prioritize physical infrastructure over other priorities (such as education, healthcare, women's rights, etc.) towards which the World Bank has been drawn in recent decades. From a holistic point of view, all such investments are crucial for equitable national prosperity and wellbeing, but nothing creates jobs and literally drives 'state-building' like infrastructure. (Khanna, 2014)

As the current global architecture decomposes, the resultant vacuum and ideological contestation in the interregnum may lead to adventurism, friction and conflict. The world therefore also needs new political institutional arrangements that are representative of the shifts in the balance-of-forces. For theorists of hegemonic wars such as A.F.K Organski, Jacek Kugler and George Modelski, this coincides with a high-risk and dangerous moment in world history when a rising power starts to challenge an existing hegemon; a historical moment that when viewed from the *longue durée*, frequently ended in vicious trade disputes and eventually in large-scale war.

President Barack Obama has made it clear that America does not want its relationship with China "to become defined by rivalry and confrontation". Rejecting the basic premises of the theorists of hegemonic wars he, in the words of his National Security Advisor Tom Donlin disagrees “with the premise put forward by some historians and theorists that a rising power and an established power are somehow destined for conflict. There is nothing preordained about such an outcome.” (Donlin, 2013)

In an interview with David Remnick in The New Yorker (January 2014), Obama confirmed that what he needs isn't any new grand strategy: “I don't really even need George Kennan right now”—but, rather the right strategic partners. “There are currents in history and you have to figure out how to

move them in one direction or another,” Rhodes said. “You can’t necessarily determine the final destination [...] The President subscribes less to a great-man theory of history and more to a great-movement theory of history—that change happens when people force it or circumstances do.” [Later, Obama told me (that is Remnick) ‘I’m not sure Ben is right about that. I believe in both.’] (Remnick, 2014).

This private denial is revelatory and provides us with important information. It also raises an important question: which currents and waves are America riding in the advancement of their goals and the implementation of their strategy? The correct answer to this question will unlock a treasure trove of information and needs to be probed further.

For American scholars like John Mearsheimer according to his work “The Tragedy of Great Power Politics” (2001) there is a limited role in international affairs for either intelligent leadership or for diplomacy, because in his view, as powers gain economic strength, they will pursue the acquisition of coercive, military power. And this in turn will lead to conflict making the idea that economic interdependence contributes to peace, a delusion. Currently China, India, Japan and Russia are all in the process of rapidly modernizing their military forces.

President Barack Obama reconfirmed the main currents of his thinking in his 2014 West-Point speech:

In such circumstances, we should not go it alone. Instead, we must mobilize allies and partners to take collective action. We have to broaden our tools to include diplomacy and development; sanctions and isolation; appeals to international law; and, if just, necessary and effective, multilateral military action. In such circumstances, we have to work with others because collective action in these circumstances is more likely to succeed, more likely to be sustained, less likely to lead to costly mistakes. (Obama, 2014)

Grand Strategy declares long-term intentions and how all instruments of national power will be wielded over time in the pursuit of specific goals. Whilst rejecting rivalry and confrontation with China, Obama at the same time, reconfirmed his adherence to the Doctrine of American Preponderance – albeit articulated softly as “global American leadership”. In other words, his intent is to arrest the decline in US hegemony that started with its disastrous military invasions of Iraq in 2003 – the latter an inflection point in post-Cold War history correctly read as such at the time by a small team of South African national security experts working with then President Thabo Mbeki that included Lindiwe Sisulu, Aziz Pahad, Welile Nhlapo, Super Moloji, Thembi Majola and myself. South Africa took an unusually strong and public position against that invasion and it was precisely Shock-and-Awe in Iraq that woke the Chinese and Russian military from their complacency and aroused their suspicions of American grand-strategic encirclement and containment. That invasion and the manner in which it was conducted, is

directly linked to the unfolding great power dynamic between the US, China, Russia and India.

Giovanni Arrighi in his *New Left Review* article entitled “Hegemony Unravelling”, refers to the works of David Harvey including “The New Imperialism”, and Thomas McCormick’s “America’s Half-Century: United States Foreign Policy in the Cold War and After” and remarks:

The attempted implementation of the (Neo-Conservative) plan through the unilateral decision to invade Iraq, Harvey argues, ‘created a bond of resistance [...] between France, Germany and Russia, even backed by China’. This sudden geopolitical realignment made it ‘possible to discern the faint outlines of a Eurasian power bloc that Halford Mackinder long ago predicted could easily dominate the world geopolitically’. In light of Washington’s longstanding fears that such a bloc might actually materialize, the occupation of Iraq takes on an even broader meaning: Not only does it constitute an attempt to control the global oil spigot – and hence the global economy – through domination over the Middle East. It also constitutes a powerful US military bridgehead on the Eurasian land mass which, when taken together with its gathering alliances from Poland down through the Balkans, yields it a highly significant geo-strategic position with the potential to disrupt any consolidation of a Eurasian power; and which could indeed be the next step in that ‘endless accumulation of political power’ that must always accompany the equally endless accumulation of capital. (Arrighi, 2005, p.34)

As far back as in 1997, Zbigniew Brzezinski, writing in *Foreign Affairs*, asserted that:

Eurasia is home to most of the world’s politically assertive and dynamic states. All the historical pretenders to global power originated in Eurasia. The world’s most populous aspirants to regional hegemony, China and India, are in Eurasia, as are all the potential political or economic challengers to American primacy. After the United States, the next six largest economies and military spenders are there, as are all but one of the world’s overt nuclear powers, and all but one of the covert ones. Eurasia accounts for 75 percent of the world’s population, 60 percent of its GNP, and 75 percent of its energy resources. Collectively, Eurasia’s potential power overshadows even America’s. Eurasia is the world’s axial supercontinent. A power that dominated Eurasia would exercise decisive influence over two of the world’s three most economically productive regions, Western Europe and East Asia. A glance at the map also suggests that a country dominant in Eurasia would almost automatically control the Middle East and Africa. With Eurasia now serving as the decisive geopolitical chessboard, it no longer suffices to fashion one policy for Europe and another for Asia. What happens with the distribution of power on the Eurasian landmass will be of decisive importance to America’s global primacy and historical legacy. (Brzezinski, 1997)

In the same article of 1997, Brzezinski went on to say:

In the short run, the United States should consolidate and perpetuate the prevailing geopolitical pluralism on the map of Eurasia. This strategy will put a premium on political manoeuvring and diplomatic manipulation, preventing the emergence of a hostile coalition that could challenge America's primacy, not to mention the remote possibility of any one state seeking to do so. A sustainable strategy for Eurasia must distinguish among the more immediate short-run perspective of the next five years or so, the medium term of 20 or so years, and the long run beyond that. Moreover, these phases must be viewed not as watertight compartments but as part of a continuum [...] By the medium term, the foregoing should lead to the emergence of strategically compatible partners which, prompted by American leadership, might shape a more cooperative trans-Eurasian security system. In the long run, the foregoing could become the global core of genuinely shared political responsibility." (Brzezinski, 1997)

In other words, he proposed making regimes compatible with US values and interests whilst pursuing counter-alliance disruption, building (co-)dependence that must lead to (inter-)dependence. Brzezinski expanded on these ideas in his subsequent two books: "The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geo-Strategic Imperatives" in 1997; and "Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global Power" in 2013.

This exposes a major and long-standing American anxiety: the biggest medium term threat to US hegemony and preponderance, lies – from a US perspective – in a deepened rapprochement between Germany and Russia. It also tells us why the US government so actively pursues the destabilization of the Ukraine: it wants to maintain friction between Germany and Russia; prevent rapprochement from deepening and build a geo-political buffer. And it explains why America, through its NSA, is spying in such a comprehensive manner on its own ally: Germany.

Obama therefore aims to restore the traditional sources of American hegemony – US economic, financial, rule-making and ideological or soft power. Tom Donlin goes on to say that "the United States is implementing a comprehensive, multidimensional strategy: it is an effort that harnesses all elements of U.S. power—military, political, trade and investment, development and our values" (Donlin, 2013). In as far as Asia is concerned "the overarching objective of the United States in the region is to sustain a stable security environment and a regional order rooted in economic openness, peaceful resolution of disputes, and respect for universal rights and freedoms" (Donlin, 2013).

This Strategy rests on five pillars:

- Strengthening US alliances particularly with Japan
- Deepening partnerships with emerging powers particularly with India

- Building a stable, productive, and constructive relationship with China;
- Empowering regional institutions;
- Helping to build a regional economic architecture that can sustain shared prosperity.

In trying to read and interpret the current context correctly – and starting with the American side – the above facts create an interesting analytical dilemma: Obama has publicly rejected the Data Modelling and warnings of the theorists of hegemonic wars on the one hand; but on the other hand, he has clearly stated his intention to not only continue to pursue American hegemony but to restore and rebuild it.

The progressive American scholar Noam Chomsky argues that successive US Governments are all pursuing the same objective; they just develop new pretexts and enemies as they go along – unintentionally affirming Obama's claim that American Grand Strategy remains unchanged (TomDispatch, 2014). Chomsky hones in on the ideological and argues that US security policy does not aim to secure "the people" but rather the US ideology of private sector capitalism built around an elite group of banks, financial institutions and the military-industrial complex. He refers to the Snowden revelations and quotes the prominent liberal scholar and government adviser Samuel Huntington: "The architects of power in the United States must create a force that can be felt but not seen. Power remains strong when it remains in the dark; exposed to the sunlight it begins to evaporate" (Huntington, 1981). Huntington wrote that in 1981, when the Cold War was again heating up, and he explained further "you may have to sell [intervention or other military action] in such a way as to create the misimpression that it is the Soviet Union that you are fighting. That is what the United States has been doing ever since the Truman Doctrine" (Huntington, 1981).

In trying to solve our analytical dilemma and without revealing any secrets, it might be useful to start by looking again at the facts.

The impact of the incipient US-Chinese and Western-Russian contestation and ongoing strategic re-positioning, is already starkly visible in regions across the globe stretching from Ukraine or Crimea; the South and East China Seas; or in the Middle East. The African continent has not been spared with the large-scale but diffused physical American military and economic presence across the whole continent as part of a far-reaching American manoeuvre ironically known as the Pivot to Asia, now the most visible red flag. This American military deployment in Africa has until recently, largely gone unnoticed but its scale and depth has caused some policy-makers to call this US geo-strategic manoeuvre "the Pivot to Africa" instead. Its landward presence is constantly and stealthily being expanded

through leadership training, anti-terrorism, anti-poaching and anti-organized crime or joint military-exercise "partnership" initiatives in all regions of Africa.

US Defence and its public and private security arms are re-positioning themselves for new and not-so-new forms of kinetic and non-kinetic interventions aimed at shaping environments, building or breaking alliances and weakening adversaries. This will include complex informational and media warfare; economic, trade and currency interventions; as well political subversion. In a hyper-connected world, the maritime capabilities for anti-access and area-denial, flow throttling or systems control and disruption, become critical. For example world trade, conducted in US Dollars via digital informational platforms, moves and happens through shipping and therefore seas, sea lanes, harbours, coastal borders and navies – both commercial and military –are key elements in the new mix of challenges confronting us. Destabilizing adversarial regimes or alliances through economic warfare, disrupting trade flows and support for tech-savvy youth groups, efforts at regime de-legitimization and strengthening oppositional forces, will be escalated.

The 2013 book of Juan Zarate "The Treasury's War: Unleashing a New Era of Financial Warfare" which lifted the lid on these new national security tools developed and deployed by the US government since 2011, is a warning of things to come. In July 2014, Reuters reported that the French bank BNP Paribas had pleaded guilty to two criminal charges laid against it by the US Treasury, and agreed to pay almost \$9 billion to resolve accusations it violated U.S. sanctions against Sudan, Cuba and Iran, a severe punishment aimed at sending a clear message to other financial institutions around the world. Behind this lies an even more important fact: the US will go to extraordinary lengths to maintain the supremacy of the US Dollar as the world's reserve currency - a critical element in maintaining US hegemonic control.

Whilst the Pivot – often called "re-balancing" – has lead America to build its presence in the Asia Pacific region, it is also trying to extend its North Atlantic hegemony southwards towards the Central Atlantic region, making the entire Western Rim of Africa a critical part of this geo-political shift – a practical manifestation of the Roosevelt corollary to the Monroe Doctrine.

This will prevent or disrupt the emergence of a BRICS-oriented, Brazilian-lead South American and South African-lead African security community developing in the Central Atlantic. And it will make Nigeria, not a BRICS member, a more important geo-strategic player. The Northern African Rim, following the 2011 Franco-American military intervention in Libya in particular, already forms part of a broader European-led Mediterranean security and influence zone as articulated in the Lisbon

Concept adopted by NATO, also in 2011.

This new focus on the seas and oceanic Rims is neither limited to Africa nor is it a coincidence as it is all part of a deliberate US-European geo-political repositioning. Although both pivoting and the modern variant of geo-strategy is often traced back to the 1904 article of the British geographer Harald Mackinder titled “The Geographical Pivot of History” in which he proposed a land-based, heartland theory of geo-politics, it was his critic Nicholas Spykman who drew on the work of the American naval theorist Alfred Mahan and his work, “The Influence of Sea Power upon History, 1660–1783”, which was an influential study on the role of the navy and of sea-power on the rise of the British Empire, that developed a complementary counter-argument of a sea-based, rim land theory of geo-strategy. Whilst Mackinder argued that Eurasia – incorporating both contemporary Russia and China – were the heartland around which world domination pivoted; and therefore whoever controlled it would control the world –Spykman in turn argued that the sea-lanes and ocean Rim around the heartland, in particular the South and East China Seas, were the key geographical areas from which the heartland and thus the globe could be dominated. From a South African perspective, this would make the Eastern Rim of Africa, as important as its Northern and Western Rims.

It is therefore not insignificant that not only the US and China but also India, Russia, Japan and Brazil have all heavily invested in their naval capabilities over last five years. Chinese stability depends on peaceful development and American preponderance on military domination and control over the Dollarized global financial system. Both China and Russia fear that the US is busy with an elaborate and incipient manoeuvre of encirclement and destabilization as part of a broader strategy of containment. South Africa fears that Africa and South Africa itself, will get embroiled in this American manoeuvre with negative consequences for our key national security goal: political-economic transformation as part of a broader African revival. America fears that China – with or without its Allies – will rival and pose a threat to US Preponderance or hegemony; or that West and East Europe would unite.

Whilst the physical and material consequences of US-Chinese repositioning are visible, the much-less visible political and ideological dimension that undergirds this may not be less important.

The American scholar Charles A. Kupchan argues that:

Understanding and managing international change requires examining not just shifts in material power, but also the associated contest among competing norms of order. Transitions in the international distribution of power produce not only novel hierarchies, but also novel brands of international order that rest on the social and ideological proclivities of newly powerful states in the system. [This is because] as great powers rise,

they, as a matter of course, seek to extend to their expanding spheres of influence, the norms that provide order within their own polities. (Kupchan, 2014, p.220)

In September 2002, then US President George W. Bush articulated the Grand Strategy of the United States of America as follows: "We will defend the peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants. We will preserve the peace by building good relations among the great powers. We will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent." (Bush, 2002)

Following his announcement in November 2011 of an American Pivot to Asia in a speech in Canberra and later rephrased as re-balancing, President Barack Obama has consistently maintained that the core elements of the existing Grand Strategy – US Preponderance and the defence, preservation and extension of the values of "freedom, liberal-democracy and free enterprise" – remain intact. These three components, and the way it has been turned into a global hegemonic praxis through constructs such as "globalization" and US coercion immediately after the end of the Cold War, have come together under the term "neo-liberalism".

The 20 March 2003 American "Shock-and-Awe" military invasion of Iraq was precisely the start of this hegemonic praxis based on neo-liberal ideology, geo-strategy and coercion.

This particular brand of liberalism – now known as anti-statist neo-liberalism – lead Henry Giroux to remark that:

Neoliberalism has become the most dangerous ideology of the current historical moment. It assaults all things public, mystifies the basic contradiction between democratic values and market fundamentalism, and weakens any viable notion of political agency by offering no language capable of connecting private considerations to public issues. Under the rule of neoliberalism, politics are market driven and the claims of democratic citizenship are subordinated to market values. What becomes troubling under such circumstances is not simply that ideas associated with freedom and agency are defined through the prevailing ideology and principles of the market, but that neoliberalism wraps itself in what appears to be an unassailable appeal to common sense. As Zygmunt Bauman notes, 'What [...] makes the neo-liberal world-view sharply different from other ideologies – indeed, a phenomenon of a separate class – is precisely the absence of questioning; its surrender to what is seen as the implacable and irreversible logic of social reality.' Also lost is the very viability of politics itself.' (Giroux, 2002, p.428)

Peter Mair subsequently noted in his essay "Ruling the Void" (2006), that under Tony Blair:

The role of 'progressive' politics was not to provide solutions from above, by exercising the 'directive hand' of government, but to bring together 'dynamic markets' and strong communities so as 'to offer synergy and

opportunity'. In Tony Blair's [a key proponent and advocate of the 2003 Iraq invasion] ideal world, politics would eventually become redundant. As one of his close cabinet colleagues was later to remark, 'depoliticizing of key decision-making is a vital element in bringing power closer to the people'. At one level, this was a simple populist strategy—employing the rhetoric of 'the people' in order to suggest that there had been a radical break with past styles of government. At another, however, it gelled perfectly with the tenets of what were then seen as newly emerging schools of 'governance' and with the idea that 'society is now sufficiently well organized through self-organizing networks that any attempts on the part of government to intervene will be ineffective and perhaps counterproductive'. In this perspective, government no longer seeks to wield power or even exercise authority. Its relevance declines, while that of non-governmental institutions and practices increases. In Ulrich Beck's terms, the dynamic moves from Politics, with a capital 'P', to politics with a lower-case one, or to what he has called 'sub-politics'. (Mair, 2006, p.26)

Anti-political sentiments were also becoming more evident in the policy-making literature of the late 1990s. Mair continues:

In 1997, an influential article appeared in *Foreign Affairs* expressing the concern that government in the US was becoming 'too political'. Its author, Alan Blinder, a leading economist and deputy head of the Federal Reserve, suggested extending the model of independent Central Banks to other key policy areas, so that decisions on health, the welfare state and so on would be taken by non-partisan experts. The role of politicians in policy-making would be confined to those areas in which the judgement of experts would not suffice to legitimize outcomes. Similar arguments were emerging in the European context. In 1996, for example, Giandomenico Majone argued that the role of expert decision-making in the policy-making process was superior to that of political decision-making in that it could take better account of long-term interests. (Mair, 2006, pp. 26-27)

South Africa was not spared from this Western hegemonic coercion then and it will not be spared from it in the future. The ANC Government under Presidents Mandela and Mbeki had to chart a very careful path amidst dangerously constrained external and domestic environments. The global environment has significantly changed, despite American grand strategic intentions remaining the same, and the international balance-of-power has very slowly begun to shift. Whilst we need to use the opportunity to domestically reintroduce the state, politics and political debate in South Africa – the anti-politics machine must be stopped – we need to do so with wisdom and as part of a broad national consensus or compact. There can be no democracy without the demos; and in national security when the chips are down, there still remains only two final arbiters: capabilities and the national will of the people.

As the ANC government under President Zuma pursues our path in

BRICS and builds a democratic developmental state aimed at fast sustained, sustainable and inclusive growth, we need to bear in mind that internationally, the intricate sets of competing great power interests and grand strategies create fertile conditions for misperception, miscommunication and miscalculation. Nonetheless nothing should deter us from enhancing the competitiveness and performance of our economy, building equity in our society or the deepening of our democracy and national will; this can only occur through the comprehensive transformation and realignment of our current dysfunctional political economy and skewed social realities.

South Africa should remain an active, constructive and consensus-building participant in the ongoing process in which the phenomenal potential of our continent and its people is finally being realized – our future and the future of our continent can never be separated. This in turn will require us to be wise shepherds in shaping new, progressive global governance architecture – financial, political, economic, security and culture – and an ideological praxis in which people and politics will claim their rightful place.

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**PART IV – WOMEN’S  
LEADERSHIP IN RE-  
INVENTING A  
GLOBALIZED WORLD**



# **CHAPTER 13. TECHNOLOGY AND THE POWER TO CONNECT: PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES THROUGH INTERNET COMMUNITIES**



**Gerard van Oortmerssen**

## **The development of technology and how it changes our world**

### **History of technology**

Homo sapiens is the first species to employ technology to make life easier and increase possibilities for survival and progress. Throughout history of mankind we have seen a continuous development of tools of increasing sophistication, from fire, the wheel, literacy, the steam engine, to the computer in our times. Technological development took place in waves. Every now and then a new technology emerged with considerable impact, heralding a new era with new impulses to economic and cultural progress. Examples are literacy, which made it possible to accumulate information and knowledge in documents, and book printing, which subsequently made this knowledge accessible to large numbers of people. Other examples are the steam engine, which started the industrial revolution and made relatively fast transportation over larger distances possible by steamships and railways.

Next came electricity, mass media and the use of hydrocarbons as a source of energy, which subsequently enabled fast air transportation. In our era it is Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which has a disruptive influence on life and society. The waves of technological development appear to happen at ever-shorter intervals. Nowadays, the amount of change that happens during the lifetime of a person is unprecedented, and the pace of change seems to accelerate even further.

Considering the ubiquity of ICT in terms of global penetration, as well as the multiple aspects of life in which it plays a role, it is hard to believe that it is only just over half a century ago that the first computers were developed. The single property of ICT that is essential for its success is the fact that it is a digital technology. The technology uses zero's and one's to represent any kind of data, making it possible to transfer and copy information indefinitely without errors and to perform computational operations on information. The value of this property can hardly be overestimated.

The first computers were built around the end of the Second World War. They were very big machines, expensive, and could be operated by specialised staff only. There were only a few, operated by government (defence) agencies, universities, and a few major corporations. They were mainly used for scientific computations and automation of administrative processes. Over the years computers became more powerful, cheaper and smaller. A major step was made in 1983 when the first personal computer came on the market. Working with a computer was no longer the privilege of specialists in a Computer Department. Anybody in an organisation could have a computer on his or her desktop, and soon even non-professional consumers could buy a PC. The democratisation of ICT started, bringing this digital technology to everyone who could afford it, and with prices going down, more and more people were able to afford the technology over the years.

In the early years computers were stand-alone machines, but in 1969 the first network was built by connecting computers at three American universities. The idea was to make more efficient use of the computing capacity by "time sharing". Soon the network was also used for sending messages and this eventually became the most important application of networks. Over the years more and more computers were connected, and interconnections were built between the various networks, thus creating a single worldwide network of computers, the Internet. Personal computers at homes could be connected to this Internet via public telephone services. The Internet got its real value in 1989, when Tim Berners Lee developed the World Wide Web (WWW) at CERN in Geneva. The WWW made it possible to easily access information on websites, navigating by just "clicking" on a word or icon, and ignited an explosive growth of the Internet. At just about the same time digital mobile phones made their entry on the market, growing

at a similar rate. In just two decades the number of mobile phones grew to 7 billion, which means that there are as many mobile phones as people in the world. The mobile phone evolved from a device for talking and sending SMS text messages to a powerful pocket computer with full Internet functionality. People in high-income countries possess various devices such as smart phones, tablets, notebooks and desktop computers all of which give access to the Internet. The way we interact with these devices has evolved as well: from punch tape in the early days, via keyboard and mouse to touch screens and voice control, which are intuitive and easy, aligned with human nature and not requiring any special training.

## Trends

When considering the development of ICT we can identify a number of trends.

The first one is the compression of space and time at exponentially growing velocity. This is the so-called Moore's law, stating that the number of transistors on a computer chip is doubling every 18 months. Effectively this means that computers become smaller, more powerful, with more memory space at an amazing speed. The price of digital devices is also going down continuously. It is difficult to fully grasp the significance of exponential growth, but doubling every 1.5 years gives a very steep growth curve after a decade or so.

It is not just the number of transistors on a chip that exhibits this growth. It is also characteristic for the amount of data on the Internet, the number of devices connected to the Internet, the number of websites, etc. etc.

The second trend is increasing connectedness. ICT is the technology that connects: it connects devices (computers, websites, information) into a global network. ICT also connects people, facilitating communication and collaboration. In its report, "Measuring the information Society 2013" the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) (2013) estimated that by the end of 2013, 2.7 billion people (40% of the world's inhabitants) were using the Internet. (The number is growing rapidly as just a decade ago this was only 10%). All these people can connect to each other, building new communities, local as well as global. This is typically realised by using social networks like Twitter and Facebook. At this moment Facebook has around 1.3 billion active users, a significant part of the world population and one out of two Internet users.

Associated with the trend of connectivity is the phenomenon of convergence. Various previously separate technologies such as radio, television, telephone, computers, photography, all converge and are embraced within Internet technology.

The third trend is increasing complexity. A modern smartphone or tablet

is more complex than a mainframe computer from the early years of ICT, and nowadays all these complex devices are connected to the Internet, together constituting an ensemble of tremendous complexity, with a multitude of interactions between devices, information and people. Just imagine that this complex system is growing every day. So does its complexity.

Some traits described in these trends are not exclusive to ICT but can be discerned in other technological developments as well, and can even be associated with the process of evolution itself. As the waves of technology seem to accelerate, the waves we see in the process of evolution have been accelerating as well: it took two billion years for life to emerge on earth, in the next several billion years many more complex forms of life emerged, mammals appeared around 100 million years ago, while homo sapiens dates back just a million years.

## **The future of ICT**

How will ICT develop from here? It is important to recognise that development will continue, at an accelerating pace. Think a moment about how your life was 10 years ago, and about the changes that took place due to ICT. Then, realise that for sure you will experience far more change in your life in the next 10 years to come! The phenomenon of exponential growth means that for a growth from 1 to 20 in the past 10 years, we will see a further spurt to almost 1000 in the next decade. We ain't seen nothing yet! How exactly our lives will change cannot be predicted, but some of the new things that are ahead can be identified with great probability.

One of the new developments we can already see is that of 'wearables', like smart watches and Google Glass. Devices are getting continuously smaller and are attached to our body, integrating Internet in our life even more than is already the case now. The data we generate are increasingly stored in the 'cloud', on servers somewhere in the Internet rather than on our own devices. This has the advantage that we can access our information anywhere, on any device, and easily share it with other people. It also means that all data can in principle be connected.

Another important development is that of sensors. There are already many sensors in our smartphones: microphones, cameras, position measuring equipment, compass, accelerometers. Sensors are also increasingly integrated in our environment and in infrastructure, to measure all kind of properties: temperature, moisture, material integrity, air quality, etc. etc. Also, RFID<sup>1</sup> chips and sensors are attached to all kind of objects and products,

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1 Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) it is a simple chip that allows the tracing and tracking of objects to which the chip is attached;

enabling continuous tracking and monitoring. In this context the concept of the ‘Internet of Things’ is emerging. Sensors are connected to the Internet and are feeding a continuous stream of data about the physical world into the ‘cloud’. Thus, a digital description of the world around us, including all infrastructure, houses, cities, objects and the real time position and properties of these assets, is built. Google maps, which besides geography and roads may already contain pictures of streets and houses and other assets, may be seen as a rudimentary form of this digital description of the world. The digital description will also contain information about people, where we are, what we do, maybe even about our pulse, blood pressure etc.

What we see emerge is one global system consisting of the Internet, all the connected intelligent devices and computers containing all information, and all sensors that generate data. One global ‘cloud’ that begins to resemble a living organism, with intelligence, a nerve system and senses. An organism that grows and evolves, becoming more and more complex.

It is important to note that this development is a rather autonomous process. The resulting system is not designed by humans (although its components are). It is growing and evolving because we all buy new stuff and connect it to the Internet. While the complexity of the system is increasing, we may expect new emergent behaviour of the system. We cannot predict this future behaviour, but one of the main questions is whether this system with increasing intelligence and complexity may develop some kind of consciousness, and to what extent it will control us instead of us controlling the system.

## **ICT is a disruptive technology, changing our behaviour and values**

### **Not just enabling but disruptive**

ICT is often regarded as an enabling technology, a technology that automates existing actions and processes, making these actions cheaper and more efficient. ICT is doing that, for sure, but ICT is much more. It is a disruptive technology, creating completely new possibilities and causing fundamental change to our lives and to our society.

ICT is truly a ‘disruptive’ technology. We see creative destruction. Automation means many people are losing their jobs, while on the other hand new jobs that did not exist before are created. The success of web shops, a completely new way of shopping, means the end of many retail

shops. Digital music and video have brought tremendous changes in the entertainment industry. Consumers are empowered to express themselves through blogging, music recordings and video's and get exposure to a global audience, thus becoming so-called 'prosumers': producers and consumers of content at the same time.

Internet has brought new ways of learning, like Massive Open Online Courses, Kahn Academy, Hole-in-the-Wall, blended learning, gaming, developments that most certainly will disrupt traditional educational institutions in the coming years. Internet empowers children and adults who are truly motivated to learn by themselves, with amazing results.

We can access expert information on any subject. Patients can learn a lot about their disease from the Internet and interactions with other patients on Internet fora, enabling them to have informed discussions with medical staff and manage their own medical treatment.

ICT is challenging existing institutions like our legal system. Digital technology made it very easy to share information and make multiple copies of material that is protected by copyrights. New types of criminal behaviour emerge, cybercrime, which requires adequate counter actions.

Since so much digital information is stored on the Internet, our world is becoming fully transparent. This has huge advantages. Adverse behaviour of our political leaders becomes apparent and people can denounce this behaviour and protest against their government. Social media are a great help in this respect, as we have seen during the so-called Arab Spring. On the other hand, the Internet can also be used by dictators to find protestors and suppress actions that threaten their position of power. These two sides of the Internet have become quite obvious from the revelations made by Wikileaks and more recently by Edward Snowden.

## **ICT changes our behaviour**

On the one hand ICT is empowering the individual, while on the other hand it helps us to build and maintain relationships with others. This is one of the paradoxes of the Internet. Will this lead to more individualism, or to a more social world? Hopefully to a social world consisting of strong individuals. There does not have to be a contradiction.

Internet and mobile devices have created a world in which we are always online, always connected, wherever we are. As a result, the boundaries between work and private life, and between the here and now of real life and the digital world are blurred. The online world is addictive; we still have to learn how to live in this new reality. Internet makes us aware of what is happening in other places in the world, what is happening to our friends, and we can share with the world what we are doing and thinking. But how do we combine the real world with cyberspace? We often see people in a meeting, or having dinner at a restaurant with friends, who are more involved with

their screen than the people they are with. Attention is a limited resource. How do we use it? Social media enable us to establish relationships with hundreds, or thousands of people. But with how many can we maintain a really meaningful relationship? There is so much information coming to us that it becomes difficult to handle. The Internet is screaming for attention, and it is sometimes difficult to resist. It becomes difficult for us to take time to concentrate and contemplate. Many young people find it difficult to read a book, being so accustomed to short bites of information. In his book *The Shallows* Nicholas Carr (2010) analyses this aspect of ICT. There are indications that frequent use of Internet has an effect on our memory and maybe even affects our brains.

## **ICT and Values**

It is obvious that the new technology offers very powerful tools that have a profound effect on the way we live. A quote from Marshall McLuhan says: “First we build the tools, then they build us”. As described in the previous paragraph, ICT is changing our behaviour, is changing maybe even our brain, our physical existence. ICT interacts with our values and our ethics. Our values determine our actions, our behaviour. We use tools, technology, to enhance our actions. If we do good, technology can help us to have a greater beneficial effect. By the same token, technology will amplify evil actions. We remain responsible for the choices we make, what we do and how we use technology, but we also have to be aware that technology may influence our choice. Some ICT tools will stimulate our creativity or our social behaviour, while other tools will stimulate controlling behaviour. ICT can assist in peace building, but also in making war. ICT empowers the individual, but can also be used to strengthen relationships. It is important that we become aware of what is really important to us, what our most precious values are, and consequently calibrate the way we use ICT to these values. For developers of ICT it is important to take user values into account when designing new technology (Van Oortmerssen, 2014). Users should make conscious choices of which ICT tools to use, and how and when to use them. We are all still in the process of adapting to ICT and the way we adapt depends on who we are, where we live, our culture and our values.

## **The digital divide and the gender gap**

### **The digital divide**

ICT with the new possibilities of e-learning and m-health brings a lot of hope for improving the standard of living and possibilities for economic growth and progress in low-income countries, in particular in rural areas without infrastructure, adequate schools and proper healthcare in place. The

obstacle met here is called the digital divide, the lack of ICT infrastructure and skills in many developing regions. This has been recognised by many, resulting in initiatives for so-called ICT4D projects -- ICT for Development. The established development aid community, however, has never been too enthusiastic about ICT. They believe the priority should be given to clean water, food and health care. In the short term that might be so, but for the longer term it seems more effective and respectful to provide the tools to empower local people to take responsibility for their own lives.

When comparing the regions of the world, the African continent is the one with the least access to Internet. According to the International Telecommunication Union (2013) Africa has the lowest ICT Development Index (IDI). The IDI is based on three variables: ICT readiness (ICT infrastructure and access), ICT skills and ICT use. Its theoretical value is between 0 and 10. The most advanced countries in terms of ICT, South Korea, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, have IDI's typically between 8 and 9. In 2012 the IDI for Africa was 2.

ICT4D projects have been hampered mostly by lack of fixed network infrastructure, in particular in rural areas. Consequently Internet access often depended on satellite connections, which are prohibitively expensive. In addition, major barriers are presented by a lack of equipment, availability of components, lack of ICT skills needed to manage computer networks, and no or intermittent electric power supply.

An example of a successful project is Macha Works (Van Stam, 2010) that brought Internet to rural communities in Zambia using an approach of empowerment of local talented young people while paying attention to, and respect for the local cultural context.

There have been justified fears that the digital gap would be hard to close, or that it would even get wider, mainly because high income countries could enjoy wideband access at decreasing cost while in regions like rural Africa the access situation was stagnant. Fortunately the situation in Africa is changing rapidly, thanks to the advent of the mobile phone, which has spread over the continent at an incredible rate. Several countries show a double figure growth rate of mobile phone penetration. Consequently Internet access is changing dramatically within a short space of time.

Devices will continue to get cheaper and more abundant, which means that this new technology will increasingly become available to anyone in the world, including in low-income countries. Where in the past equipment sent to developing countries was often out-dated, the new smaller and cheaper devices, like smartphones, become available with smaller time lags.

The backlog in development and lack of resources to stimulate the take-up of disruptive ICT technologies in innovative ways can sometimes become an advantage, leading to a phenomenon called leapfrogging. One example is mobile payments. In Africa, which lacks a well functioning financial system,

the possibilities of mobile networks for making payments has been readily recognised and systems for making payments with mobile phones have been developed. A well-known example of such a system is m-Pesa that is operational in several African countries. At present, Africa is leading the world in mobile payments. This successful innovation may lead to more examples. We begin to see centres of ICT-based innovation and business creation emerging in various places in Africa.

Notwithstanding this positive development there remain many challenges. Information on the web is predominantly available in English, not in local vernacular. In order to really empower people in rural areas it would require a “re-narration” of the web, using vernacular and adapting information to local contexts. Interesting work on this has been done by Dinesh (2012). In the re-narration model, a web page is rewritten to make it accessible to a target audience of users in a completely decentralised way. The notion of re-narration is completely general. It could, for example, mean translating a page automatically to another language. Or it could mean creating a more accessible version of a technical (or legal) document for laymen. There is also the possibility of text-to-speech to make written information accessible for illiterates.

## **The gender gap**

According to Intel's report *Women on the Web* (2012): "On average across the developing world, nearly 25% fewer women than men have access to the Internet, and the gender gap soars to nearly 45% in regions like sub-Saharan Africa."

Though Africa has recently seen rapid growth in Internet access, women are vastly underrepresented in technology. The rise of cybercafes has benefited men more than women because boys and men have more freedom of movement to get to the cafes and have more access to make and spend money.

Furthermore, there is a disturbing trend of cyber bullying experienced by young women.

Because women face barriers such as poverty, illiteracy, and discrimination when getting training and education, we are witnessing the rise of a second digital divide according to Sow (2014). It is important to understand that technology and access to the Internet is essential to women's empowerment and it is therefore key to overcoming these barriers. Becoming technologically skilled can play a major role in getting jobs, being competitive in the job market and enable these women to pull themselves out of poverty.

The mobile phone may also prove to be a vast advancement with respect to the gender gap. Mobile phones are more accessible to women than computers, are user friendly and women do not have to leave their home to

get Internet access. A recent study by Velghe (2013) in a township in South Africa has shown the amazing potential of mobile phones for literacy acquisition and informal learning. Women use the social network MXIT, which is quite popular in Africa, and they help their illiterate friends to use the phone and learn to read and write.

As Intel's report concludes: "The expansion of broadband and explosion of Internet-enabled mobile phones have begun to erode some of the toughest barriers to Internet access. They will continue to do so, and stakeholders must support these structural shifts and even help them to accelerate".

When women do have access, their use of the Internet is different compared to male users. Women spend more time on online shopping and are more active on social media. The active role of women in social media can be observed worldwide (Lee, 2011).

## **Challenges we are facing**

### **Adverse effects of technological development**

Technology has brought tremendous progress for mankind in all realms of life. Thanks to medical technology the average life expectancy has changed considerably; the world population has grown and continues to grow, while agricultural technology has made it possible to feed this large population. Technology has enriched our life, making it possible to live a comfortable life. Physical work has been alleviated or taken over by machines, computers automate many tasks, thus creating time for us to develop ourselves and do things that we find more meaningful. Long distance travel gave the possibility to experience other countries and cultures and to collaborate internationally.

At the same time this technological development has created new problems. Automation has resulted in a rise of unemployment. Industrial activities and use of hydrocarbons has created environmental problems and is changing climate at a frightening pace. The climate change in itself is a threat for agriculture, but also causes additional problems like rising sea level, extreme weather, tsunamis etc.

The continuing rise of life expectancy results in demographic changes, a need for more elderly care and the challenge to feed a still growing world population. Obviously there is a limit to how many people can live a decent life on our earth, but we do not know exactly where the limit lies.

The demand for energy is growing, while the end of supply of fossil fuel is coming in sight. Natural resources of all kind of metals and chemicals vital for technology are limited and some are nearing depletion.

The recent financial crisis has raised doubts about the adequacy of our economical system for the future.

Some may feel these problems are so severe that we should stop with further development of technology. This is no option. On the contrary, we will need more and smarter technology in order to be able to control and solve the problems caused by technology in the first place.

### **Regional inequalities: a potential cause for conflicts**

As was mentioned in the first section of this chapter, technological evolution came in waves of increasing frequency. These waves, however, were not uniformly distributed over the globe. The waves in the various regions of the world were not in harmony, resulting in imperialism, exploitation and oppression. The picture of the world of today is that technology has enriched the life of many. But it is not equally available to all. Many people in low-income countries do not benefit from all the advantages technology can bring. The problems that result from the technological development are basically global problems. Climate change affects people wherever they live but its effects will probably be even more severe for farmers in low-income countries in Asia, Africa and South America.

Although people in less privileged regions may not have a car, modern agricultural tools, high standard health care etc., the one technology that comes within reach now is the most modern one: ICT. The digital mobile phone has penetrated most of the globe at an unprecedented speed. Mobile phones have brought the possibility for communication with family members away from home, and the technology helped many to improve their business. At the same time it has connected people in rural areas to the world, creating awareness of what is beyond the horizon, creating awareness of the inequalities in wealth and living conditions that exist in today's world. Differences in wealth, opportunities, access to resources, access to technology, living conditions, all these differences become obvious to everybody in a transparent, connected world and may lead to large scale migration, resentment and tensions and thus are a potential cause for conflicts.

### **Conflicts abound**

As I write this, we commemorate the start of the First World War, the Great War that was said to end all wars. We now know how naive was this thought. When we look around we see fighting all over: in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, Asia. The character of armed conflicts has changed. In World War I the great nations were fighting each other, through soldiers shooting at each other on a rather confined battlefield. Now we often see situations where groups of rebels or fanatics take up arms. Anybody can join the fighting, sometimes even children. In many cases we see fighting within rather than between nations, typically between different ethnic or religious communities. Fighting is no longer taking place on confined battlefields but often in cities

and villages, causing many casualties among civilians, in particular women and children. Terrorist actions can pop up anywhere, with the assault on the World Trade Centre in New York as a terrifying example.

Many believers in the blessings of Internet thought that the Internet would help to bring worldwide democracy and peace and that the so called Arab Spring, in which social media played an important role, were heralding this new era. I am optimistic myself about the opportunities that the Internet provides us with in this respect, but it is obvious that we need more time. Our ability as human beings to change and adapt to the new world order is a limiting factor. Change is rapid, so rapid and intrusive that we are confused and have difficulty to adapt, even in parts of the world that have experienced technological development for centuries. Many people living in remote rural areas with a traditional culture, however, did not have this experience and are now suddenly exposed to modern communication technology, connecting them to the world, confronting them with different values and belief systems. We have to recognise these differences and invest in promoting mutual understanding, building relationships and finding common values.

## **The grand challenge**

One thing what we have in common is that we all live on this earth. We have to share finite resources. We have to share wealth, land, and opportunities. We are also facing the same challenges of climate change, pollution and conflict. How can we share in a fair way and live in peace? What is the future we will share? We come from a past with many communities, each with their own narratives about who we are, where we come from, and about the meaning of life. We are now entering an era with a new reality. Together we become aware that we are part of a global community. That does not mean that the old communities will no longer exist; they transcend into the global community. We have to reconcile the differences between the existing communities in order to make it possible that this new global community will prosper. We need a narrative for a common future. We have no alternative; time cannot be reversed.

## **Building a global community: the role women can play and how ICT can help**

### **A global community, a new reality**

We live in an exciting time. Technology is changing the world in an unprecedented way. Modern ICT is creating a connected world. The breakthrough of the Internet took off with the creation of the World Wide Web in 1989, the year that marked the fall of the Berlin wall. Mark Taylor (2001) suggested that this is no coincidence. In a connected world, the

situation of two large power blocks divided by an iron curtain is not sustainable. Thus, the year 1989 can be seen as the start of a process of transition towards a really connected global community. This new reality that we cannot yet fully grasp, will be a complex one. The new world community will not be a single monolithic super 'nation' which ends all existing nations, but a community which includes a multitude of smaller communities. These constituent communities will have different scales. Some will live together in one location. Some will be spread out over the world but connected through Internet. Each community will have its own culture, its own narrative. Everybody will simultaneously be a member of several of these communities (as we already are), as well as of the global community.

### **The role of women and ICT**

Violent conflicts have a great impact on women. It is estimated that women and children make up 80% of the world's refugees. Male members of their families are often missing or detained in connection with hostilities. Therefore women bear increased responsibility for their children and elderly relatives. Women are often at the forefront of conflict prevention and resolution, post-conflict healing and reconciliation. ICT is a powerful tool for supporting women in peace building activities. As Jensine Larsen, founder of the women's network and online forum World Pulse formulates: "Being connected, heard, and externally validated within a global community provides many women the courage and support they need to become change agents at home." (Larsen, 2012: 40).

In October 2005, on the occasion of the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the International Women's Tribune Centre launched the Peacebuilding Cyberdialogue which brought together women from Asia and Africa, representing 40 women's organizations through a 'real time global town hall meeting' using Internet. It connected women working on peace building and conflict resolution at country and community levels with gender advocates, policy makers and diplomats (Cabrera-Balleza, 2006). The Peacebuilding Cyberdialogue represented an important link in 'grounding' the connection between policies proposed at a global level and realities confronting women at the local level. It was an effective exercise in making local voices heard in a global space and bringing back that global discussion to make sense at the local level. Moreover, the Peacebuilding Cyberdialogue is an example of innovative usage of ICT. It should be remarked that in addition to Internet, local radio can also play an important role in reaching local communities.

There are many examples of grassroots initiatives where women come into action and use ICT to report local violence, mobilise local people, organise public actions. In Zambia, ICT has been used in the fight against gender-based violence. Organisations combating violence against women

have used social media to help raise awareness and educate the public about gender-based violence. Access to social media is a particularly effective way to reach youth and mobilise them in campaigns against gender-based violence (Banda, 2012).

ICT also gives the means to reach out across borders to mobilise international support.

A recent case that illustrates this phenomenon is the international mobilisation around Boko Haram's kidnapping of schoolgirls in Nigeria (Morse, 2014). Across the continent, women's groups mobilised on social media through the hashtag #BringBackOurGirls to campaign for the release of the schoolgirls.

There are many empowerment organisations for women that use the power of ICT. One example is Make Every Woman Count (2014), which uses ICT as a tool to train women in Africa so that they are able to access the political arena more easily.

Peace building has to start at local scale, among neighbours. But our goal must be to achieve global peace, by building the global community and start a dialogue about the global challenges in order to mitigate tensions and prevent potential conflicts. Women have a special role to play here, with their focus on relationship, care and responsibility and ICT provide the means that can empower them to do this.

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# CHAPTER 14.

## WOMENLEADERS4PEACE: FINDING AN AUTHENTIC AND MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTION IN A CONFLICTED AND SEXIST GLOBALIZING WORLD



Ineke Buskens

In the course of history there comes a time when humanity is called to shift to a new level of consciousness. To reach a higher moral ground. A time when we have to shed our fear and give hope to each other. That time is now.

Wangari Maathai's

Excerpt from Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech, 2004

### Introduction

On 31 October 2000, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 which gave a commitment to

reaffirming the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and *stressing* the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution (UNSC 2000 Preamble).

Since that moment, the world has seen what seems an escalation of violent occupations, revolutions, sectarian violence and civil war. At the same time

'a growing body of literature has painted a less optimistic picture of the resolution and its implementation', which is "portrayed as yet another 'trick' played by the members of the Security Council in an effort to appease women activists" (Tryggestad, 2009). It is therefore timely and pertinent, in the light of the abovementioned comprehensive commitment to women's equal participation and full involvement in matters of peace and security, to consider what leadership qualities women could bring to efforts for alleviating, mediating and possibly preventing more conflict and violence, and what they would need in order to contribute fully and meaningfully.

This chapter seeks to explore the relationships between female leadership, peace and justice in a globalizing world. Justice is brought in relation to peace in the sense that absence of justice implies absence of peace, even when open conflict has not erupted (yet). Leadership is understood as the capacity/power to change realities, ideas, and people (including oneself) emerging in response to a situation and not exclusively defined by a position or personality characteristic. Paramount to the type of leadership our globalizing and conflicted world seems to ask for are first, the capacity to align tasks, organisations, persons, thoughts and emotions to a purpose of social justice; secondly the capacity to collaborate instead of dominate, which implies the capacity for dialogue and for creating opportunities for dialogue; and thirdly the capacity to establish credibility as a leader, which is grounded in establishing coherence between intentions and actions, between ideologies and interventions and between doing and being.

After discussing leadership capacities for a globalizing world, grounded in recent examples of war and political unrest, this chapter will sketch the specific leadership gifts women can bring to conflict resolution and peace building. It will touch on the specific challenges they would have to overcome as women and women leaders given almost ubiquitous sexism and gender discrimination. It will conclude by suggesting that enhancing self and gender awareness will enhance women leaders' capacity to make an authentic and meaningful contribution to conflict resolution and peace building efforts, in our globalizing and conflicted world.

## **Leadership, justice, globalization and peace**

The world we live in is a deeply unjust and hence conflicted place. The structural inequalities that are embedded in relations of domination between and within countries, institutions, peoples and persons have given rise to endemic injustice in access to and control over resources and wealth distribution. The inevitable and seemingly perpetual conflict makes the world a very unstable and volatile place. Arguing that our particular econocentric global worldview is deeply elitist, as it "works to the benefit of the few and penalizes masses of people today and in the future". Willis Harman, futurist and past president of the Institute of Noetic Sciences, characterizes our time

as follows:

At one time, it was a dominant belief in western society that if you behaved pretty well here on this plane you'd go to heaven; that belief system held the society together in certain ways. Then we changed that belief and essentially said if you can trample on others and succeed then you'll get the most toys in the end and you'll win the game, and people behaved accordingly (Harman, 1995).<sup>1</sup>

Because the underlying value system of our global civilization is grounded in an economic ideology that has made monetary value its king pin and keystone, human beings and the natural environment do not hold intrinsic value (Buskens, 2013: p. 329).

In order to embark on a coherent trajectory towards sustainable development, peace is pertinent: peace between persons, people, organizations and countries. Human history has however given us ample opportunity to realise that peace needs to be grounded in justice and that measures of justice need to be backed up by truthful reporting.

Facilitated to a large degree by the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and social media, global collaborations and solidarities have emerged that cut across the boundaries of nation states and other human divides. How global relationships and solidarities effect existing leaders and give rise to emerging leadership acts can be illustrated through two recent events: the Ferguson Incident and the latest war on Gaza.

On 9 August 2014, an unarmed African American teenager, Michael Brown, was killed by a white police officer for no apparent reason in Ferguson, St Louis, Missouri, United States of America (USA).<sup>2</sup> The unrest that was caused by this incident was treated heavy-handedly by the police with journalists covering the protest demonstrations, assaulted, tear-gassed and arrested (Taibi, 2014). The incident evoked responses from Palestinians

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1. It will invariably be the most powerful institution in our society that will determine the parameters in which we think, act and find our meaning as human beings in relationship to each other. In this era, this institution is what we have come to understand as The Global Economy and hence the term econocentric worldview or paradigm. In the words of Willis Harman: "Every society has some kind of an organizing myth; traditional societies had one, medieval society had one, we have one. Very central to our modern myth is the idea that it's perfectly reasonable that the economy should be the paramount institution around which everything else revolves, and that economic logic and economic values should guide our decisions" (Buskens, 2013: p.329).
  2. The reason given by the police officer and the friend accompanying Michael Brown, was the fact that Brown was walking in (the middle of) the street. Ferguson protests. (McCarthy, 2014).

who tweeted to Ferguson citizens with advice on how to deal with teargas attacks and expressing empathically that they know from experience how it is to be attacked because of one's ethnicity (Times of Israel, 2014; United States Hipocrisy, 2014). This incident brought into sharp focus the unresolved issue of racial discrimination and injustice in the United States.<sup>3</sup> President Obama acknowledged this and urged the various stakeholders to listen to and attempt to understand each other, so that justice and peace could be brought about.<sup>4</sup>

The incident also raised pertinent questions regarding the militarization of the US police force and the role Israel has played and still plays in the training of US police (Dail Kos, 2011.<sup>5</sup>

The Ferguson Incident happened at a time that Israel received intense international attention and increasing critique because of its latest attack on Gaza. When it became apparent that certain US weapon deliveries were dispatched to Israel without approval of the White House, this evoked strong negative local and global reaction and a halt to the transfer by President Obama (Ravid, 2014). It needs no explanation why the lack of clear political oversight had dismayed the US President, but this issue also became a concern for quite a few global citizens. The arms trade is big business (Shah, 2013) and what this means in a neo-liberal capitalist world economy where monetary value is kingpin and human lives do not hold intrinsic value, should in itself be cause for grave concern. But the fact that

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3. The show of military-style force in an American city has created a huge backlash because the underlying concerns for justice have not been addressed. (Kucinich, 2014).
  4. "And that requires we listen, and not just shout. That's how we're going to move forward together -- by trying to unite each other and understand each other, and not simply divide ourselves from one another. We're going to have to hold tight to those values in the days ahead. And that's how we bring about justice, and that's how we bring about peace." (Washington Post, 2014).
  5. It is alleged that the New York Policy Department has opened a branch in Tel Aviv, and that there is regular training given to U.S. Police personnel by Israeli military (Ashkenzi, 2011; Daily Kos, 2012). See also the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA) ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish\\_Institute\\_for\\_National\\_Security\\_Affairs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Institute_for_National_Security_Affairs)), a neoconservative think tank, that claims to have hosted some 9,500 law enforcement officials in its Law Enforcement Exchange Program (<http://www.jinsa.org/events-programs/law-enforcement-exchange-program-leep/all>) since 2004. Not only does LEEP take "delegations of senior law enforcement executives to Israel to study methods and observe techniques used in preventing and reacting to acts of terrorism", it also "sponsors conferences within the United States, bringing Israeli experts before much larger groups of law enforcement leaders (<http://www.jinsa.org/files/LEEPbookletforweb.pdf>).

political oversight and due regulatory process regarding major arms deals were lacking also raised questions pertaining to democracy and governance: “Has globalization become a threat to democracy? Can democratically elected leaders fulfill their mandate in a globalizing world within the current economic dispensation?”

At the same time, the transnational solidarity that sprung up after the Ferguson Incident prompted the emergence of unexpected leadership. The first Palestinian citizen to tweet to Ferguson initiated him or herself as a global leader through this act. In our networked world we are all global citizens, no incident is merely local anymore, (cyber) dialogues on happenings in places as far apart as Ferguson and Gaza inspire reflections on justice as a necessary condition for peace and leadership emerges ‘from the bottom up’ (Towil, 2014).

## **Leadership4Peace: Purpose-alignment, Integrity and Dialogue**

The capacity for social justice, i.e. the capacity to understand structural inequality and mitigate and/or act towards correcting it, needs translation in the here and now into specific purposes. Effective leaders present visions, or higher purposes that appeal to peoples’ values and function like a moral compass for the people who have come together for a specific purpose. A higher purpose could be: “A world where all people are free” or “a world that works for all.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Purpose-alignment**

Purpose-aligned leadership is effective because it can adapt to a complex and fluid reality. The shared alignment creates an open system where the learning gained along the way forms and informs objectives, goals and operations; where newcomers can be included as long as they are aligned to the shared purpose; where leaders do not exclusively rely on best practices or past blueprints but are committed to a process of discovery, design and deciphering rather than of engineering, dictating and presupposing (Pascale, Milleman and Gioja, 2000: 171-195). Purpose-aligned leadership is however also a complex capacity that requires a deep and empathic understanding of the socio-political-economic-religious-historical context from a local and

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6. Berret-Koehler Publishers is “dedicated to an ambitious mission “Creating a World that Works for All””. The Berrett-Koehler Story; <http://www.bkconnection.com/static/story.asp>. The GRACE Network’s higher purposes are: “a loving, just and sustainable world” and “a world where all people are free” Buskens 2014a: p. 3 and Buskens 2014b: p.295.

increasingly global perspective as well; a firm belief that the envisaged future is humanly possible; a tolerance for uncertainty; the confidence to resist the temptation to fall back on tried recipes because 'they worked in the past' and a talent for facilitating people's thinking and acting through open ended processes.

## **Integrity**

For leadership to be effective it has to be credible and hence integrity is another important requirement of leadership. In our connected and globalizing era, every moment is a 'photo-moment' and every saying and every act of leadership will inevitably be shared with the world. Secrecy is not what it was been anymore. The bulk document released by whistle-blowers such as Bradley Manning and Edward Snowden into mainstream media have established a political climate of radical openness and transparency. If there is something that the current crises in our globalizing world show, however, it is that lack of integrity in leading figures. Discrepancy between words and deeds, incoherence between proclaimed intentions and actions will sooner or later be revealed through the use of Information Communication Technology. The contributions of amateur journalists in conjunction with the ubiquitous use of social media, the easy availability of camera enhanced mobile phones make it ever more pertinent for leaders to be authentic and coherent in order to stay credible.<sup>7</sup>

In recent cyber dialogues for instance, the US president and government have come under stark condemnation for the discrepancy between their continued military and diplomatic support for Israel whilst at the same time criticizing Israel for the increasing number of Palestinian civilian deaths in Gaza (Waters, 2014). The Israeli government has been criticized for its proclamation that it wants peace whilst acting contrary to that through continuing the occupation of the West Bank, expanding the illegal settlements, pursuing the blockade of the Gaza strip and more recently, its 50 day bombardment of Gaza (Levy, 2014; Glazebrook, 2014; Hedges, 2014).

Integrity however not only speaks to the sense of coherence between intention and action and between ideology and intervention in the sense of "meaning what you say, saying what you mean and doing what you say," but it also refers to the coherence between doing and being. The person of the leader her or himself communicates directly what her/his leadership is about.

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7. "But once the testimony of the activists became available and the blogosphere got its teeth into the visual evidence, from whatever source, an alternative picture quickly emerged and the mainstream media struggled to keep up." (Lerman, 2010).

The quality of being that leaders would need in order to be convincing, especially in striving towards conflict resolution or peace building, can be described as having ‘peace within’. Peace within does not necessarily mean that one is (able to) live a peaceful life, live in a peaceful environment or be without emotional turmoil. The ‘peace within’ can be understood as the authentic coherence one has created within oneself between ones purposes, thoughts, emotions, actions and behaviour. This ‘peace within’ flows from authentic self-acceptance and from the joy one experiences when one can freely express who one is (becoming), in actions that are meaningful in relation to what one values in life. Authenticity is an important characteristic of leadership (Helgesen & Johnson, 2010). To have ‘peace within’ is pertinent when one wants to contribute to peace: you cannot ‘give the peace that you do not have’ yourself.<sup>8</sup>

## Dialogue

Capacity for dialogue is paramount for any leader in any situation. The type of communication that seems very suitable for leaders4peace in the context of the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, seems to be the mode of communication which Marshall Rosenberg (Rosenberg, 2003) calls Non-Violent Communication (NVC) and which Kazanka Comfort and John Dada formulate as a home-grown mode of peace mediation traditionally used by African elders (Comfort & Dada, 2014). Crucial in this form of dialogue is to stay compassionately focused on the observed needs of people and communities (Comfort & Dada, 2014: 114) and refrain from judgment or diagnosis (Rosenberg, 2003). The NVC imperative to express honestly and receive empathically resonates with the open-heartedness and open-mindedness that Adri Smaling recommends for research dialogues. Open-mindedness implies being open to the partner and her/his sharing and open-heartedness means not holding back issues, feelings, insecurities or embodied experiences when they are relevant to the conversation (Smaling, 1995: 29). Both speaking and listening are grounded, in the NVC approach, in the four elements or key pieces of information, which are shared in dialogue: observations, feelings, needs and requests (Rosenberg, 2003).

Characterizing NVC as a language of the heart, Rosenberg affirms that this approach to communication frees one from cultural conditioning; allows one to break patterns of thinking that lead to argument, anger and depression; enables one to resolve conflicts peacefully, whether personal or public, domestic or international; that it creates social structures that support

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8. Leaders such as Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi chose the path of peace to accomplish justice. Acting from coherence between beliefs and actions, did grant them inner peace.

everyone's needs are being met and that it will lead to the development of relationships that are based upon mutual respect, compassion and cooperation. He admits however, that it can make one feel vulnerable in situations where not all partners are committed and/or versed in this type of communication but asserts that, as it leads us to give from the heart, it will connect us with ourselves and with each other in a way what allows our natural compassion to flourish. Rosenberg affirms that he uses the term 'nonviolence' in the way that Gandhi used it "to refer to our natural state of compassion when violence has subsided from the heart" (Rosenberg, 2003: 8).

## **Women and leadership for peace: a match made in heaven?**

Women's leadership accomplishments would understandably be under reported (because unacknowledged) in a male-dominated world and much female leadership would remain un and under-developed. Yet, a variety of discourses seem to suggest that women's leadership would not only be different and complementary to that of men, but that it would be very much in tune with the needs of our globalizing world and very valuable in relation to sustaining and creating peace. At the onset of this section however, I want to note that the following observations and reflections do not speak to all women in an absolute and essentialist sense, but I do suggest that there are enough indications that they would pertain more to women than to men, given the way women and men are currently socialised and that they would be true in various degrees to a majority of women.

Women's capacity as life-givers and care takers seems to predestine women as natural peace makers and women seem to have contributed to peace making efforts in Africa and elsewhere across times and cultures in sacred and ritualized ways (Isike and Okeke Uzokike, unknown).

Speaking to the way women have been able to fulfill top political positions in Asia, Amartya Sen recommends "to pay more attention to the part that women have been able to play, given the opportunity, at diverse levels of political activities and social initiatives" (Sen, 1999: 200). Discussing how empowerment of women contributed directly and indirectly to the well being of their families, communities and societies, Sen concludes that, "nothing, arguably is as important today in the political economy of development as an adequate recognition of political, economic and social participation and leadership of women" (Sen, 1999: 203).

Women seem to develop their self-in-relationship, which is different from the male focus on the self as an independent, separate and autonomous unit. The capacity for relational expression therefore co-constitutes their core-self (Jordan et al, 1991) and this predisposes women to develop the

capacities for caring for others and for creating nurturing environments. Women's moral development has been described by Carol Gilligan (1982) as the development of an ethic of care and her work endeavours to explain why 'a morality of rights and non-interference may appear frightening to women in its potential justification of indifference and unconcern' (Gilligan, 1982: 22).

These observations resonate with those of Sally Helgesen and Julie Johnson, who have found that women's leadership style is different from men not only in what they do, but in what they value and therefore notice. Discussing the absence of senior women executives in the firms that caused the 2008 financial crisis in the US, and interviewing women that had raised early, albeit unheeded, concerns about their firms' risky behaviour, they concluded that women leaders differ from men in that they care deeply about the social fabric of their companies and society at large and are thus less enamoured with risks and short term gains at the expense of a sustainable future. Because women value the social fabric of their world and want to align their work with their vision of how best to serve this, they found it very disturbing to see their companies compromise on those visions. Furthermore, women's capacity for 'broad spectrum notice' and empathy, and their tendency to being focused in the present moment instead of mainly oriented towards a potential future, would have alerted them to danger signals before men would become aware of such (Helgesen & Johnson, 2010).

When women engage processes of personal change and transformation, their families, communities and societies change with them. When women change, they seem to 'change-in-connection', with their connections changing with them and growing stronger in and through the processes of change they have set in motion (Buskens, 2014a). As Helgesen and Johnson confirm, women experience themselves in the centre of a web of relationships rather than on top of a hierarchy (Helgesen & Johnson, 2010).<sup>9</sup>

Transferring these observations about female leadership to the earlier discussed needs of leadership in our globalizing world and to the area of conflict resolution and peace making, it can be postulated that women are eminently suitable to develop the kind of leadership<sup>4</sup>peace that our conflicted globalizing world seems to ask for: women's capacity of broad

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9 These two authors deplore the fact, that whilst women leaders have much to give in the current era, the world of business does not seem ready to accept what they have to offer: women leaders are not defining the 'what' and the 'why' yet; whilst more and more organizations value what women do, they do not appreciate fully women's greatest gifts: their vision and their ideas (Helgesen and Johnson, 2010).

spectrum notice would facilitate purpose aligned, adaptive leadership; women's capacity for empathy and their tendency to value the relational aspect of situations and events, would facilitate their capacity to appreciate context and engage effective dialogue. Because women value the social fabric of their world and want to align their work with their understanding on how best to strive towards accomplishing this, women have the mental equipment to become coherent and hence credible leaders.

Regarding the area of conflicts resolution and peace making, women's talent for empathy and relationship would bring relational and caring qualities to the various processes, from decision-making level to execution procedures, and this would make it easier for people to reach each other across the various divides. The fact that women tend to embody the relational aspects of change processes seems particularly relevant and appropriate in the fields of conflict resolution and peace building since processes of peace, especially where they are grounded in and aligned with seeking to establish social justice, are inevitably processes of social change.

Whilst women leaders' leadership capacities thus seem to be particularly suited for purposes of peace in our conflicted globalizing world, the following questions present themselves: How can women leaders for peace establish their credibility as leaders in a sexist world? How can they give what is authentically theirs against the sexist tide and contribute fully and meaningfully? How can they experience and hence radiate their peace within?

## **Women Leaders for Peace: Challenges in a sexist world**

As a first step in taking up the challenge of contributing fully and meaningfully as women leaders for peace, it is important for women to take full cognizance of the reality of sexism and patriarchy in their environments. Without acknowledging this reality they will not be able to equip themselves to overcome and where possible transform the challenges they might face because of their gender. Such an understanding needs to comprise several aspects:

Since women will be inclined to bring an empathic and relational openness, and need for connectedness to the various situations they face, they are particularly vulnerable to sexist and discriminatory situations. They would thus need to recognize the ways sexism and patriarchy are mediated in and through social relations. This will help them to accept such realities and relationships without taking such personally and allowing them to define situations, projects and purposes.

Since women have learnt to develop their dreams according to what was deemed desirable in accordance with their traditional role in society, they may have developed an 'in-authentic' understanding about female well being

and hence their own personal well being in the situations they find themselves. Having ‘adapted their preferences’ (Nussbaum, 2000) to a sexist and discriminatory environment, they may have become active participants in their own disempowerment as women. Therefore, in order to understand and express their more authentic self, they may have to develop their ‘capacity for voice’ in conjunction with their ‘capacity to aspire’.

Appadurai (2004: 63) brings the ‘capacity to aspire’ into dialogue with Hirschman’s (1970) concept of voice. Whilst his treatise focuses on the poor, his reflections can be extended to women: “The posture of ‘voice,’ the capacity to debate, contest, inquire, and participate critically” (2004: 70) is the capacity to engage social, political and economic issues in terms of the ideologies, doctrines and norms that are widely shared and credible, and hence this capacity is reflexively related to the capacity to aspire. “It is through the exercise of voice that the sinews of aspiration as a cultural capacity are built and strengthened, and conversely, it is through exercising the capacity to aspire that the exercise of voice by the poor will be extended” (2004: 83). Women may have to go through a process of revelation to fully appreciate how their deepest understandings of themselves as women and their ways of negotiating their needs may actually be expressions of their subaltern position in male dominated societies. Subordinate groups have been socialised to think for, and in support of, the dominant group and its interests even when this would disadvantage themselves. In the same vein, women have learnt to think for and in support of the male gender and its interests and so may have become part of, and agent in, their own oppression (Baker Miller, 1991). Women may have limited their preferences and choices as to what they have learnt is socially acceptable (Nussbaum, 2000) and they have learnt to see many of their authentic aspirations for themselves as ‘selfish’ (Gilligan, 1982). In order to flourish as WomenLeaders4Peace they would have to see, acknowledge and transcend the ways in which they give their power away by adhering to traditionally accepted norms, beliefs and practices. Having fully acknowledged this, they can embark on a journey of authentic self-discovery, empowering themselves to contribute to their personal life trajectories and that of their families, communities and societies in more authentic and sustainable ways.

Given that women’s personal experiences and perspectives have been formed and informed by the fact that they are human beings that are living as women in a sexist world, it is perfectly understandable that women may have developed coping strategies that make them more judgmental of women than of men and even discriminate women because they are women (Chesler, 2001). How will women learn to see, acknowledge and deal with their own inevitable and probably partially unprocessed sexism versus women and men? These questions are pertinent to all women, yet they are pivotal for WomenLeaders4Peace because of the responsibility women

leaders have and because of the impact their sexism will have on people and on processes of conflict resolution and peace building.

Since peace in a sexist and unjust world has to be grounded in social and gender justice, WomenLeaders4Peace that are aligned with justice need to question themselves as to what 'peace' actually means: the absence of blatant and bloody conflict, or the absence of justice and mutual respect? It seems more sound theoretically, strategically and humanely to understand open conflict and injustice as different points on the continuum of 'absence of peace'. They would thus be wise to investigate themselves and other women as to what degree they have come to accept gender injustice as normal. Subordinated groups have been socialised to expect unjust treatment and when they experience anger or bitterness they will tend to suppress this or otherwise express it in ways that will not threaten the social 'harmony'. But a situation of endemic injustice is not reconcilable with sustainable peace.

Finally, WomenLeaders4Peace have to realise that their society's perspectives on aggression and power have been formed and informed by a male dominated society where generally men get to be dominant and aggressive and women get to do the caring, repairing and nurturing work. With society generally placing a higher priority and reward, monetarily and otherwise, on dominance and aggression than on the caring and nurturing that women are groomed for, women need to ask themselves what it means for them to take up a role as peace makers in such a dispensation. It would be important to question this issue, so as not to perpetuate an imbalanced gender dispensation by and through their peace building efforts.

It has become obvious that WomenLeaders4Peace are undertaking a complex and involved endeavour in this deeply sexist, unjust and conflicted world. Relations of dominance create a complexity in society where a superficial layer of social harmony between various groups co-exists with a deeper layer of seething dissent about the inequality and injustice underneath. The impact this all has on the self may be partly unconscious. This would make it more difficult for oppressed and dominated groups, such as women, to find a coherent and authentic relationship with oneself and come to joyful self-acceptance. Experiencing 'the peace' within and being able to communicate this, is possibly the most powerful and enduring leadership quality in times of conflict when peace-making capacity is most pertinent. And whilst women may have special gifts in this regard as women because of evolutionary development and / or through gender socialization, they also face the biggest challenges in this regard because of the pervasive reality of male domination, which is not only present in external social structures but also is embedded in the deeper recesses of the personal self.

## **Self and gender awareness as part of WomenLeaders4Peace training**

Since situations of conflict resolution and peace making will inevitably create delicate situations where people could be exposed and vulnerable a special leadership training for WomenLeaders4Peace would have to include the following elements: purpose-aligned, adaptive leadership capacity, empathic dialogue such as for instance grounded in the Non Violent Communication approach and a discipline of enhancing personal self and gender awareness in conjunction with engaging women's capacity to aspire and their capacity for voice.

In order to be good leaders to both women and men, and to lead processes of conflict resolution and peace building, WomenLeaders4Peace have to take their own gender socialization seriously and strive towards becoming aware how the internalization of gender beliefs and practices has affected their sense of self and their relationship with themselves and with others (Buskens 2014 b, 2014c). Since leadership is grounded in women's agency, it stands to reason that women leaders could and should become agents of their own processes of becoming aware of their gender socialization and the degrees in which, and ways in which, this socialization predisposes them to self-limiting beliefs and behaviours and sexism towards self and others.

As has been argued earlier in this text, women have learnt to adapt themselves to sexist and patriarchal environments and have learnt to reflect on themselves and their aspirations, conditioned by these impeding cultural factors. As women's capacity to reflect on and conceptualize their feelings, experiences and perspectives may be formed and informed by the dominant culture to the degree that they have become agents of their own discrimination and oppression, they have to become aware of these processes and transform the mental dynamics of self-limitation into dynamics of self-liberation. This will not only support them in coping with and transforming their personal gender discrimination experiences and patterns, but it will also make them better leaders of women and men.

The clarity and confidence women leaders would gain through such a process would help them to establish coherence between their intentions, purposes and the processes they set in motion. Expressing themselves with joy in who they are and what they do and aligning themselves with the values they cherish, in words and deeds, will enable them to enact their relational leadership capacities, effectively and sustainably in a conflicted world.

## **Summary: FemaleLeadership4Peace: capacities and challenges**

Since women, because of evolutionary development and gendered socialization, have a capacity for 'broad-spectrum notice', relationship and empathy, the kind of adaptive leadership style that a conflicted globalizing world requires, will suit them well. WomenLeadership4Peace capacity has a preventative and a management function: since women tend to be concerned about the social fabric in their environments and notice threats to social harmony, it is less likely that systemic injustices would emerge and be continued when they could pursue their authentic concerns and perspectives and when their suggestions would be given full authority. Because of their 'caring' socialization and relational capacities women would be able to create the kind of nurturing environments that would make it possible for people to reach out to each other over the various 'divides', which would make eruption of conflict less likely. Furthermore, because women very likely have had the experience of gender injustice, being 'othered' and discriminated against because of their gender, they may be better able to empathise emotionally with oppressed and excluded groups and persons than men might be. When women could translate their concern for the well being of the social fabric, into effective responses and measures, the emergence of injustice-induced conflict would be reduced. Because of women's capacity for empathy and relationship, women would also be eminently suitable to mediate in conflict situations and create opportunities for the various parties to communicate with each other and resolve their mutual grievances.

Female leaders however, face specific challenges as women in a male dominated and patriarchal world. In the first place, women's leadership (capacity) may not be given sufficient authority because of their gender and in the second place, women may also find it hard to voice their perspectives, thoughts and experiences coherently and confidently because they have adapted their being, doing, thinking, feeling and relating to a male dominated conceptual universe.

In order for femaleleadership4peace potential to become a feasible reality, the challenges women face in a sexist and male dominated world should therefore not be underestimated and women should be supported on how to deal with such in the most fruitful and growth-enhancing way. Opportunities should be created for women with leadership potential or needs to develop, besides the above mentioned leadership capacities, the capacity for self and gender awareness (Buskens, 2014b, 2014c).

## **Conclusion**

The eighteen provisions of Resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security

Council, whilst covering a broad range of issues and concerns that apply to the levels of the headquarters and member states of the United Nations, as well as to the operational level of the organization's activities, can “roughly be separated into three main categories (Tryggestad 2009):

1. Representation. The resolution urges member states to increase the representation and active participation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional, and international institutions and mechanisms for conflict prevention, conflict management, conflict resolution, and peace building.
2. Gender Perspective. A gender perspective should be adopted in the planning and implementation of peace operations and peace negotiations, including gender-sensitive training of personnel, an expanded role for women as peacekeepers, and increased attention to local women's peace initiatives, needs, and interests in mission areas.
3. Protection. The resolution emphasizes the need for increased attention to the protection and respect of women's rights, including protection against gender-based violence in situations of armed conflict and initiatives to put an end to impunity for such crimes.”

In this chapter, women’s potential leadership capacities and challenges in conflict resolution and peace making have been discussed. It is suggested that in order for women leaders to optimize their capacities and overcome their challenges, it would be good for them as part of a leadership training for peace, to engage a discipline of self and gender awareness. This is different from, and in addition to, the second category of Resolution 1325 perspectives: the Gender Perspective category. Whilst support for women leaders in a sexist environment is absolutely necessary, it would not be sufficient. Leadership capacity is grounded in agency and hence women leaders have to develop their capacity for agency, which, in a male dominated world is grounded in the capacity for voice and the capacity to aspire.

Women who have developed their capacity for voice and their capacity to aspire, and have learnt how gender discrimination has affected their awareness of self and their social world, will be better equipped to deal with the inevitable sexist and discriminatory experiences and relations they will be confronted with in their efforts to mediate conflict and make peace. They will not only be better able to protect themselves, but through becoming more empowered and socially confident (because they know they can affect their world) also have more impact on their environment and their society and consequently be more effective in their peace making work. Being able to be and act more authentically as WomenLeaders4Peace, their contributions will thus be more authentic and hence more meaningful.

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# **CHAPTER 15. A RELIGIOUS DEDICATION TO COMMUNITY: THE LASTING PROMISE OF THE CONCEPT OF CARITAS IN A PLURALIST WORLD**



**Erik Borgman**

In this article, I will try to show why and how religious attitudes and religious concept, in particular the Christian concept of caritas, charity, is important in our thinking about community, both locally and globally. It is well known that religious traditions can exclude the contribution of other traditions, religious or secular, from the necessary attempts to find common ground in a world of differences. However, religious concepts can also bridge gaps and make connections, thus building a community of people from a wide diversity of cultures. Here, I will argue that the concept of caritas is directed towards a community of people aware of the fact that they depend on one another and that we are responsible for each other's wellbeing.

## **Religious dedication and openness**

In December 1957, then Secretary General of the United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld (1905-1961) wrote a text meant to consecrate the United Nations Meditation Centre, referred to by him as 'A Room of Quiet'. Hammarskjöld explains that given the fact that people of many faiths will use the room none of the usual symbols expressing religious identity could be used in the room. For that reason the architects have found some "simple

things which speak to all of us with the same language". For instance, there is a stone in the middle of the room, a large block of iron ore, symbolizing the earth as an inheritance, a gift and a responsibility to human beings:

We may see it as an altar, empty not because there is no God, not because it is an altar to an unknown god, but because it is dedicated to the God whom man worship under many names and under many forms.

But the Room of Quiet itself, "dedicated to silence in the outward sense and stillness in the inner sense" in Hammarskjöld's formulation, is the ultimate symbol:

There is an ancient saying that the sense of a vessel is not in the shell but in the void. So it is with this room. It is for those who come here to fill the void with what they find in their centre of stillness. (Hammarskjöld, 1957)

Some four years earlier, at the beginning of his first term as Secretary General, Hammarskjöld had personally given his wholehearted support to the people that were lobbying for a Meditation Room in the U.N. building:

I do not believe in the possibility of such cooperation as we are engaged in [in the U.N.] without the deep inspiration of faith in ideals which we all share. 'Ideals' in itself is a general word. What I mean here are the ideals established by our deepest faith and highest longings. (Lispey, 2013: 325)<sup>1</sup>

At that moment in time, hardly anybody was aware of the fact that Hammarskjöld himself lived from a deep religious commitment that was fundamental to what he considered to be his task as a Secretary General.

For the general public the Christian mysticism that at least according to his own conviction enabled Hammarskjöld to bear the heavy responsibilities of his office, only came to light with the posthumous publication of *Markings* (Swedish original: *Vägmärken*), the diary reporting on what he called his 'journey inwards'. It has become recognised as a spiritual classic. Only in these personal notes it becomes fully clear how much the imitation of Jesus Christ's life of dedication and self-sacrifice until the end meant to Hammarskjöld, as he had to find his way to the ever uncertain and dangerous landscapes of international politics, in which he eventually would lose his life.<sup>2</sup>

However, in November 1953, in a statement made on an American radio show called 'This I Believe', produced by the then famous journalist Edward R. Murrow, Hammarskjöld had already said:

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1. 'Summary of remarks by Dag Hammarskjöld on 12 August 1953'

2. Hammarskjöld was killed in a diplomatic mission to Congo, under circumstances that never were fully clarified. (Williams, 2011).

... the explanation of how a man should live a life of active social service in full harmony with himself as a member of the community of the spirit, I found in the writings of those great medieval mystics for whom ‘self-surrender’ has been the way to self-realization, and who in ‘singleness of mind’ and ‘inwardness’ had found strength to say yes to every demand which the need of their neighbours made them face, and to say yes to every fate life had in store for them when they followed the call of duty, as they understood it. ‘Love’ – that much misused and misinterpreted word – for them meant simply an overflowing of the strength with which they felt themselves filled when living in true self-oblivion. And this love found natural expressions in an unhesitant fulfilment of duty and in an unreserved acceptance of life, whatever it brought them personally of toil, suffering – or happiness.

I know that their discoveries about the laws of inner life and of action have not lost their significance. (Hammar skjöld, 1954)<sup>3</sup>

In Hammar skjöld view, there was no contradiction whatsoever between religious commitment and openness to the unknown and ability to learn from it should it reveal itself. Strictly speaking, there was not even a tension. For him, firm religious rootedness made it possible to be open to the different expressions others cultivated to feed their dedication. His mystical Christianity enabled Hammar skjöld, as he wrote in *Markings*, to purify longing into openness: “each action a preparation, each choice a yes to the unknown”. (Hammar skjöld, 1957)

The same line of thought led Marga Klompé (1912-1986) in 1948, then the only female member of the Dutch delegation to the negotiations on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights who would eventually become the first female government Minister in the Netherlands.<sup>4</sup> As a devoutly practicing Roman Catholic, Klompé was convinced that human rights was rooted in the creation of human beings in the image of God. However, when it became clear to her that this was not the consensus among those dedicated to passing the Universal Declaration, she wrote in her personal diary: “Can we enforce a conflict of consciousness on others? I think not.”<sup>5</sup> Therefore

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3. A recording of the programme is available at: <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/16608/>.

4. See the article of Mirjam van Reisen in this volume.

5. Cf. Erik Borgman e.a. (ed.) (2012), *In Liefde en Rechtvaardigheid: Het dagboek van Marga Klompé 1948-1949*, Hilversum: Verloren, 51: ‘Mogen wij anderen een gewetensconflict opleggen? Ik vind niet’ (entry 8 October 1948). For further background, see Erik Borgman (2012), ‘Iemand die... de liefde centraal heeft gesteld’: Het geloof van Marga Klompé’, in: Erik Borgman and Mirjam van Reisen (ed.), *De verbeelding van Marga Klompé: Perspectieven op de toekomst*, Zoetermeer: Klement, 43-68, here esp. 55-60.

she did not insist on bringing the Divine origin of human dignity into the declaration. For Hammarskjöld and Klompé the personal and deep adherence to the Christian tradition was a bridge to connect to people dedicated to others traditions of faith and culture. Because for them the lives of human beings had an inherent quality of sacredness, they considered it their obligation to be open to the longings and visions expressed in other traditions and cultures, religions and philosophies than their own.

## **A charity as wide as the world**

Both Hammarskjöld and Klompé drew inspiration from the mystical tradition within Christianity. One of Klompé's favorite mystics was Saint Catherine of Siena (1347-1380). As she traveled to Rome in 1948, Klompé jots down in her diary that she prays on St. Catherine's grave. The body of Catherine of Siena was – and still is today – located in the Santa Maria Sopra Minerva in Rome. During Klompé's first visit to Rome in 1948 that church was 'opposite my hotel room' (7 Sept. 1948). Klompé was in the habit of attending Mass daily and during her stay in the Eternal City she probably did that in this Church. Be that as it may, the presence of Catherine of Siena so close by meant a great deal to Klompé. She noted in her diary:

This morning in Church something became very clear to me. If I want to do something good in politics, I shall have to be totally an instrument, that is to say that spiritual deepening has to come before everything else. This has been made clear to me by Catherine of Siena, I think (10 Sept. 1948).

Catherine of Siena had been living a retired and reclusive life in one room at the house of her parents. From a life of contemplation and fasting, at a certain moment she came to become feverishly political – she succeeded in convincing the Pope that he should return from Avignon to Rome – and to charitable activity. It gave her a large group of followers. It is probably her freedom and her dedication to the welfare of the world and the Church that spoke to Klompé.

We do not know what exactly Marga Klompé had read from the writings of Catherine of Siena. But as a matter of fact Catherine wrote rather eloquently on the love of community that was at the heart of Klompé's commitments all her life. In one of her many visions, Catherine of Siena heard God explain to her how He had bound human beings with 'the chain of charity':

Thus, that you may practice charity in action and in will, I in my providence did not give to any one person or to each individually the knowledge for doing anything necessary for human life. No, I gave something to one, something else to another, so that each one's need would be a reason to have recourse to the other. So though you may lose your will for charity

because of your wickedness, you will at least be forced by your own need to practice it in action. Thus you see the artisan turn to the worker and the worker to the artisan: each has need of the other because neither knows how to do what the other does. [...] Could I not have given everyone everything? Of course. But in my providence I wanted to make each of you dependent on the other, so that you would be forced to exercise charity in action and will at once (Catherine of Siena, 1980: 311-312).

We need *caritas*, we have to love one another and care for one another in order to survive. We tend to limit our charity to those we know. We need, however, to love especially those who really differ from us.

After her political career Marga Klompé dedicated her life to building, consolidating and securing the Dutch branch of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, a global Roman Catholic organisation to promote social justice and mutual responsibility, established in 1967 in the aftermath of the Second Vatican Council. Embodying Christian love and trying to help a little to realise God's plan with the world was, in her view, the task of the council. And God's plan, in her view, was a decent and dignified life for all people.<sup>6</sup>

In a more political vein, the usually very diplomatic Dag Hammarskjöld indicated on 4 May 1959, speaking at the University of Lund in his native Sweden, the provincial character of what had long been seen as 'universality' in European culture. With a striking boldness, he stated:

Goethe's 'universality' was combined with a firm conviction of the supremacy of the European man of culture, a supremacy which erected invisible walls around the spiritual life in relation to other parts of the world.

This European alleged supremacy not only led to colonialism as an expression of an attitude Hammarskjöld called 'untenable' – which in 1960 was certainly not generally excepted – but also to a closing of the spirit. It was only after the First World War that 'the whole closed European circle was broken up'. What strikes us, Hammarskjöld said, about European views on other cultures dating before this breakthrough, is:

in the first place, perhaps,... how much they did *not* see and did *not* hear, and how even their most positive attempts at entering into a world of different thoughts and emotions were coloured by an unthinking, self-assured superiority...

In Hammarskjöld's view, he and his contemporaries are the lucky ones

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6. Cf. Victor. Scheffers and Gerard Swüste (ed.) (2006), 'Mensen kunnen de wereld veranderen': Over de inspiratie en de bewogenheid van Marga Klompé, Den Haag: Justitia et Pax.

for having the possibility of the 'richest satisfaction in meeting different spiritual traditions and their representatives', thus attaining the biggest possible treasures to achieve what he considered 'the common future goal', a world of both universality and unity on the one hand and a deep understanding and respect for difference and diversity on the other. Building this future means, Hammarskjöld's feels, walking in the footsteps of "askers of questions like Socrates or the carpenter's son from Nazareth". With this reference to Jesus, Hammarskjöld makes clear how being religiously committed does not contradict openness for ideas originating from outside one's own tradition. The ultimate embodiment of the Divine in Christianity, Jesus Christ himself, in his view exemplified openness.

Three year earlier, on 3 February 1956, Hammarskjöld had given a clear example of how his interpretation of the Christian tradition could lead to conclusions that may be considered surprising. Addressing the Indian Council of World Affairs in what he characterised himself as a speech from notes made in the plane coming to New Delhi, he made the surprising point that we should not understand support to poor countries from rich countries as 'aid' or 'help'. We should consider them as 'charity'. He was fully aware that he was on thin ice here, and not just because he relied on a specific, highly profiled Christian idea. He tackled the possible misunderstanding without much ado:

Now I want to be very clear from the very beginning so that nobody, when I use the word 'charity', misunderstands it. I mean it in the original sense as something a brother does for a brother, not as a handing-out operation with the benevolence of the 'haves' in the relation to the 'have-nots'. I mean charity in the sense of mutual cooperation in a well-understood common interest. (Hammarskjöld, 1954: 659)

Gender inclusivity in language was not yet invented in the 1950s, but we can assume that to Hammarskjöld 'charity' was also what 'a sister does to a sister'.

Hammarskjöld starts from the idea that, as he admits himself is 'no news to anybody', namely that today's world is 'more than ever before one world'. This situation, he argues, does not mean the end of solidarity and charity and the start of a situation in which every nation and every people has to fight for itself and its own. On the contrary, in this interdependent world charity is needed more than ever:

The weakness of one is the weakness of all, and the strength of one – not the military strength, but the real strength, the economic and social strength, the happiness of the people – is indirectly the strength of all. Through various developments which are familiar to all, world solidarity has, so to say, been forced upon us". (Hammarskjöld, 1954: 661)

We have to be charitable to one another, because in that way we can all

receive abundantly from each other's riches and it will be clear that in the ultimate analyses there are no 'haves' and 'have-nots'.

## **Caritas as core concept to understand society**

In contemporary societal and political debates, charity, *caritas*, has become a problematic concept. *Caritas* is considered to be something additional, an 'extra'. It is generally taken for granted that *caritas* would not be necessary if society would function well. *Caritas* is seen not as something a brother does for a sister and a sister for a brother, as Hammarskjöld saw it, but as additional support for those who need help and cannot properly support themselves. *Caritas*, charity, is understood in a way exactly opposite to how Hammarskjöld wanted it understood: as 'aid', 'help'. As a consequence, the debates about *caritas* focus on whether peoples or countries applying for it really need it, and whether the help that can be given will really solve their problems. This is the situation within nations, but also between nations. *Caritas* is seen as a favour of which individuals, peoples and countries should prove themselves worthy.

There is, however, a different tradition of thinking about the relation between *caritas* and society. In the tradition of Catholic Social Thought, canonized in a whole range of documents originating from members of the hierarchy, theologians and social philosophers within the Roman Catholic Church and more or less systematised in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004), but also a living tradition of reflecting on social questions from a Christian point of view close to social practices, *caritas* is considered as an integral and essential aspect of being human. *Deus caritas est* was the first sentence of the first encyclical of now Pope emeritus Benedict XVI in 2005, quoting from the first letter of John (4:16): 'God is love', charity. The document explains how the Catholic tradition takes as its starting point that human beings are created in the image of God. God is love and therefore their natural human *eros* is intrinsically directed towards *agape*; their desire is for love, love to give and love to receive.<sup>7</sup> The natural inclination of human beings is to connect with one another, to be cared for by one another and to care for one another. Therefore, from this point of view, *caritas* is not something that can or cannot be added to society, as an addition that should not be necessary. Society comes into existence and is maintained because people are inclined to *caritas*. Living together in community as brothers and

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7. Benedict XVI, encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (25 Dec. 2005), no. 3-8 [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20051225\\_deus-caritas-est\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est_en.html)

sisters, members of the same family, is *caritas* incarnate.<sup>8</sup>

This is of course not to deny that human beings also have an inclination to avoid the uncertainty *caritas* brings them in. *Caritas* requires recognition of one's dependence on what others can only freely give: appreciation and commitment, compassion and care. To depend on the logic of the free gift is highly unsettling.<sup>9</sup> This unsettlement is what we tend to avoid, for instance by fantasizing that we our society is a matter of an enforceable contract. Therefore, the centrality of *caritas* to human societies is not self-evident. It has to not just be explained, but defended and preached.

'The relationship between God and man is reflected in the relational and social dimension of human nature', states the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.<sup>10</sup> (no. 110). This is in line with one of the major documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), were the then Roman Catholic bishops agreed on the statement that the human being is in fact not a solitary being, but 'a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential'.<sup>11</sup> (Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 12). This approach opens up the concept of *caritas* and makes it the foundation of being human. It clarifies how love for others, expressing itself in the desire that all will be well for them, is ultimately limitless. This comes to light, over and over again, but that often goes unnoticed. Take Jesus' famous parable of the Good Samaritan:

A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while travelling came near him and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' [...] Go and do likewise. (Luke 10:29-37)

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8. Cf. Benedict XVI, encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), no. 19 [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_enc\\_20090629\\_caritas-in-veritate\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate_en.html)

9. Ibid. 34.

10. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2 Apr. 2004), no. 110 [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/pontifical\\_councils/justpeace/documents/rc\\_pc\\_justpeace\\_doc\\_20060526\\_compendio-dott-soc\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html)

11. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in de Modern World *Gaudium et Spes* (7 Dec. 1965), no. 12 [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html).

Jesus does not so much instruct his disciples what to do, but he tells us what he sees happening and what should be valued and imitated. Connections are made via *caritas* between Samaritan and Jew, which is beyond the usual social boundaries, because the Samaritan recognizes the predicament of the other as concern of his own. In recognizing their fundamental dignity as threatened and violated, people who are habitually seen as standing outside one's own community, are spiritually and conceptually made participants of that community, are seen as family. From there, it is logical to help them to participate more fully, sharing the benefits and being seen as essential for the community. Through *caritas* we built communities and within these communities the members help one another to blossom.

In my view, this means *caritas* should not so much be seen as a principal to implement, something that is lacking if Christianity is lacking. The Mediaeval theologian Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) considers *caritas* as not itself a virtue, but 'the form of the virtues' that are needed to maintain a decent and safe society.<sup>12</sup> This is scholastic language stating that our societal behaviour and social habits should not be replaced, but inspired by *caritas*. This brings us back to Hammarskjöld. In a world that exists in an unending plurality of connections uniting people in relations of mutual interest and responsibility, the point is not that what Hammarskjöld called the 'haves' should give something of their affluence to the poor and needy 'have-nots'. The point is that for us as a community of humans the quality of all our lives depends on our ability to make *caritas* the heart and soul of our connections. At the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church made clear that this is at the heart of the Christian message: in Jesus Christ it is revealed that 'the new command of love was the basic law of human perfection and hence of the world's transformation'.<sup>13</sup> It is however not exclusive to Christians.

## Ubuntu

Ultimately, *caritas* is the expression of the unobjectifiable conviction that it is fundamentally rewarding to have a committed relation to people who are different. Everybody has something unique and irreplaceable to offer and *caritas* is the attempt to enable others to really offer it. The idea that our society is not complete as long as not everybody has the opportunity to contribute to it in his or her own term is ultimately a matter of belief. The Christian tradition endorses this belief by insisting that every person is in his

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12. *Summa Theologiae* II-II, questio 23, articulus 8  
<http://dhspriority.org/thomas/summa/SS/SS023.html#SSQ23A8THEP1>; cf. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 207).

13. *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 38.

or her special way an image of God and the outcome of history will be the full revelation of who is God. This clarifies that society is optimal when it brings everyone to his or her right, and vice versa, bringing everybody to his or her right is the way to optimise society.

Desmond Mpilo Tutu, the former Anglican archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, has clearly explained why in his view 'God is definitely not a Christian'. It is impossible for God to exclude anything valuable and because there are clearly valuable elements in other religions, God's presence cannot be limited to Christianity (Tutu, 2011: 3-11)<sup>14</sup>. Tutu goes on to explain that the African concept of *ubuntu*, translated by him in the adage 'I am because I belong' as replacing the Cartesian principle 'I think, therefore I am', is for him definitely among the valuable inheritance that comes from outside Christianity. The concept, he thinks, is a necessary weapon against the Western culture of achievement that tends to make human beings expendable when they do not produce or contribute material things to the richness of society.

In traditional African society, *ubuntu* [...] was seen as what ultimately distinguished people from animals – the quality of being human and also humane. Those who had *ubuntu* were compassionate and gentle, they used their strength on behalf of the weak, and they did not take advantage of others – in short, they *cared*, treating others as what they were: human beings.

*Ubuntu* is still highly valued in Africa, according to Tutu. Which is a good thing, in his view, for it makes it impossible, as he explains with a loose reference to the parable of the Good Samaritan, 'to pass by on the other side' simply because one does not want to become too involved. (Tutu, 2011: 22-23)<sup>15</sup>

Both the concept of *caritas* and the concept of *ubuntu* clarify how on a deep level commitment to society can never be limited to *my* society as I conceptualise it from *my* tradition, and to the people that contribute to it in ways I consider valuable. It requires involving those who are usually excluded, accepting what they bring as valuable for them and adding if possible what they may lack. We do not know where this will take us, but as Tutu makes clear, from a religious point of view this is exactly the uncertainty we should be able to face. The Parable of the Good Samaritan starts with the question of a Jewish scribe, who wants to know what it means

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14. In 'God is clearly not a Christian: Pleas of Interfaith Tolerance', (Tutu, 2011)pp. 3-20

15. In '*Ubuntu*: On the Nature of Human Community' (Tutu, 2011) pp. 21-24

to love one's neighbour. Tutu understands Jesus' answer to mean:

'Hey, life is more exhilarating as you try to work out the implications of your fate rather than living by rote, with ready-made second-hand answers. fitting an unchanging paradigm to a shifting, changing, perplexing, and yet fascinating world.' Our faith, our knowledge that God is in charge, must make us ready to take risks, to be venturesome and innovative; yes, to dare to walk where angels might fear to tread.

This is not a plea to take risk for risk's sake, like some kind of spiritual bungee jumping. It is taking risks for the sake of humanity, finding a way forward by bringing into the community the best we have in our different traditions, because only that will take us to where we belong: a community in which the God who is *caritas* will be all in all. In that sense, from a Christian perspective, it is taking risks for God's sake. As God himself in Jesus Christ took the risk of becoming vulnerable unto death, in order to restore community with our human vulnerability.

## Conclusion

As human beings, we are vulnerable beings. Dealing with our vulnerability means first of all to accept it and to realise that as vulnerable beings, we need one another so stay alive and to build a common world that enables us to sustain one another. In almost all of the current understanding of development and aid, this is forgotten. Already in 1958 the Jewish-American philosopher Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) saw the danger. She asked:

Should the emancipation and secularization of the modern age, which began with a turning-away, not necessarily from God, but from a god who was the Father of man in heaven, end with the even more fateful repudiation of the earth who was the Mother of all living creatures under the sky?

For Arendt, this question was related to the launch of a Sputnik on 4 October 1957 and the successful attempt by the Russians to bring it into an orbit around the earth. The *New York Times* saw this as the first step of man to break free from the Earth and Arendt quotes a statement from the Russian space theoretician Konstantin Tsiolkovsky-Kaluga (1857-1935) who had inspired the Sputnik programme: 'Mankind will not remain bound to the earth forever.' For Arendt, the connection to the earth is the essence of human condition. The desire of mankind to escape the earth is a denial of its own existence (Arendt, 1958: 1-2). We need Mother earth to sustain us and as human beings, male and female, we are called to embody the grace she incarnates, thus showing our gratitude for that grace.

"This is my commandment", says Jesus according to the Gospel of John, "that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Jesus led a life of grace and gratitude, we are told. This is the kind of life that can save.

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# **CHAPTER 16. DIGNITY AS A BASIS FOR THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: THE RELEVANCE OF THE LEGACY OF MARGA KLOMPÉ FOR A UNIVERSAL POVERTY ERADICATION PROGRAMME**



**Mirjam van Reisen**

In the first place we are the inheritors of the unfulfilled aspirations of our ancestors posits the German philosopher Walter Benjamin (1991). He suggests that perhaps it is not our forefathers' (or foremothers') achievements that determine us, but the dreams they left behind. We become the caretakers of those dreams that were not realized and of the ambitions that were not completed by previous generations.

Marga Klompé, an icon of Dutch society, dreamt of a world governed by “loving care and justice”, in which dignity for all was the basis of its organization, its governing structures and its laws. She was a leader in the resistance in the Second World War, a founding parliamentarian of the European Union, a negotiator of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Minister of Social Affairs; the first female minister of The Netherlands. This article takes her ambitions for a just global social society as a point of departure for a reflection on the post-2015 Development Agenda. How do

her aspirations reflect in the Agenda for a future better world for all? Does this agenda sufficiently well reflect the ambitions that are carried over to us from past generations?

## **Connecting the future with the past**

The post-2015 Development Agenda process encompasses the entirety of global negotiations for establishing a new global vision on the global eradication of poverty and sustainable development, a vision to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs have set targets for 2015. The process has a distinct orientation on the future, but we can only think this future in today's present. Hence, this future is the future as we imagine it today. This present imagination of a future agenda is much influenced by our past.

Rothberg (2009) looks at how the present is produced from our memories of the past. He analyses remembrance of the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization. In contrast to a theoretical approach of competing memories he proposes that "memories interact productively in unexpected ways". This theory provides an interesting conceptual framework for the analysis of the post-2015 Development Agenda. Rothberg's analysis reminds us that the post-2015 Development Agenda is a reflection of how society and members of society therein collectively produce aspirations that build on memories about the past. These evolve from our understanding of the past; from the normative and ethical ideals derived from this understanding.

This article sets out to reflect on this, based on the life of one person: Marga Klompé. She was the first female Minister of The Netherlands, a very concerned parliamentarian when the government was overseeing the brutal decolonization-process of The Netherlands with Indonesia. She was a leader in the resistance in the Second World War, which had a strong impact on her life. Marga Klompé was a negotiator in the Dutch delegation on the negotiations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. As a Minister of Social Welfare she laid the foundation of the social welfare legislation in The Netherlands. And importantly, she had experienced poverty in her own life, as a young person, which deeply affected her understanding of poverty, vulnerability and marginalization.

## **Defining Poverty**

Marga Klompé was born in 1912 as the second in a family of five children. Her father was the owner of a small company. Unfortunately the family was thrown in poverty after he became mentally ill, a disorder from which he would never recover. Marga's mother, who was from German descent, refused to accept the charity offered by the churches, mainly because she (proudly) resisted what she experienced as condescending patronage that

would accompany such support. In those inter-bellum years, churches prescribed over most aspects of family life: a persons marriage, reproduction, school, church-going and political affiliation were closely monitored. Instead of accepting the aid offered, the Klompé-women (mother and daughters) worked in all kinds of ways to try and make a living. Marga, who had a good intellectual brain, was sent to school and would teach to help provide income for the family.

The experience of poverty and dependency on aid very much define Klompé's understanding of it. She saw poverty as something that could happen to anyone. She refused to see poverty as something specific for a particular pre-defined group. She defined poverty as contextual, a condition that was the result of situational circumstances, as opposed to resulting from innate factors. She defined poverty as temporary – as something that could be overcome once the situations leading to poverty had been addressed. Her concept of poverty was deeply universal: everyone could one day become poor and anyone could come out of poverty under the right circumstances. She also identified an inalienable link between poverty and social protection; poverty resulted from the inadequacy of society to organize and provide social protection for its vulnerable members.

Her negative experience with dominant prescriptive church-based charity resulted in a clear vision to prioritize the protection of dignity of people living in poverty. To protect integrity and dignity, Klompé legislated by strictly separating material support, social support and spiritual matters. She did not accept that support to poverty-relief should be linked to conditionality in any way, and identified the respect of human dignity as the central principle to guide any support. Klompé reversed the relationship: social protection became a right enshrined in law that entitled any one without exception to live in dignity.

Marga Klompé went through a religious crisis before finding a deep spiritual foundation that would inspire her understanding of human dignity. She found herself eventually within the tradition of catholic social thought, and the responsibility to contribute in life to the social quality of family, community and society. In her later years she would actively engage with the churches, finding that a spiritual underpinning helped society in defining its social value orientation.

Her understanding of responsibility and society would underpin these convictions, which would form the basis of the social protection legislation put in place by subsequent governments after her appointment in 1956 as Minister of Social Welfare. She initiated the Law on Social Protection.

In Klompé's understanding the modern structuring of economic and social life progressively increased dependence between people as well as a dependency on circumstances beyond their control. A common shared responsibility for social risks was therefore a natural development (Borgman

et al., 2012). This was the rationale for Klompé to start legislation for establishing universal social protection in The Netherlands (1965) and to replace the Law on the Poor of 1912. These efforts began with legislation on elderly care, recognising that during the Post Second World War period elderly care homes had insufficient financial means, which lead to residents living in extreme poverty, as well as abuse and maltreatment.

In Klompé's view, the government acceptance of an overall role of responsibility did not imply that it should provide and organize everything; the role of the state was to ensure that this responsibility could and was fulfilled. She left a lot of room for civil organizations and local governments to be in the lead for implementation, arguing that those closest to the people in need of support were in the best position to decide what they needed. In her view 'care' was a fundamental aspect to create a healthy social fabric in society and therefore should remain within the communities, but with support from the government to ensure equal and universal access to such support.

Klompé's view that dignity was central to any support informed her thinking that support could never be a 'one-fit-for-all' and she rejected standardised levels. She argued that needs could differ in different parts of society and that they would also change over time and therefore could not be legislated. She decided to add a complaints procedure to the legislation. This would allow for people to be treated within boundaries set by society itself through the complaints mechanism and within changing boundaries over time, in response to changing social perceptions of what constitutes the basis for a life in dignity.

A famous expression of Klompé was that people deserved 'a bouquet of flowers' on the table. In the Netherlands the offering of flowers symbolizes the celebration of life and they are offered at special occasions to welcome people, greet them and to express gratitude. Flowers have a deep connection to economic livelihoods of the past. In this way Klompé expressed her belief that dignity is not just a matter of survival and basic needs, but is associated with the meaningful existence of human beings as capable of celebrating life, participating in a social environment and contributing to the economic foundation of a society. Social protection programmes aimed at eradicate poverty should allow people to make such meaningful contributions to society.

In the post war period in the Netherlands, as elsewhere in Europe, severe poverty existed. The legislation Klompé initiated was predominantly national in character, but she had equally strong views on the need for European and global dimensions of such policies. The experiences of the war showed that inequality and marginalization leads to conflict, and therefore a universal global framework to guarantee dignity for all was needed.

## Rights and International Responsibility

“Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.” This is the first sentence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Marga Klompé was a delegate of the Dutch Government to the United Nations. She was representing the Dutch Women Society when the Declaration was adopted, in 1948, according to her diary “three minutes before 12.” (Borgman et al, 2012).

The Universal Declaration is the result of a deep-felt ambition to revert the violence of two world wars, which had destroyed Europe and pulled many overseas territories and their peoples into European hegemonic conflicts. It is important to note that the Declaration is entitled a Universal Declaration and not an International Declaration, emphasizing, as the first sentence of the Declaration does, the centrality of the dignity of each and every human being. The basis of these rights as natural and universal is a strong statement of the rejection of the Holocaust, slavery and colonial imperialism and carries the aspiration to create an alternative basis for global society based on mutual respect rather than domination. Klompé found the inspiration for the often difficult negotiations on a universal Human Rights framework in Archbishop Emmanuel Suhard. In 1948 the Archbishop of Paris wrote a pastoral letter entitled “le sens de Dieu” in which he advocated how care through love might provide a principle basis for the organization of societies. A meeting in Paris in September that year with the Archbishop gave support for her engagement in the negotiations, especially strengthening her understanding of the need to be tolerant in view of respect for diversity so that a universal Declaration could be adopted. Klompé was very much aware of the consequence of creating international (and West-European) standards – which she saw as the basis for increasing international collaboration based on shared values, and necessarily leading to decreasing national power.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides a framework for the right of people to live in dignity and to not be poor and assigns global responsibility to protect this within the context of a broader framework of a dignified life. The legal framework recognizes social, economic and cultural rights on the one hand and political and economic rights on the other. However, in the context of the Cold War, emerging soon after the adoption of the Declaration, the ideological definition of the two blocks strived over the priority of freedom (the West) or food (the East), an ideological divide that trapped thinking on poverty and on ways to achieve its eradication. The divide locked the new independent post colonial countries into a new form of political, economic and military patronage in which they played second fiddler both in the West and in the East Block. The aspirations for

independence made way for a battlefield between newly independent post-colonial countries that were extensions of the larger East-West Cold War. The development aid policies established in both camps were mostly an extension of the East-West battle and a means to protect influence in various parts of the world.

After the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 the indivisibility of Human Rights (giving equal status to economic, social, cultural rights on the one hand and political and civil rights on the other hand) was proclaimed at the 1993 Vienna UN International Conference. The UN Summit on Social Development (1995) held in Copenhagen, provided a space for new agency for developing countries of the Global South in the new Post Cold war world order. For the first time ever, the Summit's Declaration included the recognition that poverty could be eradicated. In a logical extension of this observation emerged the need to accept responsibility as an international community to effectively eradicate poverty. The language 'eradication of poverty' is derived from this understanding and has replaced language of 'poverty alleviation' or 'poverty reduction' as goals falling short of the notion that poverty can and should be eradicated. In the latest revision of the EU's Treaty the objective of poverty eradication was introduced as the objective of its development policy (Mekonnen & van Reisen, 2012).

The Social Summit identified external factors as contributing to and exacerbating poverty. Poverty was defined as a condition caused by circumstances. Consequentially the text of the UN Social Summit does not include any reference to 'the poor' as this terminology was considered as degrading and thought to wrongly give poverty an innate presence in individuals. This language should be seen as a critique of the colonial language that linked the poor to people of colour, slaves or other marginalized people. The language of 'people living in poverty' was introduced to emphasise the understanding that poverty results from an inadequate environment. An action programme was agreed which put emphasis on the need to create enabling environments for social development.

Placing emphasis on the ethical imperative of linking action to the responsibility as identified, the Social Summit set concrete targets for the implementation of concrete policies geared towards the attainment of poverty eradication. These were concrete, identified where responsibility lay for implementation and set clear targets for their achievement. They were also time-bound. It was the first time that the Bretton Woods institutions, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, were identified in this way in such a programme. Drawn in rather reluctantly, the international financial institutions initially refused to accept the connection between finance, monetary and economic policy on the one hand and social policy and poverty eradication on the other. However due to strong public pressure

pointing to the international debt crisis and the adverse impact of structural adjustment on social policies and the exacerbation of poverty resulting from these policies, the multilateral institutions accepted responsibility in linking their areas of policy to poverty. The UN Summit for Social Development identified areas of the ‘enabling environment’ where particular responsibility was given at the multilateral level to ensure a conducive global setting for national development. This was balanced with responsibilities accorded to national states in implementing the action plan. National states responsibilities related to all countries, both in East, West and the Global South.

From 1995 onwards the international financial institutions would increasingly include new language in their policy instruments: poverty – social dimensions – inequality, publicly accepting the responsibility for the impact of global policies in finance and economy for these areas. In parallel to this, they pushed the responsibility for these policies to the national level. In 1996 the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a club of western industrialized countries, elaborated a simplified set of time-bound goals and targets in a development policy context. This constituted an important reframing of the original goals, as their application was reduced to governments of developing countries and the framework no longer identified responsibilities of non developing countries and international financial institutions. In 2000, in preparation for the Millennium Summit, the OECD, IMF and the World Bank and the UN Secretary General presented a Document “A Better World for All” (2012), in which they presented seven goals, within a similar development framework, exclusively focused on targets for developing countries only.

Civic outrage demanded that the UN would adopt a document that reflected the original universal basis of the UN Summit for Social Development in its attempt to create an internationally agreed framework for poverty eradication. This outreach eventually led to the inclusion of an eighth goal, which expressed, rather inadequately, the dimension of international policy cooperation but the protest failed to redress the goals being applicable to developing countries only. Given that the seven or eighth goals were not presented for approval to the UN General Assembly, they were never officially adopted.

The Goals remained controversial in developing countries, where critics argued that the spirit of a universal global commitment was no longer respected and poverty was linked to developing countries only (Social Watch Report, 2001). The language that the agenda “could not be imposed, but had to be embraced” (A better World for All, 2000: 2), was confusing as the United Nations had already provided the basis for international consensus and hence the agenda was an imposed agenda. Developing countries had not been party to the negotiations of the reductionist Millennium Development

Goals but were now nevertheless asked to 'embrace' these 'imposed' Goals. Whether intentionally or not, the result was that international responsibility was essentially reduced to a (policing) task by the West to monitor the performance of poor countries towards the achievement of the goals. To confuse matters further, the subsequent process under the Aid Efficiency Agenda promoted the language of 'partnership' and 'ownership'. However, at the same time international donors began to use the Millennium Development Goals as a basis for new conditionalities, to which they linked both aid and trade interests and often pursued self-interests in market liberalization. For instance the so-called 'EU MDG contracts' linked support to governments to MDG priorities, but also to trade liberalization. In this way, financial support was usually accompanied by various donor-driven demands. It is only obvious that such aid was increasingly refused by developing countries, if they were in a position to do so.

From a women's leadership perspective, the Millennium Development Goals were a complete failure. The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (1995), and the extensive gender-relevant commitments included in the UN Summit for Social Development were reduced to one Goal on Maternal Health Care. This approach reflected a perspective on women that fails to recognize women's agency in society. The problem for women was to decide whether to engage with the Millennium Development Goals, even though they did not find themselves reflected in these, or to 'embrace' them. The 'embracing' of the Millennium Development Goals was for many women activists a reluctant and difficult decision.

The Millennium Development Goals were tied to a world order that still strongly reflected the colonial map of the world and one could hypothesize that the agenda was implicitly testing the performance of the former colonies based on criteria defined by the West. Mirroring this colonial map, the agenda of the Millennium Development Goals reads as a symbol of remembrance of imperialism. The agenda shows this history as an obstacle to the development of a new universal vision of responsibility for poverty eradication at global level that is based on equality and mutual respect.

Oat the same time, and more positively, it can be argued that the agenda of the Millennium Development Goals did provide a first policy platform that expresses a universal set of values expressing global intent to eradicate poverty, linked to an international agenda of concrete action. In that sense, the Millennium Development Goals can be read as a programme that translates universal global values in tangible and measurable results. This development agenda has also provided a strong recognition of the relevance of a social agenda. In 2010 the United Nations adopted the Social Protection Floor, based on extensive work by the International Labour Organization, examining the viability in terms of costs and implementation. Policies of social protection receive more attention generally, as an alternative and more

holistic approach than the fragmentation of the narrow Millennium Development Goals. This could potentially provide a basis for more international attention for social protection legislation, whilst the UN's goal-setting of a social protection floor transfers the ambition to support universal protection to an international level. This certainly reflects the spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which Marga Klompé so full heartedly embraced in 1948.

## **Peace and Women's leadership**

The need to overcome colonial injustice was central to promote universal dignity – this was clear to Klompé, who as a parliamentarian closely followed the violent and complex process of the Indonesian independence from The Netherlands. As Minister, she was subsequently responsible for organizing the support for the many refugees and migrants from Indonesia, which would arrive in The Netherlands. During the following decades Klompé supported the ANC and its armed struggle, criticizing the apartheid regime and those, including companies, who supported it through investment and trade. She also as a Minister met with Palestinian delegations. Klompé hoped that international instruments would provide mechanisms to negotiate conflict and avoid war. The Holocaust had affected Klompé deeply and the question of how to avoid such genocide in the future was a serious and constant preoccupation during her life. In her view, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights formed the basis to build a world in which war could be avoided, with the dignity of human being as the central universal value. She saw the UN Security Council, United Nations peace and the European Union as important structures to maintain and negotiate peace.

The Second World War had deeply influenced Marga Klompé in a direct and personal way. She had to stop her studies of medicine in 1942 when the university was closed. She joined the resistance and was active as a messenger under the code name Dr. Meerbergen. She also played a role in the evacuation of Arnhem in 1944, after which she went underground with the name Truus van Aken. There is a story that she was in charge of several enemies soldiers who had been captured and she was asked to approve that they would be killed. However Klompé refused to authorize this and suggested that there were plenty of old castles in The Netherlands where these prisoners of war could be held so that justice could take its course once the war was over. Also telling is that, as a Parliamentarian, Klompé voted against a proposed expulsion of Dutch citizens, who had been found guilty of treason and collaboration with the Nazis, stating the principle that every citizen was entitled to their community and belonging therein.

She greatly valued personal responsibility based on individual conscience, which guided her brave role and leadership in the Dutch resistance. She also attached great value for the access of each individual to

independent justice. Transitional justice based on dignity meant to Klompé that individual members of communities should not be excluded from the communities to which they belonged but that an active process of justice, reconciliation and reparation would help communities come to terms with the history of the war and move forward.

It can be argued that the leadership of Klompé in the resistance was the stepping stone to her political career. She built a large network of women volunteers and of political underground activists. The women's network was well connected, and also connected to the Dutch queen Wilhelmina. The Dutch Women Society would send Klompé as a representative to the UN after the war and through her participation in the UN her political competence was recognized. This resulted in the offer for her to join Parliament, which would eventually result in her Ministerial posts. It was the war, which had shown the competence of women in serving the public good, but which had also brought women together in the public sphere, and Marga Klompé would be a symbol of the political power for women that resulted from this.

The norms of society were not yet ready for women's participation in the public sphere. Marga Klompé would never marry as the Dutch law was still such that women had to resign from work outside the home once they married and had children. To avoid such a clash, Klompé did not marry and she would say, she never met the right person at the right time. But despite being much affected by the restrictive gender-prescriptions of that time in The Netherlands, Klompé refused to be defined by these. When a press conference was called with the announcement of her being inaugurated at the first female Minister of The Netherlands, she refused to answer question on the gender issue, stating that there was no difference between male or female Ministers ("other than that she had a make-up box in her drawer" – she would eventually sigh as journalists persisted on the question). The reason was clear, Klompé wanted to be Minister of social affairs for all Dutch people, and more importantly, believed that peace and social integration required wholeness of communities, rather than divisions. In this sense, she believed that focusing exclusively on the gender issue, did not help women or the communities of which they were part.

In the publication *Women, War and Peace* (2002), Sirleaf and Rehn, identify the many different ways in which women contribute to peace-building and conflict resolution through their engagement in and between communities, the knowledge of communities that they have and the role they play as communicators and messengers, giving guidance and moral authority to family and wider community members. The combination of skills and capacities that women bring to the table are valuable in (preventive) diplomacy (Isike and Uzodike, 2011). The organization of such skills may be different in different societies and at different times; but a deeper

appreciation of what both genders can bring to the table of peace building and conflict resolution enlarges the scope of effective response mechanisms.

Based on a literature analysis of the role of women in pre-colonial societies in peacekeeping, Isike and Uzodike (2011) define women's participation in the caring side of society as an ongoing capacity that, if nurtured, would strengthen resilience of today's societies against violence. The contribution of Marga Klompé was to combine the ethics of a care society as a crucial foundation for peaceful societies. According to Klompé, the responsibility to strengthen care-based societies should be taken by governments and international institutions, recognising that communities themselves have the indigenous and intrinsic knowledge of how to organize that and that women have much to contribute to this. The agenda for peace building was therefore intrinsically connected to the agenda for poverty eradication and justice, based on a universal recognition of the need to care for each person in society. This inclusive conception related not just to the receivers of care, but also to the caregivers, especially women, recognizing the relevance and importance of this contribution to society. While for Isike and Uzodike such ethics of care refers back to pre-colonial traditional Ubuntu based African societies, and has the desire to restore the unbalanced society resulting from a patriarchal colonial intervention, for Klompé a ethical care society was a response to prevent the horrors of the holocaust ever occurring again.

UN Security Council Resolution 1325 moves the responsibility for involving women in peace and conflict matters to the highest international level. It recognizes the agency of women in prevention of conflict, protection in conflict and participation in peace building and peacekeeping. Subsequent resolutions have drawn attention to the desirability of inclusive community approaches to strengthen cultures of peace. A human rights culture and justice promoting active agency of all members of society are relevant to peace building and conflict resolution.

Activating traditional justice as one form of transitional justice promotes an inclusive community approach to assist communities to deal with wrongdoing and provide alternatives to a vicious circle of revenge "to activate systems for truth-finding, resolving conflict, reparation, reconciliation and healing and can lead to forgiveness" (Mekonnen and van Reisen, 2011). "Memory attaches itself to sites, whereas history attaches itself to events" claims Nora (1989: 22); traditional justice focuses on memory, dealing with the actual place of violence as the place of interrogation and as a source for future conflict if not healed. This analysis links traditional justice to conflict prevention marking the importance of in-situ processes that enhance the agency of communities and their members to actively engage in local justice and healing processes.

The interrogating discourse on the need to have a greater involvement of

women in peace building and conflict resolution has given focus to the importance of active and inclusive social relations at all levels, and especially at community level. It identifies the agency of women to promote inclusive social participation as a key component to peace building, in all its different forms, including the protection of vulnerable people, the creation of an inclusive social culture, education of values, norms and understanding of justice, and activating support mechanisms and care for people who are in need of assistance. In their combination the discourse on the need of women to be recognized in their capacity to contribute to peace building, has raised the question of the quality of the ethical and moral basis of society within the domain of peace building and conflict resolution.

## **“A life of dignity for all”**

This article looks at the negotiation of the post-2015 Development Agenda as the productive realization of aspirations present today in our society, which result from the unfinished achievements of previous generation. A long-term historical background is provided by the combined and distinct processes of colonialism and holocaust, which produce collective memory from which senses of responsibilities in society are still being derived.

In a recent historical perspective deeper understanding of the realization of the Millennium Development Goals itself remains instructive for an understanding of the post-2015 Development Agenda. In the context of the post 1989 era, it was the first global universal proposition for the eradication of poverty after the end of the Cold War, even though it failed to fully overcome the heritage of a colonial world order in its design. The reworking of the Millennium Development stigmatized developing countries and in doing so carried the reminiscence of the colonial past. The post-2015 Development Agenda may be a chance to overcome this if becomes a global agenda that carries as a universal agenda the ideal of social societies where people are not poor. The social protection legislation, which was put in place in Europe in the post Second World War era can serve as a model to sustain societies that fight inequality and promote dignity for all.

The post Second World War period provides a basis for understanding the need of strong multilateral and international safeguards and the UN Security Council Resolutions provide a basis of strengthening the role of women in conflict resolution and peace building, and strengthen the community basis for societies that are built on relationships, care and (preventive) diplomacy. Whilst both genders are needed for this, greater participation of women in governance and leadership should enable this transition.

“A life of Dignity for All”, is the title of the UN Secretary General Report on the post-2015 Development Agenda, linking its ambition to the opening sentence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. There is

increasing consensus that the ideals for the future agenda should focus on the interlinkage of poverty eradication and social protection (especially health), inclusive and sustainable economic growth with a view to reduce inequalities, care for the environment, a rights based governance framework, the promotion of women's leadership and protecting societies from violence to promote peace.

The Joint Declaration of the group of African Caribbean and Pacific countries, (the ACP Group) and the European Union, who together make up a majority of 108 countries in the United Nations, emphasize the following five priorities (ACP-EU Council of Minister, 2014):

- a. Basic living standards and a life of dignity for all, with a view to eradicating poverty in all its dimensions and to ensure sustainable well being. This would include, inter alia, improved health outcomes including through universal health coverage;
- b. Inclusive and sustainable economic growth. The framework should be a key driver to reduce inequalities, create decent and productive jobs, and improve the sustainability of consumption and production patterns and promote structural economic transformation;
- c. The sustainable use, management and protection of natural resources and the ecosystems services they provide;
- d. Good governance, equality and equity, with a strong focus on vulnerable and marginalized groups and the empowerment and rights of women and girls;
- e. Peaceful and stable societies and freedom from violence.

This agenda affirms that the ideals of today, projected in the future, carry forward the unfinished projects of the past. The agenda setting of the joint ACP and EU suggests that the post-2015 Development Agenda will comprehensively address a global programme and no longer just focus on developing countries alone. From the priorities that have now been set, it would appear that the promotion of women's participation will be identified as a priority, so enhancing the agency of women in fostering inclusive societies and communities. It expresses the desire that the dimensions of conflict and peace are fully integrated in this agenda, as a precondition for poverty eradication and dynamic, healthy and caring societies.

The Millennium Development Goals were never fully endorsed by the United Nations and this undermined their capacity to produce shared global commitments. It is important that the post-2015 Development Agenda will be adopted by the United Nations, so that all countries can fully participate. It will be in this act of global endorsement that the post-2015 Development Agenda will engage with the histories of colonial past and the Holocaust by seeking a common platform of negotiation to enhance global collaboration between countries at the highest possible level. In achieving endorsement of

such an Agenda, the post-2015 Development Agenda could have the capacity to become a representation of a collective memory that carries the aspiration of a better world, which is based on the dignity for all.

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**PART V - WOMEN'S  
LEADERSHIP IN  
GLOBALISED  
COMMUNITIES AS PEACE-  
BUILDERS**



# **CHAPTER 17. REDEMPTION IN SINAI: A STORY OF SLAVERY TODAY<sup>1</sup>**



Mirjam van Reisen

## **The Birth of ‘Redemption’**

This is the true story of the birth of a child in Sinai.<sup>2</sup> The name in Tigrinya given by his Eritrean mother is: Ra’ee. Ra’ee means Redemption.

The birth of Ra’ee was not a happy one. On the day she went into labour, Ra’ee’s mother was tortured, as she was each morning. Chained to the other prisoners, she was electrocuted and beaten. Several hours later Ra’ee was born. When she delivered the baby she could not free her hands to pick him up as she was chained to the other prisoners. She had no cloth with which to cover him and to keep him warm. She could not hold him to feed him. She had no water to wash him. But despite all the odds, Ra’ee was there and he was alive.

Ra’ee’s mother, HT, is a young Eritrean woman who escaped her

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1. This article is based on interviews carried out by mobile phone and skype by Meron Estefanos, a journalist and activist for justice in Sinai. The stories of HT and Berhane were earlier published in: Reisen, van, M., Estefanos, M., and Rijken, C. (2013) *The Human Trafficking Cycle: Sinai and Beyond*. Wolf Publishers. For the security of the Sinai survivors mentioned in the article the full names are not provided.
  2. The story is reconstructed from the interviews of HT with journalist Meron Estefanos and HT in 2012.

country a few months earlier to join her husband in a refugee camp in Sudan. She joined the 5,000 monthly stream of refugees who attempt to escape the open air prison which is her home-country. Eritrea enforces an unlimited 'military service', which is in reality a forced labour camp for young people, children and under aged minors. The conditions are harsh, poverty is rampant, there is no rule of law and prison conditions are unbearable. Detainees are held in ship containers placed under the hot desert sun and in holes dug under the ground. In Eritrea young people have no future, and they will risk an (effective) shoot-to-kill policy at the border to escape. HT fled to Sudan.

Her husband had left earlier and had arrived in a very large refugee camp in Kassala, called Shegarab. There he was waiting for HT to join him. HT, who was carrying his child, was able to cross the border. Unfortunately she never made it to Shegarab as an armed criminal gang abducted her. They took her to the Sinai instead. There she was chained to the other prisoners and tortured daily. She was asked to speak to relatives to collect ransom for her release. Now held in slavery, she was forced to beg and was tortured to make her do as they wished.

When HT's husband heard that she was imprisoned in Sinai he left the refugee camp and went to try and find her. Worried about her condition, he fearlessly put himself in danger to try and help her release or escape. However, he failed to find her and decided to go to Israel instead, so that he could collect the money needed to release his wife. Unfortunately in Israel he was detained under the so-called Anti-infiltrators Law<sup>3</sup>, a law that allows the Israeli authorities to detain people, mostly Africans, who have entered the country 'irregularly' under the law. No exception is made for asylum-seekers, refugees or humanitarian circumstances.

Panicking about the fate of HT who was now very pregnant, and worrying about the need to help her release, HT's husband begged to be taken to court and in court explained to the judge the situation of his wife. The Israeli judge who heard his case took an extraordinary decision. He ordered that HT's husband would be temporarily released so that he could beg for money to collect the sum needed to pay the ransom for his wife.

Meanwhile HT delivered Ra'ee and was trying to keep her son alive under the most difficult of circumstances, begging her husband to collect the

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3. This law was amended in 2012 to include irregular border crossings by Africans. The law has been successfully challenged in the Supreme Court but a new law was introduced by the government allowing the detention of African refugees in an isolated camp in the desert. The circumstances are so bad that in recent months demonstrations and hunger strikes have taken place to draw attention to the situation. The refugees have not been charged with any wrongdoing other than that they crossed the border looking for safety and asylum.

ransom for the release of herself and her son. Having given birth, the ransom had now doubled, HT had to pay for the release of herself and for her son.

HT's husband begged and collected money in Tel Aviv among the other refugees, among members of the Eritrean diaspora in Europe and from (poor) family members at home. He succeeded to collect the ransom and paid it to an intermediary in Tel Aviv. HT was finally released together with Ra'ee.

For HT it was now no longer possible to try and find safety in Israel and join her husband there. A large high tech protected fence was constructed by Israel to block African refugees from entry into Israel. HT was released close to the fence and begged to the Israeli military for water and food for her child. She was not allowed to enter. She was now so worried that her child would die from thirst and lack of food.

She was taken by the Egyptian military to a prison, as are most other survivors of Sinai trafficking, who are released in the desert. Why a prison? What was her crime?

In the prison she found no medical support, no access to a lawyer, no access to a court. HT learned that, in order for her to be released, she had to collect money for a plane ticket for her and her son so that she could be deported by the Egyptian authorities to the country she had fled: Eritrea.

HT's husband continued to collect money in Israel by begging, as he was not allowed to work. He collected the sum needed for the deportation of his wife and his son to the country to which he would never be able to return, Eritrea. A few months later, HT and Ra'ee arrived in Eritrea and live there now. Meanwhile HT's husband is still in Israel, trying to stay out of the hands of the authorities who could legally detain him indefinitely, as is the case for so many other Eritrean refugees; men, women and children. Why are they detained? Why should he be detained? What is his crime?

Ra'ee has never seen his father who, at great personal risk and fearless of the consequences enabled Ra'ee and his mother to leave Sinai torture camp. HT's husband is waiting for the day he will first set eyes on his eldest son. This is a family where two parents support each other and their young child across borders despite the injustices and tragedies inflicted on them. Ra'ee is their Redemption as they have shown courage, resilience and above all: love.

## **Slavery today: interrogating our responsibility**

The aggression of the crimes committed in the Sinai is beyond comprehension. These are crimes against life itself. Babies are beaten. A child suffering from epilepsy is electrocuted. A human trafficker refuses to negotiate the ransom for four young siblings. A young man loses two healthy hands, because he is suspended from the ceiling. A mother gives birth while in chains. Women and men are raped and ripped of their dignity in front of

children and loved ones. (Reisen, van, Estefanos, M. & Rijken 2012, 2013, Amnesty International, 2013, Human Rights Watch, 2014)

While being burnt, electrocuted and tortured the victims shout into mobile phones for help to their relatives: “please pay so that I can be released!” Those who cannot pay ransom fear being killed. Does this world exist? Is this the biblical land of Sinai where Moses received his ten commandments?

What is worse? The pain of knowing what is happening or the realization that it is easier for us to turn our head and look the other way?

Thousands of refugees, mostly from Eritrea, have been abducted, held captive in slavery in Sinai. The torture serves as a way to pressure the refugees to collect ransoms for their release. They phone parents, relatives, friends, and beg for money. The ransoms are high, very high. They have increased in the last five years as family members have paid these ransoms for the release of their loved ones. The torture is part of a new model of doing business – to make profit, lots of profit.

Who is right? He who refuses to pay for the release of a loved one so as not to promote the ‘trade’ in human beings, or he who pays (ever higher) ransoms to release his mother, his son, his child?

The Sinai Trafficking started in 2009 when Italy began to return Eritrean refugees to Libya. Libya deported these refugees to Eritrea and the refugees feared the punishment awaiting them on the forced deportation to the country they had tried to flee. Looking for a safe route and destination they attempted to try and go to Israel through the Sinai. The Eritreans that were kidnapped were able to collect the ransom, which quickly went up. Realizing that Eritreans were ‘profitable’ the organized criminal networks started to look for Eritreans and began abducting them from the refugee camps in Sudan and their surroundings.

Who is to blame? The country where refugees are tortured and extorted? The country that should have been a home, but turned its back on its own people? The country that refuses entry to refugees? The country that deports the refugees?

Israel built the big high-tech fence to stop the refugees. The survivors of Sinai Trafficking can no longer find security in Israel. Those who entered Israel prior to the building of the fence are labelled ‘infiltrators’. Under a law amended in 2012 to allow the Israeli government to detain anyone who entered the state ‘irregularly’, the survivors of the trafficking can be detained for three years. They may even be held in detention indefinitely if they cannot return to their home country – as is the case for the Eritrean refugees. Despairing, traumatized, wounded, without any support, men, women and children, are held in prisons and detention facilities. They have not committed a single crime. Why are they in detention?

What is more questionable? To prevent survivors of torture and slavery

to enter a country, or to put them in detention?

Little has been done to stop the international criminals that organize the Sinai trafficking and that works in collusion with the military, police and security officials in Eritrea, Sudan, Egypt and Israel. Those who organize such crimes and are responsible for its continuation enjoy impunity. The anti-terrorism actions in the Sinai have focused on the military security objectives and ignored the human dimension of the enslavement of Eritrean refugees.

Egypt detains the Sinai survivors and forces them to collect money by begging for the purchase of flight tickets. They are deported to Eritrea or Ethiopia. Deportation to Eritrea means an unsure future. The returning refugees have illegally left the country under the draconian Eritrean laws and can therefore be charged with treason. This can result in detention or even in the death penalty. They can be recommitted to the army and its forced labour camps where they will serve as slave labour to serve self-improvement programmes for Eritrean generals: to build their houses, work as slave labour on agricultural fields, in the mines or to provide sexual services.

How can the Sinai survivors be delivered from this vicious circle that holds them in slavery?

Churches have spoken up. As early as December 2010, Pope Benedict called for prayer for "the victims of traffickers and criminals, such as the drama of the hostages, Eritreans and of other nationalities, in the Sinai desert" (The Guardian, 2012). Pope Benedict and Pope Francis have continued to do so. In July 2014 The World Council of Churches adopted a communiqué, which "calls on member churches of the World Council of Churches in neighbouring countries and beyond to cooperate in dealing with issues of human trafficking in the Sinai desert that is costing the lives of many innocent persons daily." The statement followed a pastoral letter issued by four Eritrean Bishops in June 2014.<sup>4</sup> The letter asked

"On top of the crisis of people leaving their country (..) the family unit is fragmented because members are scattered in national service, army, rehabilitation centres, prisons, whereas the aged parents are left with no one to care for them and have been spiritually damaged. And all that combined is making the country desolate."<sup>5</sup>

The four Eritrean Bishops have been commended for their courage to speak up in a country where the right to freedom of speech and freedom of

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4. The four bishops are Mengsteab Tesfamariam, eparch of the capital Asmara; Tomas Osman, Eparch of Barentu; Kidane Yeabio, Eparch of Keren; and Feqremariam Hagos, Eparch of Segeneti.

5. Pastoral Letter, printed on awate: <http://awate.com/eritrean-catholic-bishops-ask-where-is-your-brother/>

religion mean little (Mekonnen and Reisen, van, 2014).

## **Sinai survivors reaching Europe**

On 3 October 2013 a boat sank off the coast of Lampedusa. It carried some 600 Eritrean refugees. Many of them died. Among the survivors was Berhane. Berhane fled Eritrea when he was fifteen, to avoid the slave labour camp of the military service. He was kidnapped and taken to Sinai where he spent long months in harsh circumstances, being tortured severely. He collected a ransom of \$ 38,000 for his release. He was then detained in prison by the Egyptian authorities and he collected the money for a ticket for his release. He was flown to Ethiopia, and ordered to go in one of the refugee camps. Seeing the lack of future in these camps, he decided to go through Libya and try to reach Europe. Berhane was on this boat that sank resulting in the deaths of almost 400 people. He was 17 when he reached the European shore in Italy. His name, Berhane, means Light.

Many unaccompanied minors from Eritrea have now reached Europe. As the age of the military service, de facto slave labour camps, in Eritrea decreases and consequently refugees are leaving Eritrea at an ever-younger age. Support workers find that these young people behave differently from any other young asylum seeker. It has been reported that many say that they are older than they are. They do this, despite knowing that as minors they would have access to asylum in the country in which they have arrived. Their priority is not their own safety, but their responsibility towards their family. They want to work and they want to help their families and those trapped in the situation of slavery in their country, in Sinai and elsewhere. They are impatient to enter the labour market and take their responsibility to contribute to the survival of other family members. As HT and her husband have also demonstrated, despite living in different places and unable to meet, they were able to join in carrying responsibility for Ra'ee and for each other.

The unsafe situation for legitimate asylum-seekers from Eritrea in neighbouring countries is a serious challenge for Europe. The European Union and its member states have an important role to play in resolving this situation, in identifying what can be done to change and improve the situation in Eritrea and enforce this; to help ensure safety for the refugees and asylum-seekers in neighbouring countries in Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt and ensure that in these countries proper asylum procedures are in place; to stop the slavery and trafficking in the Sinai, stop the torture and forced begging and stop the impunity of the international organized crime networks that are involved in the abduction of people into slavery; to ensure that Israel carries out its responsibility to give a safe haven to refugees and carry out its responsibilities under international law and to stop all deportations of refugees to Eritrea where they are punishable as traitors.

## A Place of Evil

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Elisabeth Rehn drew attention in their book “Women, War and Peace” (2002) on the increasing victimization of women, represented in increased human trafficking, slavery, sexual violence and killing of women. In Sinai all of these crimes against women come together. The Eritrean women come from a country where the war against a neighbouring country has taken over the entire social fabric (Selassie, 2011). Refugees fleeing national service become vulnerable victims of trafficking. Sinai stands as a place of memory of this evil. It demonstrates that a society that is driven by a patriarchal, authoritarian and colonially inspired military governance machine ultimately loses its capacity to care. Women are no longer capable to carry out that age-long function of bearing children, looking after family, including the elderly. Such a society, thirsty of love and care, becomes a desert of loneliness and pain, where everyone fights for survival.

The interrogation of the absence of women’s leadership in the context of conflict resolution and peace building is not that it should replace the participation of men in such leadership (Isike & Usodike, 2011). The discourse points to the need for a leadership that is inclusive and above all which cares. A leadership that cares about families and that sustains the links between parents, elders, youth and children. A leadership that helps communities to look after those in need. A leadership that is engaged with the important matters of life and death, of giving birth and mourning. A leadership that allows mothers and fathers to raise their children in communities that gives a foundation of harmony. A society that no longer has the capacity to care, becomes a society of slaves.

The sexual violence associated with the Sinai trafficking cycle points to the embodiment of the suppression of women. The violent gang rapes, the sadistic sexual aggression, the forced childbirth resulting from rape, embody the quest of a total submission of women into slavery that has a strong sexual dimension. The body itself has become the subject of complete ownership of the slave owner. We can only begin to imagine how women can heal from this, how families can recuperate a sense of dignity and how society will come to terms with its total breakdown.

HT is now in Sudan, to receive treatment for the torture inflicted on her. The story of HT is also a story of resilience, of courage, of a man and a woman, trying to be a family, against the odds, being worlds apart, but caring for their child and each other. The story of Berhane, light, shows the power of hope, the power of the young who will move ahead to find a place where they belong and where they can contribute. Where they can work, and support their families. Where they can care for themselves and their families. Against all odds, life stubbornly continues and refuses to give up.

None of the problems that relate to the tragedy of the stories of HT in Sudan, her husband in Israel, her son Ra'ee in Eritrea or Berhane in Sweden have easy solutions. But what is needed is the recognition that our world of today needs redemption from modern day slavery and that we all carry a responsibility for this to happen. This is the promise of the birth of Ra'ee: no matter where we are, we all carry the promise that we can deliver ourselves from slavery. This is the modern message from the Sinai: the responsibility to free mankind from slavery is still relevant today.

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# CHAPTER 18. DESERTS, HIGH SEAS AND HOPE



Selame Kidane

Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul - and sings the tunes  
without the words - and never stops at all.

Emily Dickinson

## **Introduction: from Tel Aviv to Via Tel Aviv**

In the town of Adi keyih, in southern of Eritrea, there is an area colloquially known as Via Tel Aviv. The set of gleaming brand new housing developments are all too evident of the new influx of surplus income that has been received by the inhabitants of those homes.

It is so named because invariably each family that owns such a house, has been able to build and maintain their new found life of relative comfort because one or more offspring has made it across the Eritrean borders, across the harsh Sahara desert and survived human trafficking to land in Tel Aviv. With a job as part of the humongous workforce made up of Eritrean refugees, they are legally defined as 'illegal infiltrators'.

I have many friends who live a life on the margins of society in Tel Aviv; they queue for hours every month to renew a piece of paper that tells them, and everyone who comes across them, that they are illegal residents and do not belong. In this precarious status they remain, and there is absolutely nothing anyone is going to do any day soon to rectify the situation and make it possible for them to enjoy their rights as refugees.

Earlier this year protesting their treatment and particularly a new set of measures designed to make it even harsher on refugees and would be

refugees, the inhabitants of underground Tel Aviv staged a series of walkouts. Men, women and children simply refused to go to work and sat at the park which has become a bit of a community hub in the derelict district of South Tel Aviv, which is a home to some 40,000 undocumented Eritrean refugees.

The response from Israeli employers couldn't have been more dramatic! They wanted them back and some even staged solidarity rallies of their own; there was no one to wash the dishes, the farms were deserted and fruit lay rotting. The streets were ridden with litter and assembly lines couldn't assemble anything. Like the inhabitants of Via Tel Aviv in Southern Eritrea, the businesses and hotels have also gained rather handsomely from the addition of an exceptionally amenable and hardworking workforce whose members are grateful for the opportunity to work all hours and demand nothing but the minimum wages that are turned down by everyone else in the country.

If one was to do a word association exercise about current day Eritrean refugees few would probably find positive attributes of strength and determination to associate with them. Poor, destitute and desperate would probably be top of the list. This is a stark contrast to even the previous generation of refugees who were considered highly educated and resourceful as well as committed to their national cause.

## **Eritrean refugees: the other 'push' factor**

I once had a conversation with a remarkable young Eritrean man who told me of his absolutely harrowing story of 'survival', where out of a group of thirty-two friends and relatives who set out together only three survived the journey and made it to Europe via Malta. He is a final year engineering student in a London university, his story deserves Hollywood style rendition, and yet when I asked him if his family or his friends knew the odds he beat to get here, he told me: "who cares? Who wants to know? All my family are interested in is that I survived and I am in Europe, I made it!"

In Tel Aviv almost every single person has such a story to tell or not tell as is more likely to be the case actually. Often the story tells itself in the rare reports of violent domestic abuse perpetrated against the women who are trying to strand an unlikely reality together. Or the tragedy of a young mother who committed suicide leaving a newborn and a toddler behind, but the stories of indomitable spirit and undying resourcefulness never get noticed.

My friend Zebib, used to run a Women's centre in Tel Aviv, helping her fellow refugee women and their children in the process of piecing together the realities of such fragmented existence, and through my involvement at the centre I came to know many of these women and their stories.

Senait (not her real name), was an A student back in Eritrea and comes

from a middle class family who are committed to educating their children. Her father's only dream was to see her progress with her studies. She too had a dream: to become a journalist, but in Eritrea both their dreams were unlikely to be realised. Senait couldn't face the reality of having to go to national service and becoming whatever the government intended for her, so she crossed the borders, crossed the Sahara and through Sinai she came into Israel, where she was detained for several months and unbeknown to her the conditions of her release was such that she had work as a fruit picker for several months. Still she didn't give up on her dreams of good education and a career. She never told her family what she did for a living and how she lived; she got on with her life as a farm hand. And it was only when she had an accident and damaged her legs that she actually almost gave in to the desperation of her situation and how far she was from her dream and that of her father. Today she is married and has a beautiful little girl, who probably has everything a girl of her age would want: two adoring parents who spend every last penny they earn not in Via Tel Aviv like many of their peers but on her. Because they both know that stuck as they are here in Tel Aviv they would never be able to give her the future that they would like for her without the amount of hard work and the commitment they put into raising their daughter. I dared to ask Senait about her own dream, and her response still rings in my ear:

look at me... I work all hours to earn the basics, I haven't read a single book in so many years, no one knows how big my dream used to be. All they see is the refugee I have become. Sometimes I too feel that is all I am, all I have become. The only thing that keeps me going is my responsibilities to my little girl. She deserves a future that is not limited by the status of her parents, she is a brilliant little girl, she deserves the best of futures, and that is what I am going to give her.

That conversation gave me an insight into the real purpose of the villas in Via Tel Aviv and the many weddings, christenings, birthdays, etc that are celebrated in South Tel Aviv every week. They are actually physical representations of the glimmer of hope that persists despite traumatic past experiences and harrowing present reality. The villas and the children and the elderly parents being looked after, the endless 'celebrations' are what, many women at the centre are using to give meaning to an otherwise totally fragmented reality where nothing that they have become fits in with what they dreamt of becoming before leaving Eritrea.

Meanwhile back at the centre myself, Zebib and others were trying to put together potential programmes for the women's centre; an advise session, language classes, child care facilities. For me something was missing something that is essential in my own life, entertainment, pass time activity, a bit of fun. I desperately tried to interest the women in some such activity. 'A movie night perhaps?' I suggested only to be met with blank faces.

“Ok maybe something else; what do you ladies do in your spare time?” Manna (not her real name) was the first to respond. Everything about Manna including her tall slender body and her practical attire and footwear, tell of her resilience. Manna tells me she works endless hours, as a chambermaid, so she can earn enough money to buy her way out of Israel. Already she had been cheated out of her hard earned money a couple of times by people who promised her a way out. Given how hard Manna works for hours on end, one would expect her to be devastated at the loss of such large amounts of cash and also expect her to be very weary of anyone trying to sell her a way out of Israel. Not Manna. To her planning her exit is the only way of keeping hope alive; it is in fact the stuff that her hopefulness is built upon.

Three years after that planning evening in Tel Aviv and no doubt several failed attempts later, a few months ago I saw a picture of Manna on Facebook. In the background the unmistakable grey sky of Northern Europe and enough snow to tell me this wasn't an exceptional day in Tel Aviv. I was so excited for her and finally I could stop being sad about her statement from many moons ago:

...sometimes even in my dreams I am folding sheets and making beds, if I wasn't working at a hotel on the seafront I wouldn't even have known I lived near a sea side, everything I do is centred on my dream of getting out of here. Our lives don't have room for movie nights or seaside outings.

Titi was about the only one in that group of women at the centre coordinating group who had a suggestion on what at first sounded like a great pass time activity – excursion trips into Jerusalem and all the other historical sites. I thought it was brilliant; here were a group of women who come from a very religious society and living with all the Biblical sites a very short bus ride away! Yet Titi's suggestion was received with the same polite but lukewarm reception as my frivolous suggestions of movie nights and seaside outings.

It was Easter season and Titi, who is a domestic home help for a middle class Tel Aviv family, had just come back from an evening prayer at one of the monasteries in Jerusalem. She has become more committed in her Coptic faith since arriving in Tel Aviv and spends all her spare time in church activities. She sings in the choir, she coordinates visits to religious sites for her fellow churchgoers and supports the priests in any way she can. Titi is happy and always smiling, but more importantly perhaps, she is content with her life in Tel Aviv. She puts due commitment to her job with the family, she earns enough to support her own family back in Eritrea, and has managed to strike a balance between her spiritual and physical needs. Her days are centred on her work and weekends with her church family. Her year is punctuated by colourful and vibrant celebrations of events on the religious calendar and satisfaction for her comes from knowing she is doing the right thing for her. Her friends respect her serenity even as they recognise that her

way isn't necessarily the way for everyone and they tolerate her occasional sermons in return for her ever so supportive presence in the group.

That night, and every other night I spent in Tel Aviv, my biggest preoccupation keeping me awake was the worry that I would never ever be able to tell these stories (and many more) and tell of the resilience of these women and their resolve to keep going. Their ability to find something to hold on to, something to begin stranding their lives back together even after it has been shattered by traumatic experiences that many of us are not even able to imagine.

Of course not all of the women have stories of resilience; the surprise is that not many of them are actually like Hanna (not her real name), who left Eritrea as a teenager. The eldest of a family of several younger siblings and cousins looked after and supported by her lone mother who worked as a cleaner in Asmara. Hanna thought she was now old enough to find a way of supporting her mother and her siblings. Little did she know that her 'chosen' route would land her into the hands of traffickers who would sell her several times over, gang rape her mercilessly and beat her until she lost the use of several muscles in one leg. The story of her escape and arrival in Tel Aviv is a story that could fill volumes. Sadly her physical scars were nothing compared to the emotional scars that lay deeper and beyond the reach of her various attempts to strand her life back together again. She couldn't keep a job, for the demands of such long hours and hard labour were beyond what her weakened muscles could cope with. She was too emotionally fragile to cope with friendships and the many sexual advances from men who were simply unable to see what lay just underneath her youthful appearances and urbanite demeanour. And finally her search for solace led her into the hands of a religious cult leader who abused her vulnerability and inexperience and isolated her from the little support that she would have gotten from her fellow refugee women. All Hanna ever sought from him (and what he promised her) was that he exorcise the demons of Sinai out of her tormented soul. A few months after our last meeting a common friend reported to me that the 'priest' claimed to have exorcised the Sinai demons and was working on the Tel Aviv ones, Hanna was never the same again. My friend was asking "what hope is there for her if the demons are even here in Tel Aviv?" Hanna must have felt the same sense of hopelessness in the face of so many demons too.

At about that time I started thinking about the difference that is making a difference between those that are able to adjust to the harsh realities of life as an 'illegal infiltrator' in Tel Aviv and those that are not coping at all (the perpetrators of domestic violence and victims of alcohol abuse as well as those who have succumbed to over reliance on other avoidance tactics). I also started wondering if there is a scope for us to think of these hazardous journeys out of Eritrea as acts of positive hopefulness rather than the

desperate measures of a generation unable to realise the aspirations of a once hopeful nation.

Perhaps it is the hopefulness instilled into this generation of Eritreans, a residual trait from the legacy of the independence struggle and its near miracle achievements that drives young Eritreans to be ever so hopeful and willing to overcome endless obstacles in the realisation of the goal of getting out of the country.

Although I do not have concrete empirical data, a majority of those leaving Eritrea are under 30 years of age; in Tel Aviv I would say about 26. Twenty-three years ago, at Eritrea's victorious independence, our 'illegal infiltrators' were mere toddlers. The oldest were probably carrying palm branches and dancing on the streets and the youngest would have been on their mother's backs as they danced. During the euphoric post-independence years many would have had their psychological births, the age at which a baby realises that she is separate from other entities (including the caregiver) and from this point on the village that is raising the child (in Eritrea it still takes a village), will be invested in teaching its young hopeful thinking. For this generation of Eritreans recent events would have made that lesson extra strong (potent). Eritreans across the globe and particularly inside the country would have been high on hopefulness following the attainment of the goal that took three generations of Eritreans.

Where previous generation of Eritreans were taught bitter perseverance and sacrifice, this generation of Eritreans will have been brought up on a staple diet of sweet victory flowing from a direct link of the experience of making a move towards a goal (an important element of hopeful thinking). If this hypothesis is true then hopefulness is somewhat a double-edged sword for Eritrean young people. It is both the force that is making it possible for them to choose exile as a pathway to goal attainment and it is perhaps the trait that is making it possible for them to survive even in the most unlikely of circumstances, such as in the case of my friends at the women's centre in Tel Aviv. Making it possible for them to work all hours and still manage to turn up at weddings looking ever so elegant and with immaculately turned out children on tow, on their only free day of the week.

## **Propelled by hope**

Hope theorists define hope as the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways (Snyder, 2002). Here hope is conceptualised as an individual deference variable reflecting relatively enduring, cross-situational subjective appraisals of goal related capabilities made up of three major components: goals, agency and pathway.

Goals can be short-term or long-term, and inevitably they will vary significantly in terms of their importance or probability of attainment. When

a goal is appraised and if it is of high enough importance to warrant continued mental attention then the person moves along the sequence to a phase where they consider the pathway and the agency.

Pathways represent a person's perceived ability to devise workable routes to goals, the resolve that makes people say: "I will find a way to get this done." (Snyder, 1998) People with high hope are more often than not able to imagine multiple routes and herein lies the difference that actually is the difference. When the individual encounters barriers to the goals (and particularly to goals with high outcome value) their ability to access other pathways becomes crucial.

Agency is the motivational component that propels people along their imagined pathway towards their goal. It reflects the individual's perception that she can begin to move along the pathway. It is the mental will power characterised by the internal speech such as "I am not going to be stopped." (Snyder, 2002) Like the ability to devise alternative routes, agentic thinking is also crucial as it provides the necessary motivation that ought to be channelled to alternative routes.

Thus hope can be defined as a positive motivational state based on a goal directed energy (agency), channelled through a considered pathway towards a chosen goal. When a particular goal pursuit has been completed (and a goal attained) emotions would cycle back to influencing subsequent pathway and agentic thinking, embedding hopeful thinking. When barriers are experienced those who are able to think of more pathways and muster enough motivation to pursue these would be at an advantage.

Thinking back to my many conversations with my friends at the Eritrean Community Women's Centre in Tel Aviv and their indomitable strength of spirit despite it all, and reflecting against the above theory (and similar others), some of what I have observed over the last few years begins to tell a story that is often untold about this generation of Eritreans. Of course no one has yet done any research into the phenomena that makes young people pay thousands of dollars for a space on a rickety boat or even a dinghy that is going to sail into the darkness literally and figuratively. However, could the fact that they were raised by a generation that actually fought against all odds and won their independence have programmed them to believe that there are near infinitive pathways to achieving their goal? Could they have developed an exceptionally high agentic thinking, a belief in their ability to 'finding a way' under any circumstances?

On my second or third visit to Tel Aviv Manna was recovering (only financially) from her latest setback on her quest to get out of Israel, and with a smile she told me that the "setback" was a lesson on human nature to all involved and that next time she would be more astute. I didn't think of it like that then but Manna's logic was actually no different to Zebib's when organisation after organisation were telling us that a Women's centre run by

Eritrean refugees in the heart of South Tel Aviv was simply impossible. Unperturbed Zebib just went about finding new ways to deliver services starting with an idea that actually generated the income required and provided much needed services (a child care facility for working mothers). Today the Centre runs numerous flagship programmes and doesn't even need the income from the crèche to sustain it.

Could the over dependence on alcohol and violence, that is more common in the young Eritrean men (anecdotal evidence) be ascribed to gender based differences measurable on the Hope Scales available to researchers? And more importantly would understanding all this facilitate the development of approaches that would enable us to support the psychological adjustment for those that are finding it hard to cope?

Of course not all the men have resorted to avoidance through alcohol and violence as a way of coping with their traumatic experience. In fact just as many women might also be finding adjustment difficult but their avoidance might be hidden beneath eating disorders or self harm.

I have also come across men that have shown tremendous strength and managed to come through such difficult experiences. Solomon (not his real name) is among the oldest Tel Aviv inhabitants I have met, through his currently frail body frame you can still see the tremendous physical strength that has carried him through a life of so much hardship. He was a young soldier during the independence struggle, but rather than be celebrated as a victorious hero he spent much of his life in independent Eritrea in and out of prisons for his vocal opposition against government policies and particularly the fate of his fellow former fighters. When he finally managed to escape from prison he took himself and his teenage daughters through the mountains he fought so hard to liberate and arrived in Sudan. Unfortunately all three were abducted and Solomon suffered horrendously at the hands of his abductors and their choice of torment for him was to rape his daughters before his eyes. When some ransom was paid by the family Solomon wanted one of the girls to be freed but the captors figured they would gain more by keeping the girls so they let him go instead, it took months before he recovered enough presence of mind to realise where he was. At the time I met him he had mobilised the community to collect enough money to free both his girls from the hands of captors, it was really clear that all he lived for was to see his children freed. Few weeks ago I heard both girls were now free from traffickers but still in limbo in Egypt.

Within hope theory any stressor can be conceptualised as that which interferes with the attainment of goal (starting with the most basic) and coping is the ability to effectively respond to a stressor so as to reduce psychological (and physical) pain. (Houston, 1988) High hope individuals will find more pathways to overcome the stressor and will also be more motivated to utilise those strategies. Higher hope people will also be more

likely to find benefits (strength) in their on-going dealing with stressors (Tennen & Affleck, 1999) and less likely to use avoidance; a coping style linked to distress and decreased psychological adjustment when overused. (Suls & Fletcher, 1985)

Researchers have also found a link between higher hope and successful coping with unforeseen stressors (barriers to goal), (Snyder & Pulvers, 2001) enabling them to think effectively about the future, with full appreciation of the fact that at times they will face major life stressors. By contrast low hope individuals are more likely to catastrophise the future.

Successful adjustment is dependent on the ability to prevent major stressors by reducing, eliminating or containing them. High hope individuals are more likely to be flexible enough to find alternative goals in the face of immutable goal blockages. My friends building houses and supporting their families in comparative comfort at via Tel Aviv back in Adi Qeyih have found a worthy alternative goal of making something out of the fact that they are stuck in Israel without the prospects of making the lives they envisaged for themselves. For Senait and her partner it was pouring everything into her little girl, for Zebib and colleagues it was helping as many of their fellow refugee women as possible find the support that they need. All of this is meeting a need far more significant for the giver, than what the recipient might ever appreciate.

In my work with many refugees (both from Eritrea and other places), I have come across many people who are all too willing to entertain fantasies about ‘magically’ escaping their particular entrapment; unfortunately it sounds like Hanna may have fallen for that when she agreed to go through abusive rituals as solution. Many others in Tel Aviv come and demand that we talk to the UNHCR and effect their resettlement out of Israel. All this is a form of disengaged (avoidant) coping behaviour, more akin to low hope individuals, and often results in an unhealthy consequence, as well as a missed opportunity for learning from the experience of overcoming goal blockages.

## **Bittersweet triumph**

Clearly the capacity that some Eritrean Refugee Women have shown for coping with numerous adversities, and the fact that many may have even thrived as a result of this experience, is a bitter sweet triumph as we know that many others have simply not had the opportunity to even contemplate alternative pathways that may have been available to them.

It is difficult to estimate how many have perished in the hands of brutal human traffickers torturing them to death in an attempt to extort ransom from their families. Many have also not made the journeys across the Mediterranean. At the time of writing, two such boats carrying at least 400 Eritreans in total are said to be missing for several weeks, one is feared to

have sank off the Libyan coast from where it set sail over a month ago. Unfortunately such circumstances are far too frequent and yet refugees continue to make the journey. I guess there can also be over-hopefulness too.

## **Building with hope**

As well as helping us understand the mentality that maybe facilitating the psychological adjustment of Eritrean refugees in Tel Aviv (and other destinations), hope theory can also provide a framework for developing a process through which those who are not coping can be assisted too.

When people lose hope they have little else to live for. Similarly if people avoid stressors through poor coping mechanisms, they will soon become disconnected from their goals. Hope theory provides a framework for therapeutic interventions by tapping into cognitive constructs involving people's perceptions as related to their goals. First, through their abilities to initiate and maintain movement towards a goal (agency) and their goal-related behaviours; Secondly, using their abilities to generate viable strategies in the event of blockages (pathways). Self-reflection through therapeutic intervention can therefore provide opportunities for those not coping to examine their agency or pathway thinking and be helped to raise their hopefulness by learning more effective agentic and goal-directed pathways.

This has got significant potentials for working with Eritrean refugees across the globe. Many have been through traumatic experiences and could be suffering from PTSD. Getting people back in touch with their original goal and helping them build their repertoire of workable pathways could potentially be an extremely rewarding therapeutic engagement.

I particularly think of people like Solomon, who could be helped to reflect back about the various obstacles in their lives and how they (life as a soldier, adjusting back into civilian life, escaping prison and being able to raise tens of thousands of dollars in Tel Aviv) can rebuild life using these very building blocks.

Perhaps if one had the opportunity to get to Hanna before the religious cult leader, one would have been able to get her back in touch with her goal of helping her mother and her siblings, using the strength that she had to survive the horrendous experience she had been through at such a young age.

## **Conclusion: A hopeful agenda for Eritrea**

Last October when a boat carrying Eritreans sank and 366 people died, Eritreans across the world grieved with the bitterest expression of anguish coming from a massive memorial service held in Levensky Park in South Tel Aviv. Young men and women, priests and lay people wailed their heartbreak

out. The torment of unrealised hope had come to haunt them: even after you pursue every pathway available and pushed yourself to follow every last one to reach a goal, sometimes that goal which seemed close and attainable enough, proves to be just the opposite.

A few months later the same crowd gathered in the same park refusing to go back to work until the Israelis sorted out their refugee policies. The same men and women gathered and demonstrated their determination to dismantle every barrier to them attaining their goal of living their dream of stability and security. The women's centre was abuzz with activities, organising the women and children protest day, hosting information session for wives of diplomats, organising the food rota for the protestors and child care facilities for those who need one, a sign that Eritreans in Tel Aviv always find a way back to hope.

Watching the endless coverage of those rallies on social media, listening to the speeches that were being made by young Eritreans, I too was riding high on the tide of hope rising from Tel Aviv of all places in the universe. I figured that if the policies of two governments (the Eritrean and Israeli governments) with such low hope for Eritrean youth are unable to delete the hope coefficient programmed into their psyche by the villages that brought them up, and if hope is such a persistent feature of Eritreans, there really is a good chance that we would be able to reverse all that has gone against us.

It is the low hope policies of the regime in Eritrea that have become an immovable blockage preventing the goal of many Eritreans from being realised inside their country. The search for alternative pathways leads many frustrated young people into choosing exile to attain their goal of personal development and security. Therefore the task of those of us fighting for a better Eritrea should include a fight for a high hope government with policies that facilitate the removal of blockages to the attainment of the goals of its citizens. We should also fight for policies that facilitate the setting and achieving of collective goals that enables the entire society to gain from common benefits. And finally as my friends have fully demonstrated, where there is a will there is always a way.

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# CHAPTER 19. A PLACE CALLED HOME: THE MARGINALISATION OF ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN



**Grace Kwinjeh**

There is a generation of young Zimbabweans, who left the country with their mothers, when they were just babies, with vivid memories of what the place, they used to call home, is like.

One of these young women is my daughter, Charmaine. She left Zimbabwe when she was just seven years old. She will be turning twenty next October. She first stayed in Belgium, than had to relocate to the United Kingdom, with her younger brother Clive, after I had to go back home to Zimbabwe. When I returned to Belgium in 2009, Charmaine relocated again to stay with me.

She is a hard-working and determined girl. She enrolled in the French education system, but then had to leave again for the UK, as a result of both the difficult economic situation and the difficulty of adapting to the French school system.

In spite of all those difficulties, Charmaine did very well in her A-level exams. She has now been accepted to study law at University level.

Charmaine's story is testimony of the children from Zimbabwe's many single female political activists, who endured years of separation with their children. Some senior women in the MDC, had to let their adolescent children go to the UK while they remained in Zimbabwe, staying for long periods of time without seeing them. I am so proud of their strength and tenacity. They are such a potential asset for Zimbabwe.

But, then again, I avoid to ask her the question which is always on my

mind, because I fear the answer: "which place do you call home?"

## **The Zimbabwe diaspora woman: "out of sight, out of mind"**

This chapter interrogates the positioning of Zimbabwean women who left Zimbabwe over the past 15 years, as a result of the multifaceted and prolonged struggle. Some left voluntarily, others were forced to flee by circumstances, beyond their control. The definition of women leaders is not confined to those who were in national and visible leadership only, but rather, also takes into account, women who were involved in political organisations from grassroots level. Many were forced to flee the country as a result of their political convictions and activism. Political persecution was not directed to those in mainstream politics alone, but civil society too, especially those who participated in the constitutional and women's movements (Human Rights Watch, 2006). There are also reports of teachers, especially in the rural areas, who suffered much persecution at the hands of Zanu PF's youth militia, just for being suspected of belonging to a particular opposition group. This chapter, therefore, seeks to start a conversation, on the whereabouts of these unnamed she-heroes or 'sheroes' of the struggle for democracy, to acknowledge their presence and to draw from their Diaspora experiences, in order to explore how they may contribute meaningfully to the rebuilding of Zimbabwe.

The lack of information concerning this important group of women, creates a solid case for further research into this area, given that the Diaspora is estimated at four million Zimbabweans, half of whom are women. The question of where the migrant Zimbabwean women, who have been at the forefront of the struggle at different levels in society, disappeared to and what became of them has been overlooked. There are many unsung 'sheroes' of the struggle, some like award winning and celebrated journalist Violet Gonda, who has been barred from returning to Zimbabwe. Gonda is one of the founder members of the popular UK based radio station SWRADIO Africa, which has since closed down due to financial constraints. She is on a Zimbabwe sanctions list, which includes senior British politicians among others.

The chapter gives an account of the political situation in Zimbabwe identifying how patriarchal power continues to dominate and has led to cycles of violence associated with the political processes. The chapter identifies how women have been affected by the political violence and how this has increased women migration. The chapter then looks at life in the diaspora as a new site of struggle, with new challenges relating to change and loss of identity. This chapter finally looks at the experience of loss, of no longer belonging, no longer being at the centre of the place called home. I

will conclude by looking at the way in which women in the diaspora have found new forms of expression and organisation to survive and counteract the negative impact of the experience of losses on their lives.

## **Election violence affecting women's political participation**

In what seemed like a progressive, seamless flow of historic events, which started with the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, immediately followed by the process that led to the collapse of the Apartheid South-Africa regime, a new era was ushered in, as winds of change blew over the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. The political mood changed, to encompass language that had to do with the inclusion of the previously marginalised groups. An environment was created for the increased participation of women in the public and private domains. In particular their participation in political decision-making which had hitherto remained a male preserve and has influenced priorities of budgets. An example often given is how male Members of Parliament (MPs), have pushed for resource allocation to make roads in rural areas to ease their travel, at the expense of building clinics to alleviate the suffering of women and children who often have to walk long distances in search of medical care.

Women now occupy notable positions of power at national, regional and even continental levels. The African Union Commission, which had long been identified with being a bastion for patriarchy, is now headed by a woman, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, who was elected to the position in October 2012. Other examples of female performance in countries like Rwanda constitute an impressive 64%, the highest in the world. SADC has affirmed its commitment to promoting women to positions of decision-making and power, the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development was signed and adopted by 12 SADC Heads of State and Government on 17 August 2008 in Johannesburg, South Africa. In this Protocol a commitment was made by Member States to achieve 50% women representation and participation in political and decision-making positions in the public and private sectors by 2015.

In Zimbabwe, women at present constitute 35% of Zimbabwe's Parliament, a figure which doubled after the 2013 harmonised elections, from the previous 17% in the 2008 election. This is a result of a provision in the new constitution, which was adopted in May 2013. This provides for a quota of 60 seats to be reserved for women. Women are selected through a proportional representation system. The seats are awarded to each political party according to the number of votes it receives. However, given the overall controversial nature of Zimbabwe's elections, and, the patronage system within political parties, the provision to promote women to positions

of decision-making, loses its meaning. To date the opposition has disputed the outcome of the 2013 election, in which ruling Zanu PF made a clean sweep in most constituencies. The overall outcome is that Zanu PF women are the beneficiaries of this quota, since Zanu PF has the majority in parliament. According to those who contest the elections, the women who have taken these seats are the beneficiaries of the deception by their party and of vote rigging.

Another problem is that the system of selection of women across the political divide, has not been based on merit, but has rather rewarded those women who toed the party line. These women, selected on this basis remain hamstrung in parliament, as they don't have their independent support in a constituency. Therefore they have a limited possibility to push for policies that do not gain the support of the male leadership. The increased numbers of women in the current Parliament has not translated to any robust debate for policy changes that could benefit women.

So, despite the progress made at regional level to enhance women's participation in elections, there are major challenges in Zimbabwe. In 2009 the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) did research on the interest Zimbabwean women have in the politics of their country and found that women come out in large numbers to vote but that the voting patterns are affected by political violence, which has characterised elections since 2000. Reasons for not voting are associated with insecurity and fear because of the operating environment of intimidation and harassment. The report further indicates that the figures of women feeling unsafe during election periods has been rising steadily since 2002, with 70% reporting to be unsafe in 2008.

Violence during election time is a major issue that has tainted the credibility of Zimbabwe's elections, with the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change, (MDC) and other smaller parties still contesting the outcome of previous elections. Increased human rights violations are also reported around election time, these take the form of abductions, assaults, torture, rape and murder. AidsFreeWorld examined 70 alleged survivors, detailing 380 total acts of rape by 241 perpetrators. According to the report, many of these rapes were by multiple perpetrators, mostly identified as supporters of ZANU PF, and, in many instances, the perpetrators could be clearly identified by the victims. These women were interviewed in South Africa and Botswana, where they had fled into exile. Forty of the 70 women also reported that they had been severely assaulted, either before or after the rape, with sticks, electric cords, logs or metal rods (AidsFreeWorld, 2008). Failure to deal with violence in national politics and at political party levels has been the biggest stumbling block to Zimbabwean women fully benefiting from the protocols and declarations made at SADC level.

I together with three other female opposition leaders, including about 30 men, were brutally tortured on the 11 March 2007, while on our way to a

prayer meeting for peace. I sustained injuries to my head and was unconscious for several hours after being beaten non-stop by several riot police, at a time. They only stopped to change hands after they were tired. I left Zimbabwe, in my pyjamas in an ambulance for South Africa where I received medical care. This is the case with many victims of political violence, who out of safety precautions have to leave the country abruptly to save their lives.

## **Women leadership within the pro-democracy movement**

In 1997 Robert Mugabe had been in power for 17 years after the white Smith regime had been overturned. The exposure of widespread corruption and misappropriation of public funds, popular disenchantment with the Lancaster House constitution (which gave President Robert Mugabe sweeping powers), and the desire by Zimbabweans for a 'home-grown' constitution, led to the formation of the broad alliance, the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA). It was composed of a wide array of civil society organisations, which ranged from the women's movement, trade union, student organisations, churches and professional bodies. It became a popular platform for mobilisation and organisation around issues of governance. This led to discussions around the formation of an alternative political movement, which would challenge Robert Mugabe's Zanu PF through elections. Thus the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was formed, led by trade unionists Gibson Sibanda and Morgan Tsvangirai, and was launched in 1999. This was a watershed in Zimbabwe's history and the role women played in their individual capacities and as a movement is also key to understanding the overall successes especially in the constitutional movement. I was among the founders of the new party.

The way Zimbabwe's liberation narrative has been framed, often discounts the important and pivotal role that the women's movement played in both the constitutional movement, and later in the formation of the MDC. 'Her story' is often missing in spite of the heroic roles played by the women. One can mention for instance, Thoko Matshe, who was chairperson of the NCA, during the historic 'No Vote' campaign, in 2001, against a government sponsored constitution, which was meant to dilute and counter what civil society was suggesting, after mobilising views of Zimbabweans from all walks of life. Matshe, who is now based in South Africa, offered outstanding leadership to the broad alliance because of her integrity. Her meticulous leadership navigated around contentious issues on the constitutional reform agenda, and she kept the NCA together. Matshe led the NCA to victory, in a historic 'NO-VOTE' campaign. This changed Zimbabwe's political face. More importantly, it dismantled the myth of the invincibility of the ruling

party Zanu PF.

Other women leaders, who are now in the diaspora, are women's rights advocates, Lydia Zigomo-Nyatsanza and Yvonne Mahlunge-Gwashawanhu. Both are lawyers by profession and they both sat on the national Task Force of the NCA. Gwashawanhu is a practising law and at present plays a key role in educating women migrants of their rights.

The MDC under Tsvangira's leadership lost the plot altogether in terms of supporting and recognising the women in its ranks. The party, which has split into several formations in the 15 years of its existence, is now identified through a suffix to the name. The MDC led by Tsvangirai is now identified as MDC-T. The party has failed to deal decisively with issues of internal party cohesion among the different interest groups, which include women, as well as those to do with accountability and upholding the original founding principles of the party, which distinguished it from Zanu PF. Recent internal party violence has also badly tainted the image of the liberation movement, with the most recent case being the assault of former party, deputy Treasurer General, Elton Mangoma at the party head-quarters, Harvest House.

There are significant cases of victimisation of women within the ranks of MDC-T. Trudy Stevenson was assaulted at Harvest House after falling out with the party President. Lucia Matibenga, a party founder member, was removed from her post as Women's Assembly chairperson after falling out of favour with the party leadership. The failure by the MDC-T to dismantle the exhausted patriarchal model of power, premised on violence, has been its main undoing. The party is being torn apart by factional wars which pit Tsvangirai against his erstwhile right hand man, Secretary General Tendai Biti. Women in the party have also been torn apart, opting to support either of the two men. The MDC failed to build a formidable women's wing or movement, which would advocate and push for the interests of women not just within the party but at national level too.

## **Marginalisation of the diaspora in Zimbabwean politics**

Zimbabwe benefits a great deal from remittances from those in the diaspora. According to Finance Minister, Patrick Chinamasa, just between January to November 2013, the country received \$1.6 billion in remittances from the diaspora. While presenting the 2014 budget, Chinamasa went further to explain that the government would aim to harness the diaspora potential, by formalising a platform for dialogue through engaging the Zimbabwe Diaspora Home Interface Programme (ZDHIP), an entity through which the government aims to articulate its policies for engagement and investment with the Zimbabwe diaspora.

Despite the hardship of Zimbabweans living abroad and the benefits for

the country of their contributions, the Zimbabwean leadership in general, across the political divide hold a rather condescending view towards those who have left the country - both male and female. This is the case irrespective of the motive behind their move, even if the departure was not politically motivated. The tenuous relation between the diaspora and the leadership became clear when MDC President, Tsvangirai, the then Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, visited London in 2009 and suggested that the Zimbabweans living in the diaspora ought to consider going back home, suggesting that they were wasting time. He was shocked to find that the Zimbabwean audience heckled and booed him (Mbiba, 2012).

The problem with the Zimbabwe political leadership is the general assumption that to participate fully in the affairs of the nation, one has to be inside the country. Zimbabweans in the Diaspora cannot vote, an issue on which both Zanu PF and the MDC-T seem to be in agreement. The Zanu PF dominated parliament of Zimbabwe, passed on 1 August 2014 the Electoral Amendment Bill, which takes away the right for those in the Diaspora to vote, contrary to section 67 of the constitution which protects the rights of adult citizens to vote. There have been no protestations from the opposition.

## **Women in the Zimbabwe diaspora**

While the majority of the women fled violence in all its forms in Zimbabwe, violence remains a major issue that has resurfaced in their lives. Women in the Diaspora face the double jeopardy of being women and of also being in a foreign land.

The estimated 3-4 million Zimbabweans left especially to South Africa (2 million) and the UK (400,000) as well as Botswana (UNDP, 2010). The consequences are enormous. Families have been ripped apart. For instance, if the mother suddenly got an opportunity to practice nursing in the UK or the father had a chance to leave for Australia to teach. Other unmarried women with children had to make career choices and leave their children in Zimbabwe with relatives while they went out in search of work. Male and female migrants have suffered significant losses, not only in terms of what they owned at home, but even in terms of their careers. In the UK for instance nurses have been hired in the nursing and elderly care service industries, while many were qualified for other professions. As JoAnn McGregor (2006) pointed out: “Deskilling and a loss of status were problems for many of the qualified nurses who had relocated to the UK, and also for some of the older trainees in Britain, who had experience as professionals outside the health sector, or had run their own businesses.” Some Zimbabweans in the Diaspora and especially those on asylum have not seen their families for over a decade.

In the United Kingdom and the United States there have been increased

reports of domestic violence as a result of reversed roles. Women may find it easier to find work in social services, mostly as care workers while their husbands remain at home to look after the children. They hope for professional work as they would at home, to preserve what they traditionally see as their dignity and standing in society. Women have been more able to adapt, becoming breadwinners. This may result in a cultural shock and the men may feel emasculated and disrespected by their wives. This seems to be a cause of domestic violence in the Zimbabwean diaspora. The men have found it hard to understand the change in gender-roles. Their coping mechanisms include drug abuse, violence, sometimes femicide or suicide.<sup>1</sup>

In a report on *Zimbabwean Nurses and Teachers Negotiating Work and Family in Britain*, men interviewed often described nursing as a negative career choice. A former teacher recalled: “I trained as a nurse due to my immigration status - that was back in 2000, it was the only way to be stable” (McGregor, 2006: 9). Another male teacher who retrained elaborated:

I didn't take the nursing job willingly, I just found myself without other opportunities, so I'm not motivated to go further through with the training, I felt I wouldn't last long, so I almost quit. I'm still undecided, I did a diploma not a degree in nursing – I chose not to go on because I didn't think I'd last long... I still feel a teacher, I decided to go into nursing because of a lack of opportunities for teachers, I thought of nursing as a job for females (McGregor, 2006: 9).

Now these two citations are interesting for an analysis of gender relations in the Zimbabwe diaspora and the reversal of roles. Women are

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1 From reports in social media: “Distraught mum kills self, two daughters in US”, [newzimbabwe.com](#), 02.07.2014; “Mum may have killed son before starting fire”, [Thurrock Gazette](#), 5.12.2014; “What's pushing Diaspora spousal killings?” Creed Mushimbo, [Newzimbabwe.com](#), 12.10.2013. There is the reported case of 47 year old, Angela Mtambu, who killed herself and her two daughters, using suffocating nitrogen gas, at their upstate home in New York. Press reports indicate that Mtambu had to be admitted to Pennsylvania mental institution after being overcome with grief. There is the case reported in December 2013, of 45 year old, Cathy Mhlaba of Shoebury, in the United Kingdom, who is reported to have killed her son after which she took her own life, by starting a fire in her black Vauxhall Vectra. Mhlaba was in the leadership of the local MDC structures in Southend, where she was well respected. Many cannot fathom what led to her tragic end. Another heart breaking diaspora experience is of domestic violence. You have the case of the late Canada based Professor Otilia Chareka, who was bludgeoned by her husband, Patrick Chareka, in front of their young children. It is reported Chareka will spend at least thirteen years of his life in jail. In Washington, USA is another case of Mary Mushapaidze was killed by her husband Mthulisi Ndlovhu, during a row over dirty dishes.

facing a huge backlash as a result if this.

The problem associated with the reversal of gender-roles has resulted in lengthy discussions on the popular news-site for Zimbabwean diaspora members: *Newzimbabwe.com*. Zimbabwean women in the UK are starting to organise themselves, mobilise support and build awareness for women caught in domestic traps of violence. Several organisations mobilise and raise awareness around this issue of domestic violence, such as the Zimbabwe Women's Network in the UK, (ZIWNUK) and P.H.O.E.B.E (Promotion of Health, Opportunity, Equality, Benevolence and Empowerment) which promotes greater inclusivity, encouraging a greater number of black and ethnic minority women and children to receive domestic violence support and counselling services across Suffolk.

The issue of domestic violence is intimately linked up with the overall sense of insecurity of the migrant communities. The situation for migrants and asylum-seeker remains insecure. In South Africa for instance the recent Documentation of Zimbabweans Project (DZP) permits for Zimbabweans living in South Africa, will be renewed under a new dispensation and will be called Zimbabwe Special Permit. But generally the situation of undocumented Zimbabwean migrants remains tenuous.

Despite these challenges women have found ways of organising and supporting themselves, their families and their communities. The Zimbabwe Women Achievers Awards (ZWAA), provides a platform in which women recognise their achievements and express their hope. Based in the UK, the ZWAA attracts Zimbabweans from all walks of life, and once a year at an event characterised by glitz and glamour, the women celebrate their successes.

## **Nora Chengeto Tapiwa – Tribute to a leader of women in the diaspora**

(The source of this story is: Sofia Javed (undated) *Nora Chengeto Tapiwa of Zimbabwe. Biography.*)

A person who has very much inspired me is Nora Chengeto Tapiwa. She was a well-known leader of Zimbabwean exiled activists in South Africa. She was one of the founder members of the Zimbabwe Diaspora Development Chamber, (ZDDC). This organisation aims at creating cohesion and unity among the Zimbabwean diaspora, in South Africa, and beyond.

Tapiwa grew up in rural Zimbabwe during the liberation war. She became the organising secretary of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade (ZCTU) union and hence became targeted by the government's suppression of political opposition. She was threatened and in 2003 Tapiwa decided to leave Zimbabwe with her two children. She fled to South Africa. Two years later the Zimbabwean authorities destroyed her house in Harare as part of a

demolition programme called Operation Murambatsvina. This operation would result in an estimated 700,000 members of the Zimbabwe's working class community becoming homeless (Tibaijuka, 2005).

In South Africa, Tapiwa began to organise the refugee community and she formed the Global Zimbabwe Forum (GZF) with a group of more than 2,000 refugees, which grew to a large umbrella of 40 Zimbabwean organizations in exile. Advocacy towards the South African government to acknowledge the plight of Zimbabwean migrants and recognize them as refugees, succeeded in a waiver of visa requirements for Zimbabweans seeking asylum in South Africa.

The experience of women who fled has been like jumping out of the frying pan into the fire. In 2008 xenophobic riots broke out in South Africa against Zimbabwean refugees. This resulted in over 50 deaths among them Zimbabweans, and women were also targeted for rape and other forms of abuse (Romey, 2008).

Tapiwa worked at the Johannesburg Mayor's Migrant Desk and the South African Red Cross Society to coordinate humanitarian aid to migrants, and provide shelter and food to the victims of such attacks. She established the Tapiwa Institute of Leadership, specifically aiming at women; She motivated this:

I want to encourage women to have confidence in themselves and believe they are no different from their male counterparts. Women, as mothers, are more passionate in making peace. They can keep nations together, the way they keep their families together. (Javed, undated)

Tapiwa received the Award of Woman PeaceMaker in 2010. Sadly, she passed away on 18 March 2014.

## **Conclusion**

In Zimbabwe, women at all levels have given leadership to, and played an important role in, transformational politics. With President Mugabe in power for nearly 35 years, the country badly needs a more inclusive form of leadership. However, the patriarchal power structure, inherited from the colonial domination, has not been deconstructed, despite the efforts of women and social movements to establish alternatives. The cyclical violence associated with political elections has specifically targeted women. Women in politics are routinely suffering from violence and abuse and removal from positions if they fail to please the party leadership. The patronage system has silenced women politically, despite the new law promoting women's political leadership and guaranteeing women parliamentary seats, in conformity with the SADC protocol.

The 2 million women living in the diaspora face many challenges. Adapting to new circumstances, they find work (often in the care industry)

below their training or capacities. Having work, while their husbands have difficulty in finding jobs, creates tensions within the home and the changing gender roles lead to domestic violence. The insecurity of many migrants, especially those who don't have documents, compounds the intra-household tension. While the Zimbabwe government recognises the contribution of the diaspora in monetary terms, it has failed to recognise the diaspora in terms of its political participation. Generally there is a sense that Zimbabweans in the diaspora are marginalised. A new generation of young adults has grown up in the diaspora. These young adults are Zimbabweans, but the question is, will they call Zimbabwe home?

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# CHAPTER 21. “GIRLS MAKE MUSIC, WOMEN CREATE CHANGE”: ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO FIGHTING FOR A LIVING WAGE IN LONDON



Robyn Stocker

## **The Scene**

“What do we want? A Living Wage! When do we want it? NOW!” These familiar words echo across Brixton town as strikers make their voices heard, loud and clear. Most of these voices are female who believe they deserve respect and value in the workplace. I wish I could say they believe this without a shadow of a doubt, but the reality is that women have been conditioned to feel more uncertain about their decisions and to question themselves. Of course men do also, but it seems to be a more common theme for their female counterparts. A woman’s value and position in society has been underrated for far too long.

The fact that these bold female campaigners have chosen to participate in such a movement demonstrates the underlying spirit of strength and determination. And one of the things that fortify this willingness to stand up is the support offered through the collective voice.

I am one of these women. We work in the service industry for a successful branch of a company with 21 branches across the UK. In 2013, the company was taken over by a larger national company. To protect the identity and reputation of these organisations, I will refer to the branch I

work for as the Branch, the company as the Company and the current parent company (with interest in different countries) as the Parent.

The strikers add up to 69 members of the recognised trade union, of which a good majority is female. On the union's current six-person committee, there are an equal number of male and female representatives.

For the strikers, the last five months has been an intense emotional rollercoaster experience encompassing feelings of passion, unity, solidarity, progression, disappointment, frustration, breakthrough, tension, renewal and victory. But the fight is far from over.

## **The Cause and the Community**

In 2007, staff balloted for industrial action and won a staggered agreement that took them above the poverty line. But this wage has since proven to be inadequate as a living rate and in early April this year, the Branch union members balloted to go on strike following negotiations that started in October 2013. The Greater London Authority recommends a London Living Wage, as it is the minimum prescribed amount necessary for living a sustainable life in London. The same applies to the Living Wage, which is the rate set to apply for the rest of the UK. Several organisations are already proud Living Wage employers: Lush Hand Made Cosmetics, Transport For London, The National Portrait Gallery, ABTA Travel Association and KPMG, to name a few.

A unit with a strong female presence, the strikers currently challenge the system, demanding the Living Wage as a basic human right.

Brixton is fast becoming a haven for wealthier residents, yet the community bonds remain strong and there is a reluctance to let go of the original grit and integrity of the old community. Some of the longstanding local residents know the story all too well. The Branch is a well-known landmark in the heart of a vibrant community. People either use the space to meet, work or unwind. Or people gather outside on the renowned Windrush Square, named after the Empire Windrush. This was a ship that hailed from Jamaica in 1948, carrying 492 immigrants many of whom then settled in Brixton where the nearest Labour Exchange was situated at the time. This historical setting is a poignant reminder of the spirit of strength of the working classes. The Brixton riots, sparked in the 1980's also offer a rich tale of historic significance to this local community, based on rebellion against institutional racism and oppression against minorities. Despite widespread regeneration, in places you can still feel a sense of struggle, riot and revolution that linger in the air. So it's not surprising that alongside the steady rise in power for the underdog, women are joining the uprising. And constituting at least half (if not more) of the world's population, they form a major cog in the overall works.

Women are key to the process of peace building within communities.

Because of their nature and alternative perspective, they provide the balance in the human equation. Throughout history, women have been at the centre point of the home, family and as such, the community. By nature, women also bring a range of approaches to the table; non-violent methods of protest, creative approaches and nurture over aggressive resistance. These characteristics complement women's ability to also stand strong, be assertive, use logic and strategize. These traits are typically associated with masculinity but strong female leaders express both aspects, just as well-rounded male leaders express a good balance of masculine and feminine traits also. The bottom line is that a balance of energy is needed and this can only happen where all aspects of healthy human traits are present.

## **The Challenge and the Secret**

During the original negotiations prior to strike at the Advisory, Conciliation, and Arbitration Service (ACAS) in December 2013, the Company made an offer that would provide an increase in wages and work towards reaching the current living wage within approximately two years (£8.80 per hour). However, with no seeming further opportunity to negotiate, staff would always be lagging behind by two years with no commitment to ever reaching a rate that would match a current Living Wage.

Over the last four months, we have taken to the streets of Brixton and London to promote our message. During this period, we have been on strike thirteen times, protesting loudly outside our workplace and at strategically selected locations to raise our profile across local, national, and interest specific media. We were so passionate and inspired by the cause that we created our own brand "Living Staff, Living Wage", to represent our message: "All living staff deserve a Living Wage." We also enlisted the support of a number of celebrities who have been willing to endorse our campaign.

With our range of creative abilities, we pooled together and came up with engaging and entertaining ideas of how we could build a marketable brand to front our campaign and we have used everyone's strengths and the rich range of skills to create dynamism and liveliness to drive the movement forwards. Using music, art, drama, design, film and photography, amongst other talents, combined with productivity, efficiency and smart management and marketing skills, we recognise that by creating engaging processes, morale stays high and in turn fuels members and the community to keep going without which we would sure as hell crash and burn.

More recently (this July), following the three-month strike period, we returned to the negotiating table. The Company made an improved offer. The premise of which, £9.10 per hour would be reached by September 2016 and that we would have the opportunity to renegotiate in June 2016. A rough calculation suggests that by this time, the Living Wage will be estimated to

have risen to about £9.70 per hour. Although the gap is much smaller, we still feel reluctant to accept an offer which means we are still lagging behind by a fair amount and there were also additional terms in the offer that did not sit well (for the purpose of this piece, I won't go into the details). Ultimately, we recognise the need to be practical in the application of the requested increase yet we are reluctant to settle for a situation whereby we still feel regarded as exploitable. The Company's overall stance, and certainly the Parent's attitude towards us still do not provide us with the reassurance that we are valued. At the time of writing, the results of the vote are yet to be released.

Through this work, we drew a lot of attention from the community and the media. The BBC, Channel 4, ITV, Evening Standard and The Guardian to name a few, covered our story. Our Facebook "likes" and Twitter followers rose into the thousands. We have repeatedly been approached to speak at conferences, rallies, marches and events to share hints and tips for other groups and to inspire people to stand up for what they believe in. We are regularly approached by people who ask us if we have achieved what we want. When we respond "no", the general response is one of disgust at the company and praise to us for our tenacity. People admire our spirit and want to learn our secret. The Branch is the only recognised Union of all of the Company's branches. Yet staff from four other branches have now been in touch and have told us that our campaign has encouraged them to unionise. How did we draw such attention and what sets us apart from other campaigns?

I believe the key element to our success is the innovative and youthful spirit of our campaigners. Not only do we have a large presence of women, but we also draw people who tune into their brilliant and creative minds. A huge proportion of the workers at the Branch are freelancers, others are students and a small minority work full time. It is a truly special place, and many of the staff choose to stay for a number of years owing to the sense of mutual respect, support, openness and community created by the type of employee that the Branch attracts. Through my own observations, I have found that the above-mentioned traits are often present in environments where there is a strong presence of women and "creative" workers.

As expressed by the branch secretary of the union and also one of the other female representatives, "I think there's so much loyalty at the Branch that you will find really difficult to find at other places and I think it's a fair thing for us to have, a Living Wage. I don't think it's asking the world."

## **They Exploit, We Create**

One of the approaches we have been keen to employ as part of our campaign is to ensure that we take every given opportunity to keep lines of communication open with the Company. With so many different

perspectives and skillsets, communication and maturity of approach has meant that there is something very real and genuine about the strikers. This in part is owing to the fact that there is a healthy blend of female and male leaders driving the campaign. And when I refer to leaders, I consider every single person actively involved in driving our campaign a leader. I believe that the hierarchical perspective of a leader can no longer apply. To me, a leader is any person who is respected by others, who inspires others and encourages positive growth.

As mentioned previously, another reason why the campaign is so successful is the high proportion of strikers developing careers in the creative industry. These are the people who bring life to the workplace and a main reason why the Branch is so popular within the community.

Ironically, the casual nature of the employment also seems to justify the lack of real value offered to employees. And the industry is filled with these. It has been proven that providing better conditions for staff and valuing their contribution encourages productivity and as such should be given priority. But the reality is that employers offer this flexibility of work under the false guise that they are “understanding” and “accommodating”. In fact it suits them and allows them to manipulate staff to meet their own corporate agendas. Employees lose negotiating power and legal rights in the workplace owing to the lack of formal security and become objects for value extraction. What does that say about corporate perspective on the creative industry? And since the creative industry values the expression of qualities associated with femininity and not just masculinity, what does this say about corporate perspective on the feminine?

Outside of my job at the Branch, I work as a DJ, trainee music producer and manage a project called “Girls Make Music”. The aim is to promote access for women to forge careers as music producers and sound engineers. I also teach young girls how to be a DJ and music production skills, encouraging more women to be an integral part of the music creation process and become leaders in this field.

The nature of my work and my situation requires a flexible working structure and this organisation is one of the rare companies that offers flexibility alongside some form of security. I truly appreciate this but it doesn't give the Company license to profit by paying an unfair wage. In contrast, the management style used by the strikers seeks to promote growth and inclusivity of members, giving them a voice and platform to develop as people, allowing them to own their experiences and take leadership in areas where they feel confident, willing and able.

## **To be continued...**

The Company's response to our industrial action is to continually shut down the Branch on the days when we strike. As a paradox, the make-up of the

Company's management is also a marginal majority female. I must clarify that not all managers are effective leaders. As I stipulated earlier on in the chapter, my definition of a leader is not so much a person's position of authority but a person's ability to manage, inspire and lead others effectively to grow and develop. The traditional patriarchal style of leadership is still very much present in the actions of the Company's approach to management and no doubt within most corporate companies. And so I think a large part of moving forwards will be to encourage both women and men to use a supportive stance to women taking leadership. Sheryl Sandburg, the COO of Facebook, writes:

Since there are so many more men at the top of every industry, the proverbial old-boy network continues to flourish. And since there are already a reduced number of women in leadership roles, it's not possible for the junior women to get enough support unless senior men jump in too. We need to make male leaders aware of this shortage and encourage them to widen their circle. (Sandburg, 2013, pp.71)

Good leaders are honest with themselves about who they are and what they want. One female striker who has worked at the Branch for several years, at the prospect of settling for a below par offer for which she would be entitled to backdated lump sum pay, proclaimed: "I may be broke but I'm not cheap".

Good women leaders are not trying to fit masculine stereotypes. It is very common for women who have taken on leadership roles to be shunned by both men and women for acting like men. But if both women and men were to embrace their feminine and masculine qualities and genuinely apply a balance of these traits to any given situation, the product would be organic. The male strikers are remarkable; they seem adept at also embracing their feminine qualities and are able to reach a real balance. This balance in society has been tipped way too far one way and it needs to swing back to settle at a happy medium. More women's leadership in decision-making is therefore necessary according to Sheryl Sandburg:

Real change will come when powerful women are less of an exception. It is easy to dislike senior women because there are so few. If women held 50 percent of the top jobs, it would just not be possible to dislike that many people. (Sandburg, 2013, pp.50)

I realised very recently how touched I feel by the campaign. My participation has taken a lot out of me physically, mentally and especially emotionally. Many times, I have been on the verge of throwing in the towel. Leadership is a challenge and I have learnt day-by-day better ways of managing this role. I saw a glimmer of hope though, a sign that my work as a leader and our work as a team of representatives does pay off. Not necessarily in monetary terms or in terms of physical reward, but in terms of

witnessing evidence of the rise in women's leadership.

One of the young female strikers spoke up at a recent meeting:

All of those things [challenges with continued industrial action] I think can be tackled pragmatically, we need to do more fundraising, more of us need to step up and take responsibility... if we let [the Company] with everything they've been doing, grind us down, we'd be submitting to them and we'll have to go back to say oh you know, did we get the Living Wage? Well, almost. And that's what our campaign is, it's Living Staff, Living Wage. (Anonymous, 2014)

Picture a group of beautiful and inspiring women, sat conferring at a table in a bright and airy café. Some young, some older, but all with the type of determination and passion that cannot be stood in the way of. These female strikers took it upon themselves to gather together and draw up a detailed plan that would assist us all in the decision-making process of managing the ballot over current negotiations. This was the type of scene that I longed to see—a demonstration that women's work can be as much appreciated as a wonderful part of life as is the contribution of men.

I have repeatedly been told by male colleagues in my work as DJ and teacher that my presence is welcome. It “takes the edge off” and “brings a different energy to the group, we feel more settled”. It is clear that developing a strong vision of women's leadership, representation and participation in peace building in communities is imperative.

Every single person living and breathing should by birthright be afforded a Living Wage. Women by birthright should be afforded respect. Recognition and value equates to fully functioning people and flourishing employees. Feminine traits such as compassion, sensitivity and tolerance add power to the human mix and effective female leaders are invaluable to progression in society. I believe that men and women alike would benefit greatly from supporting women to become positive leaders and promoting a more comprehensive leadership style in the workplace. Women should not and no longer need to comply with damaging standards from times past.

Laurel Thatcher Ulrich (2007), a famous historian and former professor at Harvard University, sums this up in one beautiful statement: “Well behaved women seldom make history.”

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# **CHAPTER 22. HOME-BASED CARE: THE POWER OF WOMEN TO CONNECT VULNERABLE MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY**



**Catherine Schook**

For one person, it might be chicken noodle soup. For another, peeled grapes with missing pits. Whatever the comfort food craving or reassurance from a caring hand, our memories of sick days often have a glimmer of a woman’s smiling touch. It seems no coincidence that in many countries women dominate the health workforce in over 75% of paid positions according to the World Health Organization (WHO) (2008). These care providers frequent our homes as well as our communities no matter their age, ethnicity, or availability.

As women have the ability to increase population growth courtesy of their reproductive organs, child bearing and rearing seems only the beginning. Bestowed upon her XX chromosomes comes a lifelong evolutionary characteristic of protection and nurturing. Our lineage has created an expanding chain throughout time, links labelled as “child” and one day perhaps as “parent”. The roles within these links can interchange where a parent cares for a child and one day, a child for a parent. At the rate of population growth and differing age groups however, we’ll have more “parent” links than ever before. In 2011, one in six European Union adults were over the age of 65. One in twenty were over 80 according to Eurostat (2013). The “child” links are looking a bit stressed.

An unbalanced chain is forming, especially for those that do not have a

“child” link below them. For those families living in a rural setting with children nearby, as informal carers they are aware of the aging process and newly acquired responsibilities. Thanks to non-age specific technology, communication and nonphysical caring with a faraway aging family is common and scheduled weekly. Yet if none of the children are 50 steps away from their childhood front door at all times, responsibility can often fall to others, the non-familial others. Here enters the 75% female dominated health workforce in a variety of colourful positions.

One common example is of mom and dad growing old on the front porch in their rocking chairs with iPads and it will be the home care assistants, the health aides, “the help” that will come to their rescue when daughters and sons cannot. According to the WHO, home-care is roughly defined as satisfying people’s health and social needs while residing in their home by providing appropriate and high quality home-based health care and services, by formal or informal caregivers, within a balanced and affordable continuum of care (WHO, 1999; WHO, 2002). An informal care giver, another keyword in this discussion about women’s access to elderly care, is remarked as a carer that looks after family, partners, friends or neighbours in need because they are ill, frail or have a disability and the care they provide is unpaid (Eurocarers, 2007). Children fall into this category, along with aging spouses.

To place this topic in its historical context, let it be known that in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, large-scale hospitals and medical institutions were built to care for the sick, the wounded and disabled, and the frail (Risse, 1999). Children’s hospitals and mental institutions were also constructed during this time yet in the 1960s, a beginning replacement model started to take shape. So as to avoid long stays in medical institutions for both children and older people, new polices focused on improving nursing homes and elderly residential homes with such labels as integrated care, continuous care, deinstitutionalization, community care organizations and home-based care (WHO, 2008). Now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is preferable to stay within one’s home and maintain a routine with controlled customized care (Economic Policy Committee and the European Commission 2006). As alternatives become available to those favouring to age at home versus an institution, a selection process is now available for who will care for them, in what way and how often. Older children sometimes are not even a part of this equation.

The aim of this chapter is not only to discuss aging and its complexity in quality and care, but also to highlight unseen female informal care providers, a working force that has thinned out since urban sprawl and smaller family sizes became normalized. These women do not receive compensation in monetary form and their efforts are often coupled with paid care, which is highly demanded and globally short in supply. Several questionnaires and

interviews were prepared for this chapter heading and the results are presented in a narrative format. The roles of the participating female caregivers range from daughter-in-law to granddaughter, from living 50 steps away, to living in another country. Within these stories, the interchangeability of the “child” to a “parent” link in the familial chain and the inheritance of caring can further be understood.

## **Tiny’s granddaughter**

Tiny is currently 93 years old. She is living at home in a small village in North Holland and she enjoys the comforts of egg salad on toast and has a history of spoiling her grandchildren with peeled pit-less grapes (“A few grapes were a luxury back then she says, now this is very common food”). She is nearly blind and she has four daily visits from home-care aids as organized by a home-based care organization. Thursday night is her scheduled shopping night and that is with one of her granddaughters. Tuesday is with the other granddaughter (“My sister also comes by once a week and does the same that I do”).

This granddaughter, a questionnaire respondent, knew she wanted to work with people at a young age, especially when deciding her educational path: “I did always want to do something concerning people. That’s what I like, having contact with the people around you that you work with and for.” It was a trip to the dentist that sealed her fate: “I asked my own dentist if I could join him an afternoon in the office to see how everything works in a dental practice. I liked it so much and found it that interesting that I eventually made my career choice.” Perhaps it came naturally to her, choosing a helping profession: “The care for your teeth and socializing with people were the two key features that interested me about my job.”

This granddaughter joined the informal caregiving workforce in 2013 when her grandmother got sick and moved to be closer to her immediate family: “I would always visit her every other week, but now it’s standard I visit her every Thursday night to help her and keep her company.” When questioned about priorities and how this granddaughter decides what to do during these nightly visits, she answers: “Her priority is my priority then. She’s cared for four times a day. My parents help out a lot too. So when it comes to getting her medication and meals ready, that is taken care of by the care people. I keep her company.”

What this granddaughter does though is something more than just keeping Tiny company: “Whenever it’s necessary I’ll water the plants, clean the toilet, do the dishes and we visit the mall around the corner together. A real ‘outing’ for her.” She even receives secret grandma compensation: “My grandma sometimes sneakily gives me 10 euro, because she thinks we deserve it. She’s very happy when we visit and likes giving us a little something.”

As someone that dedicates one evening a week to the needs of someone else, the question of why a young, career-oriented woman would give her time is asked. Her cool response: "She always took such good care of us and now she needs that care. I love doing it for her because I see her spirit is lifted. I'm a caring person at heart anyway. I think the people that need it most deserve it and I like doing it then." This granddaughter has a brother and a father, (Tiny is her father's mother) so when questioned about the qualities she brings to caring that her male counterparts don't, she replies: "It is because they are not as involved with my grandma as we are. The people that are there most for her are me, my sister, my parents and my aunt. Women cope with it differently than men do I think. Less patience and not such a strong bond I think. Women tend to care more than men do." Interesting that the list of individuals that are on the caring schedule (not including the paid help aides) are 80% female. Perhaps this "caring gene" has been hereditarily passed down to this granddaughter through her mother and the good care of her paternal grandmother. The combined family unit has reversed roles in providing care and is individually responding.

## **Karl and Irmgard's daughter**

Originally from Germany, with parents still nestled in German farmland, Karl and Irmgard's daughter left for the big city early on, leaving behind two siblings living closely to their parents. Once the mother, 83, was stricken with dementia and the father, 88, was too exhausted to care for his wife, the immediate family was called into action. She recalls: "The total body care has to happen by someone else. But first my father wouldn't let anyone in. [...] He takes her out walking and he can hardly walk and she is still very strong [...] And he said to the family, 'Please come and live with us because I can't do all of this.'" Luckily a few steps away lived the older brother and his "saint-like" wife and she started to care for the mother: "My sister-in-law is the fall back scenario. I mean she has to do it everyday."

After two years of the sister-in-law caring for the mother, Karl and Irmgard's daughter addressed the next phase with her father considering the growing burden on one family member: "And he says, 'No no, nothing will be changed. I will take care of your mother until she dies and I hope you will help. That's the situation. And she's done everything for us and now we do everything for her.'" With baby steps, the daughter residing in the Netherlands hired a weekly cleaning lady. Soon a weekly aide was hired to help with bathing and cooking.

However while recently on holiday, a dreaded phone call came from her younger sister saying their father needed to go to the hospital considering complaints of exhaustion and heart problems. After his release with recommendations of rest, the father asked again for the daughter to stay. Her reply: "You have to be dying before I come more frequently. And then he

says, ‘Ah, [cough cough] I think I am going to die.’” In order to leave him and her mother in better hands, without placing more responsibility on the sister-in-law (who at the time had the mother living at her house from bedtime to 15.00 the next day), 24-hour care entered the conversation.

“You have that very often in Germany with farmers. If you bring a farmer to an elderly home, he’ll just leave. So we have a lot of women from Poland and Slovakia, they come in and they live with the elderly people for a month, sometimes two months. And then they go back and someone else comes for a month.” It took some getting used to, with a decrease in staff down to one person, and some behavior and control change with Papa, however Maria is currently living with Karl and Irmgard. She is an older Slovakian woman, as selected by the daughter from a home-based care organization, that will return home in a month and another will take her place. Already, the parents are taking to her and the sister-in-law only houses Maria. However the sister-in-law’s perspective, as a care provider not even related by blood, stated eloquently why she gives her time: “It’s part of life. You raise your children, your parents die, children don’t need that much care anymore and then you start all over again. What more can you do?”

Eventually, nonphysical informal care can be achieved across national borders if there is a telephone and a home-care organization to call. With a family unit of three children however, two of which living nearby, the saving grace was the daughter-in-law. Not an instance of genetics but an example of a woman individually responding.

## **Mrs. VHVW’s daughter-in-law**

While the granddaughter gives her time every Thursday evening to Tiny, the daughter-in-law, her husband’s mother, knows her as Mrs. VHVM. With a shift in perspective from one caregiver to another with the same elderly woman, including alternative roles and responsibilities, perhaps the richness of the informal caregiving in a family unit can be witnessed in this participant’s responses.

From an early age, the daughter-in-law was raised in a close family: “Family life was important, communal meals, coffee in the evening and on weekends.” Like her daughter, this daughter-in-law also found the helping professions and its education enticing: “I decided to go to nursing school, to have something to fall back on.” With a nursing education, she now works as a healthcare assessor: “As a community care giver, I’m caring for physical tasks, coordinating the tasks and I support the client in their home situation.”

Her caregiving roles are a bit more in-depth than her daughter’s: “We do groceries, read her mail because she’s almost blind, assist her going outside. We check the safety of her food, clean up her ‘accidents’, change medication, and check her clothing. Sometimes we help her get showered.” When it

comes to planning priorities, one is strikingly clear: “Our first priority is taking her outside. She thoroughly enjoys this but can’t do it by herself any more. We shop together as much as possible at the local mall.” As tradition repeats itself with the daughter-in-law, family meals are also occasionally organized: “Every so often I take her to our home on Wednesday to have a meal with us. However, because she has a strict diet, eats slowly and not in the tastiest way, I don’t do this too often.”

Lucky for Mrs. VHVM, she raised a son with connections: “Her son works at a organic grocery store, so he takes care of the groceries.” However balancing of the care priorities has been difficult recently considering a decline in health: “We have spent the night with her over a period of time, because she couldn’t get in or out of bed by herself. It’s getting better now, but cognitively speaking she’s gotten worse, which increased her dependence on care.”

The daughter-in-law describes her role as a caregiver by saying: “I’m caring and love to make someone else happy. Actually it makes myself feel good if people appreciate what I do.” When the conversation turns to the man’s role in caregiving, her response mentions Mrs. VHVM’s son: “My husband struggles with ‘defecating accidents’. Helping with the physical needs, especially personal hygiene is hard for him. I myself don’t really mind with this aspect of caring, probably because of my nursing background.” When questioned why she believes it is women who provide care for others, she responds: “The wife was at home caring for the children, the man provided income. You still see this with the elderly. I myself think that care giving is closer to women than men, if this is genetic I don’t know.” Lastly, it was asked if she had any ideas how to make a community more elderly-focused. Her response: “An afternoon program, with a possible communal meal or coffee, could decrease social isolation. A long afternoon/evening with a program would be a welcome break.”

## **The Golden Age**

In these stories of women providing care for a blood relative or a family member related by marriage, no matter the relation, they give their time and physical and mental energy for years. As these narratives pinpoint, a person’s specific caring role for an elderly family member differentiates and certain skill sets or “perks” are put to use. A granddaughter’s Thursday evening is free, the son works for a grocery store, the daughter-in-law has a background in nursing to help with medications, a daughter finds and contacts the best services. If the family unit works together in utilizing their strengths and schedules, the balance is more equal. If it falls to one person, as the example in Germany, the quality of care decreases in not just the recipients but also in the givers.

Another similarity between these narratives is the elderly person’s desire

to be outdoors. Being outdoors and socialization is a part of human behavior, no matter what age, so a trip to the mall or a walk with a balancing arm could make the difference. Even the daughter-in-law made the recommendation to include an afternoon elderly programme to decrease social isolation. Perhaps this topic is being examined too closely and the desired end result to achieve healthy aging is simply human interaction, preferably from informal family caregivers.

Women have an inherited attribute of nurturing as passed down the familial chain. The participants mentioned within this discussion strengthen that statement as witnessed in their monthly, weekly, if not daily commitment to caring for an older individual, whether blood related or not. The informal caregivers role has been decreasing with the growing presence and demand of non-familial care considering the family's move in being farther away. Globalization has allowed the spread of populations, however when someone turns that golden age, the vast spread and absence of people, especially family, is no longer desired. It's the comfort, the family connection, the trips outdoors, those interactions are the ones women can not only provide but also cherish. The woman's role in connecting the elderly population is of significant importance and without it the family unit is not complete. In order to face global aging, family responsibility needs to be re-prioritized where individual roles are formed to fill certain gaps for the benefit of the aging family member. The leaders of this change will lie within women, as it is their role within the family and the community to nurture, solve problems and provide comfort, even in the form of peeled grapes.

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**PART-VI A REFLECTION  
ON THE CHALLENGES OF  
REBUILDING POST-  
CONFLICT LIBERIA**



# **CHAPTER 23. INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**Lecture on the occasion of the celebration of  
the 85th Dies at Tilburg University, Tilburg,  
Netherlands on Friday, 9 November 2012**



**By H.E. Mrs. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of  
Liberia**

Rector Magnificus, Professor Philip Eijlander;  
The Executive Board of Tilburg University;  
Faculty, Students;  
Members of Parliament and Officials of Government;  
Corporate Leaders and Leaders in Social Responsibility;  
Former Prime Minister Lubbers;  
My Fellow Liberians; Ladies and Gentlemen:

Let me say how delighted I am to be in the Netherlands once again, and to be here in Tilburg, a city that is growing in prominence economically, culturally and particularly in the field of education.

Thank you, Tilburg University, for the kind invitation to be your guest of honour and to address this esteemed Tilburg family as you celebrate the 85<sup>th</sup> Dies. It is an honour to be associated with an institution recognized for its research and as the best-specialized University in the Netherlands every year for the past five years.

I am especially honoured to have been selected this particular year, 2012, as you mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of an extraordinary woman,

Marga Klompé, the first female Minister of the Netherlands, whose life bore striking similarities to my own – an activist and an advocate for equal rights – and it is a pleasure to be able to speak on a topic that is her legacy and this year's special theme, "International Social Responsibility."

Marga Klompé's work in negotiating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was inspired by the need to provide a life of dignity for everyone, irrespective of their culture, religion or ethnicity. She argued that societies were becoming more complex, and therefore society had a responsibility to care, so as to protect the dignity of every person. Her message was as relevant then, over sixty years ago, and it resonates even today.

I join in celebrating the life of this courageous woman, who went on to negotiate the Universal Social Security Bill, from which Dutch Society continues to benefit. Marga Klompé had a vision of a society based on institutional structures that promoted the protection and preservation of values, which in turn, created a healthy and tolerant society with a focus on assisting the unprivileged as an entitlement and not charity.

## **International Social Responsibility**

On the topic of international social responsibility, we would need to speak of the inequities of our world, and what has to be done to mitigate or eliminate them. Inequities and variation in natural endowment are inherent constants in the human condition. Some of us are taller, stronger or smarter than the average person. Some regions encourage agriculture, horticulture and aquaculture much more than others. These differences occur naturally, and it would be unfair to begrudge any person or region for their naturally occurring advantages.

We know, however, that the moral strength of any society can be gauged on how it treats the most vulnerable – the children, the elderly, the disabled and the poor. On this scale, our global society has made strides, but is still wanting. There is so much more to do, and it is in this context that international social responsibility takes shape.

Over time, some of us are able to build on our advantage and become even stronger. Hard work, persistent effort, effective planning are all qualities that some possess much more than others. In societies where the individual's rights are protected, and stability and security maintained, people thrive. We must always respect and applaud such success.

We must also note that power seeks power, and history is replete with instances where advantages, whether naturally endowed, legally or illegally acquired, are wielded against the public interest, and short-term benefits accrue to but a few. Ultimately, however, this happens to the long-term detriment of the collective good.

The 2008 financial crisis is one example. The disproportionate influence

and advantage of a small group of people threatened the entire global economy. Even in a country like Liberia, which is not directly connected to international finance, we felt the resulting credit crunch when investment and remittances declined. Another instance of the institutionalization of an advantage that works against the greater good is the role of women in society. One example that comes to mind is the stubborn discrimination against women across all societies: the obvious wage gap between men and women for performing the same job; the smaller number of women in positions of public trust; the absence of a choice of a career; and the wholesale obstruction of 50% of the world's population from equal participation in political, economic and social life.

With time these inequities become institutionalized to such an extent that its beneficiaries no longer even notice them. Only its victims see them and care, since they must live with the consequences daily. Your role – my role – is to work to end these disparities. Our responsibility is to reform our institutions, organizations and entities – local, regional, national and international – so they reflect the equality of persons for which we all strive.

At its most basic, international social responsibility is concerned with the development of the human person. A major thrust is to ensure human development and security through empowerment and sustainability, along with greater equity and productivity. The end result of international social responsibility must be to promote and preserve a peaceful world order, protect the environment, and bequeath to succeeding generations a more stable and a more humane international system.

International social responsibility is made necessary by multiple issues, the most important of which is the vast gap that exists between the rich and the poor within countries and We live in an unequal world that is increasingly becoming even more unequal. We live in a world where it is now possible for individuals to pay tens of millions of dollars for recreational trips to space when millions of school children still walk miles to unlit classrooms that do not even have enough chairs and desks, and some are forced to sit on the floor. That we are comfortable with such a world, that we will sit on the side-lines and let this continue, is blight on our collective conscience. Through international social responsibility, we move outside the margins of society to include those who have been excluded.

Let me highlight, though, some of the good news: between countries. Between 1990 and today, we have made tremendous progress in reducing some of the inequities within and between our societies. I can provide anecdotal evidence of how empowered women have become in my country.

When I travel in the countryside, and I see how women are far more assertive in taking part in discussions in their communities. They tell me that they no longer sit down and let the men decide. As I travel across Liberia and Africa, I am both amazed and humbled by the number of young women

whose options for future aspirations have expanded. Today, they say boldly, we want to become President; we want to be a Prime Minister. To those young people we say, indeed, international social responsibility is beginning to take root.

The 2012 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report also gives cause for hope. It notes that three important targets will be met well ahead of the 2015 end-date. Even more heartening is the observation that “while challenging,” meeting the remaining targets is well within our reach, if governments do not waver from their commitments.

The Report notes that, for the first time since records on poverty began, the number of people living in extreme poverty has fallen in every developing region, including our own sub-Saharan Africa. Preliminary estimates indicate that the proportion of people living on less than US\$1.25 a day fell in 2010 to less than half of the 1990 rate, and during the same period over two billion people gained access to improved drinking water sources; the share of slum dwellers in urban areas declined; and improving the lives of at least 100 million people.

In revising its poverty statistics, the World Bank observed that, when one takes into account increased population between 1981 and 2005, global poverty rates have fallen by about 25 percent. Unfortunately, this is not as encouraging as it sounds since these aggregate numbers do not account for differences between regions. China's large population and impressive progress over the period skews the aggregate number. During that period, China's poverty rate fell from 85% to 15.9%, or by over 600 million people, accounting for about 50% of the decrease in global poverty. We applaud this reduction, the lives of at least 100 million people having been improved, and those improvements keep mounting. Yet, I say, the numbers are disappointing, and the pace of improvement is still unacceptable.

Over 3 billion of our fellow human beings still subsist on less than US\$2.50 daily. More than a billion children live in poverty, and tens of millions lack access to adequate shelter or safe drinking water. At this pace, it will be difficult to halve extreme poverty in some of our lifetimes.

Allow me to use my own country as an example of why and how such a pace is frustratingly slow. Liberia's current population is about 4 million. Our vulnerable employment rate exceeds 60%, as most of our labor force lacks the kinds of skills that would make them marketable. Our infrastructure is weak, making transactional cost prohibitively high for small businesses. The price of capital remains high, resulting in high interest rates, short lending periods and, consequently, high default rates, which in turn, further increase lending and transactional costs.

Most of the world's poor live in countries like Liberia. If we are to reduce poverty, then aid is not enough. It has never been enough.

When I came into office in 2006, the National Budget of our entire

country was US\$80 million – perhaps something equivalent to some of the budgets of your universities. Our Central Bank reserves were a mere US\$5 million. It didn't take a rocket scientist to tell us that US\$80 million would not meet all of the vast the needs of a collapsed economy and destroyed country.

We have made great progress, but even that must be seen in context. Our National Budget today has climbed to \$687 million, a great leap from the 2006 figure. However, the cost of paving the road that links the center of our country to its southeast will cost US\$405 million; and restoring our large hydro-electric generator will exceed US\$250 million. Countries like ours – with high unemployment, little or no infrastructure and small resource envelopes – are host to the world's poor, and if we are to reduce the inequities that exist in our world, how we see these countries, and how we engage them, will have to change.

Please note that it is not for the lack of resources that these disparities exist. The aggregate unreported wealth of individuals in tax havens is equal to the combined size of the United States and Japanese economies. This is about US\$21 trillion, all of which, according to the Tax Justice Network, is held by 100 million people. But just listen, of this \$9.8 trillion is held by just 100,000 people.

This is not an attempt to criticize the success of those who have piled up the billions, but an opportunity to show the stark inequalities that still persist in our world – where a country with under 4 million people cannot afford paved roads and entire populations are cut off from the rains during six months, and 100,000 people are able to hold about \$9.8 trillion dollars in unreported earnings. We have all heard the statistics, but they warrant repetition. It is important to keep in mind that every statistic represents a life – a child, a mother, a daughter, a father.

International social development must address human development. I believe that the UN System is correct when it observes that human development encompasses more than the rise and fall of incomes. We need to create a global environment that allows people not only to develop their potential but to also lead productive lives. I also believe that the UN membership is correct to move beyond the old policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign State, to intervention in the interest of a repressed people, under the policy of the Responsibility to Protect.

According to the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), poverty reduction will occur as a result of the rate of growth and change in income distribution. This is within countries and between countries. We must also note that reduction in inequality and income differences will help spur poverty reduction. If we want to end acute poverty, if we want to improve opportunities for all of the world's people, countries and regions, international social responsibility must address these inequalities.

## Conclusion

Let me close by saying the new dynamics of population growth, developed country stagflation and financial stress suggests that the world is at a crossroads. We must either adopt new policies and strategies to bring the world's poor nations into the competitive and contributive arenas of development through the exercise of international social responsibility, or we face the reversals of prosperity in the richer nations of the world.

The time to act is now.

The time to bring about women's equality is now.

The time to address poor education in children in poorer nations is now.

The time to bring international responsibility to all nations in an interdependent world, where everything you do, and say, also has ramifications for us, is now.

And every time we succeed or fail, you feel the consequences.

The new Global Development Agenda, now being formulated, the one in which I participate as co-Chair, in going beyond the Millennium Development Goals to formulate an agenda that, indeed, will be global, coming from rigorous global consultations, will reflect an agenda and an objective that says we cannot allow our people in the world to be poor.

Poverty must be eliminated. We must formulate this.

We must demand this.

We must insist on it.

And we must act on it. I thank you.

## CHAPTER 24. LAUDATIO

**On the occasion of awarding an Honorary  
Doctorate from the University of Tilburg at  
the 85<sup>th</sup> Dies to H.E. Mrs. Ellen Johnson  
Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia**



By Professor Dr. Mirjam van Reisen, Endowed Chair of  
Marga Klompé

Friday, 9 November 2012

Madam President,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,

"Our dream has the size of freedom" are the poetic lines with which you gave inspiration to the people of Liberia: Liberia, the country of freedom.

The country of hope, for so many who found refuge in it after the dark days of slavery. The connection of your country with the United States speaks for itself. But so does the connection with Europe. It was the Dutch East Indian company that was among those firms, trading slaves from West Africa to the Americas. It has deeply affected the realities in your country. You have described this in great detail in your book: "This Child Will Be Great."

Madam President, we warmly welcome you to European soil. This is your own continent in so many ways. I am reminded of your maternal grandfather, who was German, and who lived in Liberia where he met your

grandmother.

Madam, on Wednesday you received the highest distinction of France at the Elysée Palace from President Hollande: la Grande Croix de la Légion d'Honneur. This well deserved honour is surely a sign of changing times. The entry of a new era, away from the days that European countries competed over colonial control and rule in Africa, and over access to its abundant natural resources. Away from competition between Dutch, French, British and German territories. Today Africa and Europe are finding each other in very new ways.

Our images are painted by the past. The destruction of the civil war in Liberia and in Sierra Leone shocked the world. We all remember the pictures of adults and children that were maimed, the pandemonium frightened us all. You had the courage to go back to your country, assemble the women, organise their participation in a constructive force to stop the conflict. Your influential report "Women, War and Peace" published by the UN in 2002 has helped in understanding the role that women play in conflict, not just as victims, but as agents, who have a choice, to accept, to participate, to resist, to mediate, to call their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons to account. In conflict we all carry responsibility. Women can choose to help end conflict. This is what you have shown. It has inspired women all over the world, and led to the groundbreaking UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

You have shown the power of imagining the future with fresh eyes. As the Flemish painter Permeke put it: "I don't paint what I see, but I paint what I think I have seen." While we paint we create a reality, we create our future. Our imagination is what we become. Therefore how we imagine the future is how we shape reality. I was in Monrovia at the invitation of your government this summer. I walked into one of the townships and a young boy of some 18 years old approached me to guide me around and finally brought me to his mother's place. His family had been destroyed by the civil war, his father, a government official, killed in front of his eyes, his mother, uneducated, fled with her children and in all those years of growing up, this kid had not once gone to school. What did he want, I asked. To go to school. To find a job. And his mother, sitting in front of a shack, was just grateful. Grateful for peace. Grateful for a quiet night. Grateful for the little freedom offered by a country in peace.

Madam President, the expectations upon you are immense. It is not enough that you were bold in firmly denouncing corruption, when western countries supported the corrupt leaders of your country during the Cold War. It is not enough that you suffered the pain of prison when you demanded democracy loud and clear, and we in the west continued to support the dictatorial regime. It is not enough that you climbed the ladder of a professional, first as Minister of Finance, then as World Bank Advisor, next as Under Secretary General of the UN, and gave all of this up to serve

your country. It is not enough that you have heard the cries of your people and responded to it. We need you now to succeed to construct the future: to get the children to school, to create jobs, to build roads, to build homes, to bring democracy, to keep the peace. To realise the dreams created through the hope which you embody as President.

At this Dies we celebrate the 100th birthday of our first female Minister: Marga Klompé. She bears much resemblance with you. She also had German roots. She resisted Nazism and became a leader in the resistance. She served in the United Nations where she assisted in the negotiations of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She served in the European Assembly working for regional peace on this continent. She realised the first law on Universal Social Protection in the Netherlands.

As you have, Marga Klompé demanded respect for the human dignity of all, asked for all of us to carry responsibility for justice and peace, individuals, politicians, companies. We all have our role to play. As you are, she was a spiritual woman of faith. And like you, she was a pragmatic realist.

And as you, she was and is supported by a strong, supportive and loyal sister. Your achievements are no small feat. You have shown the world that women can lead. That African women can lead. That women can lead countries out of conflict. That women can play a pivotal role in bringing peace, in making peace, in keeping peace. That women are good economists, good financial analysts, good strategists. That women care, as daughters, mothers, wives, partners and as leaders.

In Europe we look at your achievements and wonder, is this the new Africa? The new Africa won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2011. Europe won the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2012. This surely provides a basis for a partnership for peace and prosperity between our continents.

Madam, I congratulate you on your bold and courageous steps, which will remain to inspire the people of our continents to believe that peace is possible. 'Our dream has the size of freedom' - indeed, but reality needs exceptional people with your courage and inspiration."



**PART VII – THE PRAXIS  
OF ENGAGING WITH  
WOMEN’S AGENCY IN  
PEACE BUILDING**



# **CHAPTER 25. “SHOW ME YOUR FRIENDS, AND I WILL TELL YOU WHO YOU ARE”: THE ROLE OF REHABILITATION PROGRAMMES IN REDUCING RECIDIVISM AMONG PRISON INMATES**



**Vickie Wambura**

Benjamin Baraka, a young 21-year-old lad, was arrested and sentenced to Nairobi West Prison in 2005 for fraud. He was sentenced to three years in prison. In April 2007, he joined the existing prison primary education programme. At first, Benjamin’s grades were very low but he was determined to turn that around. He worked hard, put in extra hours of learning and assignments, proving he was up to the task. At the end of that year, Benjamin was at the top of his class and his teacher and prison officials were proud of him. He had a bright future ahead of him and was full of so much potential. Prior to his release, Benjamin sat for the national exams and when asked his plans when released, he retorted that he would go back to his former ways of forging cheques. He went on to say that this is all he knew how to do and it put food on the table and a roof over his head.

This was almost seven years ago and this first hand encounter helped shape my thoughts about the challenges facing prison rehabilitation in the country. The presence of peace doesn’t mean the absence of crime. In fact, crime violates personal peace. It constitutes an invasion of personal space, and is an assault to the peaceful state on the victims. While the whole nation

may not be at war, the victims feel and live in a different reality irrespective of whether the crime caused them to suffer physical hurt and pain. When statistics and numbers are read out about declining or increasing crime rates it's important to take a step back amidst the applause or disapproval and visualize the actual human faces on both ends of this tragedy. Both the victims and perpetrators are our brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers and relatives. The reduction of crime and the active effort towards reducing repeat offence is central to peace building in our society. My personal thesis is that if we get rehabilitation right then we will have better and safer communities. That is why I established the organization Nafisika Trust.

## **From the Beginning**

It was just about Christmas in 2006 after spending my gap year in Belgium on a cultural exchange programme. I was back home in Nairobi and was in the process of applying for a student visa to return to Belgium. One evening I watched a TV news story that described the dilapidated state of prisons in Kenya. The first thought that crossed my mind was, "Who spends Christmas with prisoners?" I immediately got excited at the thought of doing something about the conditions during the Christmas season. However, it took me a while to gain access into prison as I didn't know how to go about it, but in January 2007, Pastor Simon Mbevi of Mavuno Church introduced me to Nairobi West Prison, a men's prison in the heart of the city.

Needless to say, I was excited to walk through the prison gates to offer my services. I had it all figured out, so I thought. I was going to paint the prison together with the inmates. This would enable us to bring a facelift to the prison as well as allow me to spend time with the inmates and to get to know them personally instead of as statistics. It seemed like a great plan until I met the officer in charge of the prison together with her staff officers. My brilliant idea was immediately turned down as they told me that they had just painted the prison and didn't need any more painting. My bubble burst. At 21 years old I was a little intimidated by all the officers in the room when I asked what else I could do. They looked at me blankly for what seemed like forever until one officer spoke out. She said that they had just started an education programme but lacked books and stationary. I jumped at it and offered to get the learning resources they needed.

So two weeks later, I returned with over 150 books and dozens of pens and pencils. I had managed to raise money, which was donated by my family who encouraged me to take on this crazy challenge. When dropping off the books, I requested to take a tour of the prison to see the conditions in which the inmates lived. I walked past their living quarters, rest area, common hall and kitchen when I saw a small dark room that acted like a classroom with eight students. One inmate acted as the teacher and they scribbled in their exercise books. This scenario moved me to look deeper at what they were

learning. So I glanced through their books and I was moved to inquire more. I began to learn that there weren't any trained teachers commissioned by the prison service to teach at the prison, despite them directed to have a school programme. At the time they only had one class that would sit for the national exams but they were barely prepared to do so. So I offered to teach and they agreed! On that day, I taught English and it was an amazing experience.

I continued to frequent the prison on a daily basis as I taught English and Mathematics. It was the most fulfilling experience in my life and after a few weeks I began to think that I could do this for life. So in an attempt to discover my purpose, I postponed my education in Belgium to the next semester and continued to teach in prison. After a couple of months I completely discarded the idea of studying abroad and decided to pursue a road less travelled. I decided to dance to the tune that resonated in my heart; I dedicated my entire time to teach in prison. I had no clue where this would lead to but I had found something greater for which to live. It was something beyond me, something worth living for.

My encounter with Benjamin reshaped my thinking of social change. I began to understand that I was dealing with a systemic challenge that needed a different approach. I needed to understand the roots of the problem and begin to address them from different angles. I studied about rehabilitation globally and the different approaches from the East and the West. I analyzed the situation in our prisons deeper and formulated approaches that would address the causes of re-offence in Kenya.

## **The state of the Kenyan prisons and partnership with Nafisika Trust**

The Kenya Prisons Service has its origins in the colonial era where its main role was to incarcerate and punish Africans as a means of pacifying them. Traditionally, the prisons service had been a department of the Ministry of Home Affairs under the Office of the Vice-President. Vice-Presidents were basically political appointees serving under the whims of the president and lacked the muscle to effect changes unless there was goodwill from the president. As a result the inherited legacy of the prison system was maintained. Largely ignored in the post-independence years by subsequent administrations, a radical shift was needed if we were to break away from having prisons as punishment centres towards becoming rehabilitation centres.

This journey began earnestly in 2001 when the then Vice-President and Minister of Home Affairs Moody Awori began to institute reforms to the service to address the years of rot and neglect. This shift meant that prisoner reformation would no longer be a by-product of imprisonment but rather a

deliberate action taken by prison personnel. This was the birth of rehabilitation as a priority of the Kenya Prison Service. Over the years, the Kenya Prison Service has improved on its service delivery and approach in rehabilitation of prison inmates. It has been a herculean task to change the more than 40 years of neglect and change the established culture and attitude towards rehabilitation. Behind this reform has been the hard work and dedicated service of the prison service workers who have had support from the very top echelons of the service. Their dedication and determination to turn around prisons from centres of punishment to centres of reform deserves applause.

However given the demands of other sectors of the economy, substantial expenditure on prison programmes ranks low on the list of official priorities. It is because of this that the prison service created the Open Door Policy where they could partner with non-profits like Nafisika Trust to support their rehabilitation processes and programmes. This policy has enabled a flourishing partnership between Nafisika Trust and the Kenya Prison Service since 2007 when I first walked through the prison gates of Nairobi West Prison. Our work has not been without its set of challenges, such as fighting mind-sets, getting resources and establishing new cultures and norms, but it has been worthwhile. Today Nafisika Trust and the Prison Service can boast of our work and success stories from the hundreds of reformed inmates and a positive environment in prison. Through this work we have been able to fully understand our resource gaps that are needed to make our work more effective. Four key areas stand out for us in no particular order: finance, infrastructure, technical expertise and technology accelerators.

## **The vicious cycle of recidivism**

While there was a form of industry and training built into the system, it did not have rehabilitation at the centre. Inmates could learn some skills such as carpentry. However built within the criminal justice system were sentences that included “hard labour”, which usually entailed punitive and unproductive tasks such as crushing stones for hours on end. This in effect created “hardened” criminals bonded in camaraderie brought on by the suffering they endured together while in prison. This does not create safer communities upon release of these inmates when they complete their sentences as they quickly fall back into the same company and get back into crime again and therein lies the vicious cycle of recidivism. We have since established that understanding the causes of recidivism is key to successful rehabilitation and achieving peaceful neighbourhoods as a by-product.

Many reasons and factors have been put forward as causes of criminal behaviour. The interesting thing is that none of the reasons are unique to criminals. It's a complex issue that cannot be easily deciphered. If it was that

simple then it would have been solved a long time ago. Every child is born with a lot of promise, and somewhere along the way, irrespective of social standing, they take different paths. Some choose crime. This occurs with families further complicating and blurring the different reasons. We have however noticed a few things that stick out among many inmates. Dysfunctional families are common among inmates. Research by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice show that 70% of children born of incarcerated parents end up in prison (2008). Absentee fathers, child neglect or negative home environments for children lead to increased crime in children. Low education standards, which then contributes to poor employment and poverty, has been shown by Marano to be a contributor to choices to get into crime as individuals try to make a living through illegal means (2003). There could be many other causes and this is a knowledge gap that should be addressed even if in a minimalist way.

Among the causes of recidivism is unemployment. After prison, the most crucial thing ex-inmates need to get back on their feet is a source of income. Many inmates leaving prison are at the bottom of the pyramid and do not have much financial support to start life over again. On the very day they are released many have no housing, food for the night or even the bus fare to get them anywhere. It's an "out of the frying pan, into the fire" scenario. The truth is crime has a "reward" of sorts or else no one would get into it, and many go back to crime.

Societal stigma is a major challenge that ex-inmates face in their bid to get reintegrated and accepted. Society has a very negative and warped view of prisoners and they extend this to them even after having paid doing time. Stigma is almost like a second prison for these individuals. They serve their time in prison but when they get out, society continues to punish them despite their best efforts to change. When society refuses to give a second chance to these men and women, they condemn them as second-rate citizens, which brings frustration and causes them to rebel into a life of crime once again.

In this fast changing world many inmates lack relevant skill sets to get into gainful employment. An IT professional jailed for five years will find him or herself hopelessly outdated upon release. The current model doesn't enable inmates to continually improve on their skills. While it may be argued that a prison is not a school, we believe that a balance can be struck to enable prisoners with some professional training to continually access updates or practice in a limited way in their profession. This way they will still have some relevance in society upon release. There is also the need to adopt ex-inmates into the right kind of networks when released. The Confucius quote says "Show me your friends and I will show you your character". No doubt we are a sum total of the people around us and with the right kind of people around us then we are almost assured of a successful

future. Inmates do not have these kinds of networks and also their lack of exposure is a limiting factor in their life.

## **Nafisika Trust approach—the power of volunteers**

The face of the Kenyan inmate is very youthful. According to Njono, earlier surveys published in the Kenya Youth Fact book using data from the Kenya economic survey showed that a significant number of offenders are between the ages of 18 and 25 (2010). The data shows that out of 96,726 convictions, 54.3% were of this age group. If the 26-50 age group is added to this number, it rises to 88.4%.

The majority of the volunteers that give their time and expertise are young too. It is part of our strategy to attract a pool of young volunteers who are of near similar age as the inmates. While all are generally welcome, we do have a preference for university students and young professionals who are eager to pass on the skills they have. Over the past year alone, these volunteers have given ten thousand hours of service. Every year Nafisika involves an average of 60 volunteers in its programmes and this is often a defining experience for both inmates and volunteers alike.

Working in partnership with the Kenyan Prison Service, Nafisika Trust runs programmes in Counselling, Education, Entrepreneurship and Re-entry. The reason we run these programmes is because the majority of inmates have not had adequate access to education, exposure and opportunities. This in turn sets them to be at the bottom of the pyramid in life. The economic gap grows wider and the cycle of crime continues. Our programmes are a strategic attempt to narrow the economic gap by providing skills that will enable individuals to have access to employment and break the cycle of crime in their lives and that of their children. These four key areas that I will expand on below are run mainly by volunteers and through partnerships forged with interested groups and the Kenya Prisons Service.

### **Counselling**

Nafisika runs both psychosocial and substance abuse counselling that targets prison inmates that suffer from psychological issues or have a history of substance abuse. We have noted that many of the inmates come from unstable and broken families. The absence of role models at the family level leaves many of these young people vulnerable to anyone who wants to create a new reference point in their lives as appertains to education, attitude towards work and money, and social standing. The effects of these have been devastating. Many youth get caught up in the wrong company and acquire bad habits. Substance abuse is the most rampant amongst the youth and is a major barrier to employment. This challenge requires trained

psychologists and counsellors to address it effectively. We have partnered with the psychology department of the United States International University, a private university in Kenya to enable us to deliver quality counselling and family therapy in the prisons.

## **Education**

Literacy rates among prison inmates are quite low. Many of the inmates dropped out of school at an early age and lack the most basic writing and numeracy skills needed to get by. While poverty is a contributor to low education standards among inmates, there are those who quit school on their own volition and got into crime as a way to avoid parental control and guidance. It is challenging to deal with such inmates because of the years of “miseducation” they have and not many feel the need to get back into formal education since they have lived a life convinced that it has no real value. The persistence of our volunteers and that of the prison warders has however made steady headway in changing these perceptions. Through counselling sessions we have seen increasing numbers join the literacy classes and work on their reading and writing skills. They have been able to shed off the shame that comes with being illiterate and take steps towards taking charge of their lives. Having a goal to work towards has proved to be therapeutic to the inmates, allowing them time and space to accept the challenges they faced as part of what shaped their decisions, realize the consequences that similar choices would have and most importantly, overcome the effects of their past lives. A few of the inmates go on to take the national examination and some proceed to study for their “O” level examinations. This in turn improves the employability of these inmates. We also have a long-standing volunteer-run computer skills education programme in which we teach basic computer literacy skills to those who already have some proficiency in reading and writing.

## **Employment Programmes**

Our Employment Programme consists of entrepreneurship training and business incubation projects. We have partnered with KCA University to deliver an entrepreneurship course that develops self-awareness, assists with career goal setting, and acquiring financial literacy, and sales and business plan development skills. These programmes equip inmates with skills to enable them either secure employment or start their own.

## **Re-entry Programmes**

Prison service ends when an inmate is done serving his time. While this should be a joyful time, an ex-inmate quickly experiences the woes of life

after prison. Many ex-inmates experience stigma and rejection from society and some find it hard to get jobs as they may not be adequately skilled or are not employed because they have a prison record. Nafisika walks with ex-inmates down this difficult path and helps them get on their feet as fast as possible. Before release, inmates go through interview sessions with Nafisika and prison staff to help them envision their lives after prison. We hold family therapy sessions so that the bond between them and their family is strengthened. Upon release we hold their hand through the tough times. We also link individuals with prospective employers, support them in starting a business or get them to college to pursue higher education.

## **Something to feel good about—The Entrepreneurship Programme**

The Entrepreneurship Programme is the biggest and most impactful programme we run. The majority of the inmates are eager to take this class despite its intensive nature. This quarterly programme takes inmates through the ins and outs of how to start and run a successful business. Those who attend feel that it is most beneficial to them after being released, especially since their criminal record lowers their attractiveness in the formal employment market. The skills they gain in this programme give them a competitive advantage. The curriculum jointly developed by Nafisika and KCA University teaches the inmates to discover themselves and their potential away from crime. It also teaches them how to best position and brand themselves, how to write business plans, how to raise capital and to keep appropriate accounts for their business. We like to think of this as a discovery of who they are and what they can achieve. At the end of the programme, inmates graduate with a certificate in Business and Entrepreneurship from KCA University.

Two inmates released from Nairobi West Prison recently have put into practice what they learned in our Entrepreneurship Programme. Both former security guards arrested for assault but exonerated three years later. One of them now runs his own clothing business in downtown Nairobi and offers professional writing services for clients who need help with tender documents and related documentation. These skills were learned while in prison and are an example of how properly tailored rehabilitation programmes that resonate with the inmates can be transformative. The former inmate also volunteers his security skills, learned at his former job prior to incarceration, at his local church in the face of terror threats in the country. Another inmate has gone on to run a successful vegetable farm in his hometown of Gatundu. When asked about the impact of the Entrepreneurship Programme he had participated in while in prison, he stated that it helped him learn how to write a business plan, think through

important steps in starting a business and keep proper records of accounts. He knew he couldn't get his former job back but he is now happy to have something of his own and is able to support his wife and two children.

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# **CHAPTER 26. THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE IS THE HAND THAT RULES THE WORLD: WOMEN’S ROLE IN IMPROVING COMMUNITY SECURITY**



**Agnes Dinkelman**

In 2002 Liberian women, tired of war, wanted their men to arrange an agreement on the negotiating table. They followed the call of Leymah Gbowee to no longer have sex with their husbands. What was the strength of that intervention? They had a good view on the driver that in this case shaped reality: the hunger for power. They understood that the fight for power fails when women embarrass men by talking to the media about the “powerless” situation of their men in the bedrooms of their homes. The women also were aware of the possibilities of solidarity, because together one can achieve more. So, what in fact did these women do?

The Liberian women took the space they had to influence their world. Beyond that, they understood how to effectively address the issue from the position they were in, knowing what they stood for together and determined: to bring an end to violence and rape, to bring peace and to work on dignity from there. So what can we say about “their position”, “their space” and about “understanding the drivers that shaped reality” to effectively address an issue?

The combination of danger and violence causes a strong increase of dopamine and adrenaline to the brain. It makes the archetype “warrior” feel strong and valuable, it helps him to move away from fear but also

disconnects him from other human beings, according to Bourke (1999). Men who live in hostile situations are therefore dominantly led by gaining control and managing risks. The hunger for power as the dominant value decreases if the circumstances change: no more war, no more fights, decreasing hostility. I have observed this in my encounter with former DRC warriors and in my work with European policing officers who returned from Afghanistan. The change of circumstances did its work on the value level: there was mistrust and alertness before, back in a safer environment their base attitude towards the world around them changed. In the new situation we saw cooperativeness and openness for the rules and codes of the society in a calm and responsible way.

So how are women to cope with situations of violence? Women have the beautiful position to really make a difference in community security. They are married to the men, mothers of the children and sisters of each other, and have intimate relationships with all of them. From their position they can sense, pre-sense, see and foresee, interpret and monitor what is happening in their communities, and their interpretations are therefore insightful into the development of conflict. After all, given this position they are well positioned to give meaning to what they sense and see and so develop a deep understanding into the context of which they live.

Women can also use their space to become educated, to give impulses for change, and to take leadership in their communities. The space of women is often limited in comparison to the male position due to traditions, law, and determination of men, external family or religion. So what can women do given the position they have, acting within the space they have, to improve the situation of community security?

My writing is based on my experience as an analyst and practitioner on social dynamics, community security and women leadership. I will share observations from real cases without disclosing identities of actors for reasons of confidentiality. I would like to explore here examples of how women can use a limited space to leverage the situation in conflict. Such examples provide insight into the leadership of women to create community security on a personal, communal and national level.

## **Coping with hostility**

Safe places hardly exist. I learned this by working with a diverse group of people around the globe, either in groups or with individuals, in villages, offices and institutions. I am always struck when people mention the hostility they meet in their lives. Mothers and daughters-in-law might fight over homework, power and privileges. In companies and institutions I have seen people fighting for the better-paid job, competing in a way that leaves no space for collaboration. In every environment there is insecurity.

So then what is a secure community? I consider a secure community a

safe place which can have the size of a country or be as small as a family; where people can trust each other, where they know that no one will harm them, cheat on them or betray them. In a safe place there is dignity, respect and support. We have to face the truth; safe places hardly exist, so there is no other way than to purposefully deal with hostility. Hostility makes people cautious and withhold themselves from developing talents and sharing thoughts and ideas. In the end, an unsafe human environment is costing us what we so desperately need: trust and inclusiveness in an emotional, social, economic and spiritual way for peace and prosperity.

Some people confront unsafe places heads up and with stretched backs; ready to act, gain control and diminish risks that they feel can undermine their status. Others lay back and act cautiously because they don't want to get involved in any serious threats. Young girls living in communities where violence is common often behave this way. When I describe their behaviour as "as an attempt to be invisible" they laugh, recognizing it. Some people measure their position carefully, consider the situation, calculate, avoid hostility as much as possible, and at some point take their chances to avoid the next violent threat. These are all responses to cope with hostility. A child soldier from Sierra Leone, according to Mooy's work, shows this in a clear way by stating, "I ate from the human heart so the ones who saw me were frightened [...] as everybody was aware that I was a bad person they wouldn't dare to hurt me" (Mooy, 2008, pp.19)

All warriors share the desire to come to grips with insecurity through power and control. But unguided warriors are dangerous warriors. Thomas Sankara, the murdered visionary president of Burkina Faso, stated that a warrior without education is a potential criminal, according to the video Thomas Sankara: The Upright Man (Pan AfricanMarkets, 2006). We therefore need to consider more carefully the coping mechanisms employed to address insecurity and hostility.

People are coping with hostility at all levels. World leaders avoid threats too and try to stay in control. Opponents of Stalin in Russia were executed and not allowed to become a threat. Later Brezhnev made his competitors retire while Khrushchev sent them to far away countries as ambassadors for Russia, as narrated by Yeltsin (1990). Gorbachev allowed his opponents to come back into politics to show the world that he was serious about the idea of "glasnost", meaning openness. In the same spirit, Obama asked his direct opponent within the Democratic Party, Hillary Clinton, to be his Secretary of State and overcame their antagonism by offering her a position next to him. World leaders act like all humans by having a personal view on the feeling of safety for themselves and their position. In geopolitical interaction, Gorbachev and Obama tried to let cooperation prevail. Their challenge was to cope with an environment that forced them to take position in a world shaped by hostility, control and power.

## **Identifying values as a basis for coping mechanisms**

Coping with control, power and hostility can be done in different ways motivated by different values and according to prevailing circumstances. Mwenda put it this way:

It is possible that a corrupt dictatorship in one country at a given time is what is necessary to achieve rapid change. But it can become dysfunctional in another country with different social and political dynamics. The building of a national identity and an effective state in homogenous Rwanda under a Tutsi president may demand honest government; but in heterogeneous Nigeria or DRC, corruption may be the glue to bring and hold diverse interests of powerful elites together. There is no one size that fits all.” (Mwenda, 2014).

My argument is that in order to improve safety and security in communities it is crucial to understand that there is no standardised way to respond to violence. Circumstances differ, issues disputed over are not the same, cultures may differ and people respond in different ways. In trying to address hostility, a range of coping mechanisms can be used that are motivated by different values. Human behaviour originates in values. In order to increase the range of coping responses to hostility we need to review the values that underpin behaviour. In our attempt to understand a situation we should observe and assess the values of that community. This profile of values can provide us with the information needed to determine what kind of interventions may be effective.

Let me give you an example. I worked in the Netherlands with minority leaders that have an African or Asian background. These leaders perceived reality in a total new way once they understood how to use the perspective of values and worldviews, considering the circumstances they were in. The younger leaders longed for more influence. They wanted to lead their community towards more involvement in the Dutch postmodern society. The elderly leaders didn't let them and they withheld information from the next generation and prohibited their actions or ignored their requests. During our meetings it was identified that one of the crucial issues for the elderly leaders was the question of a dignified retirement. They felt responsible for the fact that they took their families to a new world and didn't succeed in their goals of pride, honour and prosperity. Without addressing these issues properly, the elders stayed unwavering in post-modern questions and attempted to stay in control and by doing so, they prevented the youngest generation fitting into society. The younger leaders in our sessions understood they had to earn their leadership position by gaining the trust of the elders by honouring them. They had to make clear that the experience and knowledge of the elderly would be part of their moral

compass while navigating a new world. Only addressing the need for tradition and cherishing the culture and honouring the families would not be enough to change leadership positions. We also had to understand the need for dignity and respect so that the elders could retire in a honourable manner. It would help them to be proud of their offspring to take leadership and behave in ways they felt were correct.

In unsafe places the urge for power and control is a dominant value. To increase women's leadership in community safety, it is important that women can identify how values impact choices and behaviour, knowing that everybody is coping with power and control in their own interest.

## **Educating male 'heroes'**

Unsafe places in the domestic domain are quite common. One third of women throughout the world will experience physical or sexual violence by a partner or sexual violence by a non-partner as the World Health Organization (WHO) concluded recently (2013). Domestic violence is power driven. The violator is in control, the victim is calculating. In domestic violence situations, the violator (often but not always male) does not postpone the satisfaction of his needs. This inability is a real threat for women.

Women can put domestic violence and rape on the agenda. The most effective way to do so is to reset or re-emphasise what constitutes a "code of conduct" for a man. This can be the impetus for an identity transition: from the archetype "warrior" to a "community man". Violence and rape no longer fit in this archetype. When men want to adapt to the new identity they have to leave the warrior archetype in which rape is common. The more men identify with the concept of "real men" the more they will reduce violence. Women therefore have to push male leaders to subscribe to the code against domestic violence and rape and to correct the men that are violating the code. Men's involvement in maintaining the code is also important. They should correct their peers so that the issue becomes a matter of honour, pride, embarrassment and shame. To maintain a new code, male involvement in correction and blaming is crucially important.

If we approach the violators in the archetypal role of "warriors", we can see that a key value is "to be in charge". Using violence is a very common way for them to achieve their goals. We need to change the circumstances in a way that can provide the men with new roles, in which they are in charge again but in a different and non-violent way. A transitional process of male identity starts with the question of "What is a real man?" And beyond that, "How could a real man become a hero?"

Women can use their feminine qualities to start a process of support for men to become more open for what the community needs them to be: to protect the women from other men; and to build houses, hospitals and

schools; to create perspective for the children; and to allow women to be their partner in the development of the family and the community. Men working on items like these deserve to be perceived by the community as “real men”.

Heroes could be described as real men (or women) who know how to empower the community and have an attitude of understanding and support. They are able to move away from hostility and find ways to cooperate and facilitate dignity and social, economic and spiritual growth. Heroes could be described as leaders who serve the interests of all living creatures in the community.

I propose that a possible intervention for addressing these questions is to organize regular gatherings. As this issue is important for the whole community, it is important to get everyone involved. An example of such gatherings is the community meetings at the grassroots level in both urban and rural Rwanda initiated by the government. About 50 families living in a neighbourhood or village called Umudugudu have formed the lowest administrative entity in Rwanda. The Umudugudu gatherings are used by the government as an information channel where citizens can be informed on policies. The gatherings also are used by the community to deliberate on safety issues, social behaviour, and about conflicts between neighbours and conflicts within the home. The citizens choose the leaders of these gatherings themselves. Such an existing framework would be an excellent basis for the development of “real men” in community security.

In our case as we explore an intervention on domestic violence and the transition of men from a “warrior” towards a “real man” who is of great value to the community, women leaders could start with gatherings in their village supported by the leading and respected “real men”. At the start, women leaders have to explain the central issue and give information on legal or policy requirements. Male and female leaders have to make clear that the community cannot prosper without everybody being accepted as a member of the community and everybody taking their role. The question brought up is “what do we consider a real man?”

The next stage of the intervention could be the invitation to reflect on the question. It urges participants to avoid talking about “me and myself” but to externalize and speak about “the man that is doing the things real men do”, or “a man who is behaving without hostility, taking responsibility by finding ways to build peace, like heroes do”. The women of the community can sit around the group of men and reflect on the discussion when they get the floor. They can tell stories in which they express how they expect the men to contribute to the family and the community. This way the community can standardise the behaviour they think is useful to the group, for both women and men. Domestic violence is one of the issues on the agenda.

These are important post conflict tools and women leaders can make a start with this identity shifting process. They can organize and facilitate these intimate sessions where men and women work on the transition of the identity of men. In these meetings they can find ways to become “a real man” and a hero. Health and governmental institutes, policing forces and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) can support the process by communicating information on behaviour that responds to a code for manhood that does not rely on violence.

## **Women’s involvement in early warning in radicalization**

Some regions, such as the Middle East, North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, are threatened by terrorist groups like ISIS, Boko Haram and Al Shabaab. According to Kwok’s work, these groups are growing steadily and financed by wealthy sources in the Middle East or Indonesia (2014). The extremists receive funds from Southeast Asia through oil in the caliphate or kidnappings in Africa. This extremism threatens women and men with their liberty and independence.

The geographical playing fields of these groups transcend the borders of nations. The Islamic State (IS) caliphate creates a situation that leads to a new possibility for meeting, talking and collaboration between the West and the Arab world. African leaders also have to decide on a strategy and to overcome differences so that they may act jointly and quickly before the situation gets out of hand.

Looking at it from the perspective of values, the members of the terrorist organisations are motivated by a desire for more power and control. The urge for power and control leads to the law of the jungle that is full of concepts as “eat or be eaten”, instant satisfaction, honour, pride, brotherhood and the idea of following leaders without questioning.

We have to understand the degree of attraction that these groups exert on young people. The attraction can lie in the idea of adventure, of being invincible, untouchable, unbeatable, and being a part of the winning team. These groups offer young people a way to make the world understand that they are fed up with what they see as humiliation through Western oppression.

They find the legitimacy of their actions in the Quran. The groups take the view that everyone must take the holy book literally without interpretation. This view gives them full control over what they want civilians to think and how they want civilians to act. The similarity with the Christian Inquisition is striking. In late medieval times the Inquisition had the exclusive right to setting the standards, judging and punishing people. Today we see in IS a new manifestation of the values and behaviour that

fit with dominance, male superiority and the value of hunger for power. We need to deal with this trend. Women are crucial in this process.

Young people who are considering joining terrorist groups need counterforce. They need to be firmly corrected by the people around them to address and contradict both the defected logic and the urge for control. In these young people we have potential warriors that are falsely informed and who need proper firm guidance and adequate information that is well adjusted to their goals and values. Mothers should be encouraged to pick up on early signs and to observe and reflect on new ideas of their sons and daughters. Communities can contribute by organizing an early warning service for police forces and the military. Governments and donors could invest in television programming with debates that include experts on the issue as well as young people. This will help identify the defects in the logic of the jihadist movement, to prevent young people from becoming criminals.

As mothers and sisters, women have the best position to sense and pre-sense changes as their sons and brothers become attracted to the jihadi movement. The men in the family can become informed by the narratives that are spread by fundamentalists in real life or through the Internet. Mothers need to know (and should be informed) that they have the power to intervene. They have the position to help their children to see what is right and what is wrong. There are too many women who do not understand that this is within their power, especially when it comes to their sons. These mothers and sisters need to become the first responders. We could facilitate meetings where women can learn to read the first signs, how to respond and what to do. Community leaderships should support women so they can start to provide de-programming training and provide psychological and spiritual support.

## **The hand that rocks the cradle...**

The challenges to community security are serious. They have to be addressed with an understanding that values drive behaviour. To diminish hostility, values need to be shaped or reshaped. Community processes that intervene at the level of values to shift identity are therefore key to promote long-lasting community security.

At the local level women can play a very important role in resetting the value systems that define boys and men and identify new male identities that allow men to be valuable for the community in a non-violent way. Using their space they can make an important contribution to improve community security, like the Liberian women who responded to the call of Leymah Gbowee in 2002. The examples of the identity shift for men after conflict and the undermining of the support of extremism show how women can address hostility in a constructive way. In early warning, which is increasingly relevant within the expansion of extremist terrorist organisations looking to

recruit young people, women have an important role to play in education, identifying young people attracted to these organisations and addressing, as a community, effective responses. Men have an important role to play as peers, demanding non-violent behaviour that is valued and respected by the community as positive masculinity.

Unsafe places can become less unsafe over time, with leaders who respect their people and demand non-violent, constructive behaviour. The more secure society is, the more people can feel safe to work on social and economic perspectives. Women leaders can initiate this process and increase the number of women leaders leading communities, institutions and homes. Women can educate their children to become real men and strong heroes and heroines that understand how to intervene to the hunger for control and power. As the poet William Ross Wallace wrote (1890): “The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world”.

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## **CHAPTER 27. CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO AND UNLEASHING THE HIDDEN POWER OF WOMEN: THE ZIMBABWEAN EXPERIENCE**



**Chikomborero Mafuriranwa**

### **The story of Rose Mapango, age 38, Area Trainer Seke, Mashonaland East Province**

I was deeply traumatised by the rape I experienced during the period of conflict. I was raped by a “good Samaritan” from the nearby village as I fled the violence in my home area. This man was a friend of my late father and I had known him from childhood. I went to his home so that I could board a bus to Harare from his village since it was safer there as the cadres had not yet occupied the area. My plan was to proceed to Harare to seek refuge at my brother and his wife’s house. I decided to seek refuge in Harare as I was informed by my brother that the situation in urban areas was less tense. Cadres had attacked our village the night before but luckily, I had fled with my neighbour and my two-year-old son whom I strapped to my back and fled to a nearby mountain. The next day, I walked to the nearby village, at whose market I had planned to catch the next bus to Harare. It was not safe for me to board a bus from my village, as I was afraid of being followed by cadres who would be milling around at the market harassing people. Unfortunately for me, the “good Samaritan” I had affectionately addressed as “Uncle” all my life left his wife sleeping in their matrimonial bed, tip-toed into the room where my son and I were sleeping and sexually violated me

during the night.

The next day, I left with my neighbour for Harare. On arrival in the city, I did not narrate the rape incident to my brother or his wife but simply kept it to myself, though I would cry myself to sleep every night for two months. After the Government of National Unity was formed and since a government arm for peace called the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration was put in place, I decided to go back to the village since this new Ministry vowed to ensure that peace would be restored in communities. Well of course that was what I made myself believe yet the real reason was that I did not want to be judged for having yet another baby out of wedlock by my brother and his wife so I thought it best to leave their home before my pregnancy became visible. I put on a brave face and convinced my brother to let me go back to the village, yet deep down inside I was choking with fear—the fear of being alone in that hut and experiencing yet another attack.

On returning to the village, my neighbour invited me one hot Wednesday afternoon to a club meeting that took place 500 metres from our community fields where we had been tilling the land in preparation for our next maize planting season. We met with ten other women from the village and sat under a tree. I had no reason not to join this meeting since it was 12:00pm and the sun was at its peak, its rays burning my face, and we had decided to take a break. The meeting's agenda for that day was on how it was important for women to seek counselling for the trauma they experienced and how it was up to us to break the cycle of violence. Those words rang in my head and I then made the decision to visit the clinic the next day since I was now five months pregnant and had not registered for antenatal care. The nurse was not as friendly as I expected, however she attended to me and advised me on the steps to follow.

I was tested for HIV and tested positive, however I received post-test counselling and was advised to return to the clinic after a few months for more tests. I walked home feeling confused and angry—angry for letting that scumbag have his way with me. I was determined on revenge. I had a few sinister ideas in my head, like burning him to death in his hut in the middle of the night. “That wouldn't be so bad”, I thought to myself and grinned.

The following Wednesday, my neighbour invited me for the club meeting under the tree. Again we sat down and discussed issues of peace as it was the topical issue of the time. After the meeting, I shared my experience with my neighbour and she referred me to an Area Trainer from the club who had been trained on counselling.

Over a period of three months, my personal healing process took place. I began to feel less and less bitter and became more hopeful for the future. I have forgiven my violator though I have not sought justice for this crime. I realized as we learned more on gender- based violence in the club that my

case would probably be dismissed, as there was no adequate evidence left from the crime since several months had passed. However a year later, I now have a healthy baby girl who is free from the virus as I underwent successful anti-retroviral therapy.

I have also been leading a community-based intervention for approaching our traditional leaders advocating for punishment of perpetrators of violence against women. Our Chief openly supports us and I am on the lookout for cases of violence in the community and refer them to the Chief's Court that meets every Saturday. Our Chief's Court is an important part of our community structure and most people seek to have issues addressed under Customary Law rather than seeking Litigation which they view as tedious, complicated and above all, expensive. Due to us playing the watchdog role as women, men in the community are now afraid of abusing women in any form. I do not regret the day I joined that club meeting under the tree for it has given me a new outlook on life. I am also able to defend other women and girls and give them the power to protect themselves despite my not having received that opportunity myself.

The name of Rose Mapango is fictitious as to protect her identity.

## **The impact of the conflict on women**

The conflict that took place in Zimbabwe prior, during, and after 2008 was highly gendered in nature and negatively affected women more than men due to the patriarchal nature of Zimbabwean society. The colonial era worsened this as colonial power solicited male labour and provided them with passes for the urban areas, while women were left behind in rural areas. In modern day, women resultantly have less educational opportunities than men and form the majority of people living in rural areas. Men on the other hand work in cities and surrounding towns, with those who are married only returning home to their spouses on weekends and public holidays.

Women were highly vulnerable to attack by cadres due to the geographical spacing in rural areas and lack of coordination where the violence took place. They were raped, tortured and some killed. A main characteristic of these violent political clashes was the use of the rape of women as a weapon of war meant to weaken the opposing force.

The problems of women are three fold: lack of economic opportunities, lack of political participation, and violence and sexual violence.

Women also have limited economic opportunities as they do not own the means of production such as the land and only provide labour on their father's or husband's land. They also benefit very little from commercial farming and grow only very few crops for subsistence. This lack of resources hinders their participation in socio-economic and political processes; hence they are not able to take up positions of power.

Although women form the majority of the population, they are not

adequately represented in national political structures. In Zimbabwe, women therefore have limited representation in Parliament and other forms of local leadership. Therefore, policies and laws are not conducive towards the socio-economic growth of women as it is men who formulate policies against a patriarchal mind-set. Hence the political representation is lacking to defend women's interests, including the protection of women against violence as well as measures to increase women's participation in decision-making processes.

Training workshops for women across Zimbabwe revealed that the patriarchal nature of Zimbabwean society is the main cause of women's violation during periods of conflict. Gender-based violence is rife in many communities. The presence of gender-based violence in homes easily spirals to other women in the communities. This is because culturally, women are exposed to gender-based violence by their male partners and other male members of their families and these cases go unreported. As a result, these men who are accustomed to abusing women within the domestic sphere without any punishment easily extend this violence to other women in communities during periods of political conflict.

Women who experienced violence during 2008 were displaced from their homes and lost their sources of livelihood in the form of crops and livestock such as cattle, goats and chickens. Some had their homes burnt down and were left homeless. Other women also experienced sexual abuse in addition to being displaced and losing their homes. However, they did not have access to health services such as Post Exposure Prophylaxis and Counselling as well as justice due to weak institutional operations in health centres such as clinics and local Traditional Chiefs Courts as well as Magistrates Courts. Women are in dire need of counselling, treatment for HIV and STIs as well as justice from local and/or legal courts.

## **National Healing mechanisms for Peace**

Peace Begins with Me! Peace Begins with You! Peace Begins with Us!  
Ukuthula kuqala ngami! Ukuthula kuqala ngawe! Ukuthula kuqala ngathi!  
Runyararo runotanga neni! Runyararo runotanga newe! Runyararo runotanga nesu!

These were the aspirations expressed by the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI) which was established in 2009 as one of three transitional arrangements created during the period of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) that was intended to facilitate the peace building process. The GPA aims to lay the foundations of addressing Zimbabwe's history of the cyclical political violence over generations. From 2009, three Ministers (among whom the Vice-President), representing Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF),

Movement for Democratic Change- Tsvangirai (MDC-T) and Movement for Democratic Change- Mutambara (MDC-M), gave leadership to ONHRI. The three founding ONHRI co-principals, ONHRI Chairperson, Vice President Landa John Nkomo representing ZANU/PF, Minister Sekai Masikana Holland (MDCT) and the late Minister Gibson Jama Sibanda (MDC), succeeded by Minister Moses Mzila Ndllovu. ONHRI was established to achieve restoration of the dignity of all Zimbabweans regardless of age, gender or creed; to achieve peace, stability, unity and prosperity for individual Zimbabweans, their families, communities, organizations and the country as a whole.

The co-principles agreed to adopt a national, inclusive, grassroots-based consultative strategy to gather the views of Zimbabweans on their vision of establishment of sustainable peace in this country. For 18 months the ONHRI focus was on the following broad areas of engagement, with a view to restore the tenets and values of the Africanness, Ubuntu Bethu/Hunhu Hwedu, of Zimbabwe. Following this process, ONHRI proposed to the government to develop a bill for the enactment of an Act of Parliament on Peace and Reconciliation processes in Zimbabwe. The proposed infrastructure for peace with its four elements was adopted by the cabinet in April 2012.

The Policy Framework proposes the establishment of an independent operational institution to be called the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) where “reconciliation” is inclusive of healing and reparations, and “peace” suggests negotiated settlement of disputes and prevention of future violence. The NPRC shall provide policy advice, facilitate the development of programmes and supervise implementation of programmes and activities for the promotion of equality, national healing, cohesion and unity.

The Voluntary Code of Conduct for Political Parties is for intra and inter-political parties to deliberate commitment through moral suasion to regulate the behaviour and conduct of political parties’ officials, members and supporters. This instrument is meant to embed zero tolerance to violence in all political engagements and processes where internal disciplinary mechanisms and procedures would have to be enforced. Resort to legal enforcement would be through prevailing enacted laws.

The voluntary Code of Conduct for Political Parties is part of the documentation of the Nomination Court to be signed by every person wishing to become a candidate in Parliamentary elections. All candidates signed this on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2013 at the harmonised elections. The Code of Conduct defines in clear terms and lays down the consequences of indulging in any form of violence as a candidate during the course of elections.

The History Programme is intended to bring Zimbabweans together to discover the common ground they share. The programme is to pursue for

purposes of learning from the past epochs of historical experiences to inform our future. It is hoped the launch of this programme will take place soon. ONHRI's hope is that Zimbabweans through traditional leaders interacting with scholars and clans will assist the history researchers to carry out their research work when they visit various areas in the country. The History Programme is still in progress, coordinated by Midlands State University (MSU) as recommended by ONHRI. A team of academics has been working with communities, traditional leaders and others as an inclusive healing exercise by its agreed methodology. The project aims to encourage Zimbabweans to appreciate their common cultural values and that they are one family.

The three co-principals identified Midlands State University where the History Programme was already ongoing to host new Peace Institutions that would carry out Peace Programmes for sustainability of the achievements of the ONHRI recommendations. This fourth element was still being created but its main focus would be to respond to and aim to address the complex concerns of survivors of violence, both perpetrators and victims. The base for the effective and sustainable Promotion of Equality, National Healing, Cohesion and Unity translating into positive peace should be through empowering all Zimbabweans politically, culturally, socially and economically through programmes and projects to eliminate poverty by creating sustainable livelihoods thus catalysing development and a resilient national economy.

### **Self-organisation of women**

The Association of Women's Clubs (AWC) is a community-based organization that was founded in 1938 by an 18 year old visionary school teacher, Helen Vera, who was married to a traditional Chief, Chief Mangwende of Murehwa, Mashonaland Province in Zimbabwe. Helen was moved by the plight of women when she observed how extremely impoverished they were when they came to the Chief's homestead. They wore tattered clothing and went to the Chief seeking assistance for basic provisions such as food. During the early years of her marriage, Helen grouped together women in various villages under the Chieftom into clubs. It is at this point that the seed of a social movement for women empowerment to fight the poverty that patriarchy brought about for women was sown.

The club's aim as set up by Helen Mangwende née Vera was to improve basic living standards of women. Members were taught basic home economic skills such as cooking, sewing, knitting and crocheting. Young Farmers' Clubs were also started for young women whose aim was to enable young women to take part in farming, which is the main commercial activity to enable them to be financially independent and provide themselves and

their children and not depend on men. To date, the organisation consists of roughly 100,000 rural-based members spread across five provinces of the country which include Matabeleland, Mashonaland East, Manicaland, Midlands and Masvingo.

AWC has responded to numerous needs of women over the decades since its formation. During the early 2000s, due to socio-economic challenges such as increasing food shortages, a decline in health service delivery and more recently, politically-motivated violence; AWC has played a pivotal role in addressing socio-political challenges in Zimbabwean communities after the 2008 elections, with women playing a crucial role.

Based on the problems that they faced, women in their clubs collectively made the decision to take action to address the injustices they experienced. The story of Rose Mapanga highlights the opportunities that exist for women for them to unleash their hidden power and make positive changes for themselves and others in their communities.

International and local legal frameworks have also provided the background against which promotion of women's participation in governance, peace building and security can take place. The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 has provided the framework for work around women-led peace building initiatives in Zimbabwe. Nationally, the Constitution Making Process has also aided this.

True to AWC's mandate of training and information-dissemination to rural women, training of women on conflict transformation, peace and healing has been carried out in a fruitful partnership with Oxfam Novib since 2011. The training carried out under the partnership has significantly contributed towards closing gaps in the low participation of women in peace building and leadership at local and national levels. This is due to the fact that information on gender equality and women's rights creates the consciousness of security as a right. Women's clubs also provide a safe space where women can share knowledge and ideas regarding peace building. The clubs are structured and this enables the members to think proactively and shape their thoughts and carry out actions in an organized manner.

Women's clubs, in addition to creating a hub of knowledge and information sharing, also create a platform where women are equipped with lobbying and advocacy skills. This work is carried out to close gaps that are created when women have adequate information yet there is no conducive local legal or policy environment that supports their participation. Women are stronger as a collective and can engage themselves in advocacy to community leaders and other authorities at the national level.

Due to advocacy work of the clubs, women have also taken up local positions of authority and women-led community initiatives have been adopted. They are also more proactive than men on issues of the promotion of peace and are more effective change-agents. They have merged

information and the traditional cultural systems in existence. Women have led the formation of Peace Committees that have carried out advocacy work to traditional leaders so that they adopt a more positive system that promotes the participation of women. Women have also negotiated for central roles in mediation of cases amongst rival parties that clashed during election violence.

Despite having limited academic knowledge and resources, rural women have the power to make a difference if they realise the power they have and are given a slight push. The desire they have to see a better Zimbabwe for future generations is the driving force behind their passion for peace.

## **Conclusions**

“An eye for an eye makes Zimbabwe blind”, was the slogan promoted by the Organ for National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration. Peace and reconciliation includes all Zimbabweans in accordance with the philosophy of ubuntu bethu / hunhu hwedu and provides basis reparation, restitution, compensation, among others perceived entitlements, arising from violent historical epochs of Zimbabwe. In the future, the details of peace building will fall under the purview of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission as an institution, once legally established, to deal with the past and future occurrences of violence.

The Infrastructure or Architecture for Peace through the Zimbabwe National Policy Framework for Peace and Reconciliation bestows a legacy of solving disputes through dialogue rather than violent conflict to succeeding generations enabling a break away from the culture of cyclical political violence inherited from the past epochs of our history. Such violence has affected women in deeply traumatic ways as a result of which women have been shunned. The Association of Women's Clubs has been one of the mechanisms through which women meet, support each other, deal with the consequences of violence, organising security and protection and demand their place in the community and even justice. When women organise, they can change their lives in positive directions and lead communities to peace.

# CHAPTER 28. ONE HAND CANNOT TIE A BUNDLE: PEACE BUILDING IN SECULAR AND FAITH-BASED COMMUNITIES IN UGANDA



Angeline Nguedjeu-Momekam

## Introduction

I am not a victim of a conflict or post conflict setting. I grew up in the relatively stable environment of Cameroon long after the independence years. Yes, the Biafra wars of the seventies still lingered in the background as it had spilt over into Western Cameroon. Through the tales of my grandparents I was confronted with issues of conflict or displacement, but I now realize that I had a caricatured idea of survivors of war and conflict.

I now work within the field of conflict transformation and have spoken with many survivors. Listening to their stories has been humbling and at times frustrating. I have also experienced this work as rewarding as the ability to understand and empathise with the experiences of survivors of war and conflict has transformed my view of the world. In my experience, addressing women and peace issues in post conflict communities cannot be done with a detached or “neutral” mind-set.

My role is to accompany the implementation process of the programme strategy through identified local partners. Partners are selected based on their suitability in relation to the targeted communities. We sit together and discuss how to fill the identified capacity gaps. It is my role to oversee the institutional capacity building process tailored to the demands in line with the joint terms and agreements.

I have been struck with the gender dimensions of conflict and the incredible resilience of women who have encountered conflict. In this contribution, I want to share my experience of supporting communities who have gone through conflict. In the case of faith-based communities, religion plays an integrative role and offers a thread of hope to the marginalised.

I am interested to share my thoughts on how religion can be an important aspect of strengthening a community approach to peace building. This contribution is intended to be a snapshot from practice and highlights the challenges of supporting such interventions aimed at peace building in communities. It builds on my work as a conflict transformation officer in the Dutch Protestant aid organisation, InterChurch Organization for Development Cooperation (ICCO). The conflict transformation programme supports efforts that are aimed at societies where poor and marginalised rights of men and women are respected and where the rule of law prevails. The programme facilitates community driven interventions through both faith-based and secular local partners.

## **Northern and North East Uganda**

The programme I am supporting is in Northern and North East Uganda. The peace process and subsequent massive return of former Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) created new challenges. This region is afflicted by the remnants of two decades of insurgence of the Lord Resistance Army (LRA). The civil war in Northern Uganda that lasted for 20 years has had devastating effects on the community support mechanisms. Despite the ongoing reconstruction processes (including the Peace Recovery and Development Plan and the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF)) thousands of people are still deprived of economic opportunities, resulting in widespread poverty and insecurity. Women bear the brunt of gender-based violence, including genital mutilation that is practiced by the Sabinu in the East and the Pokot in Northeastern Uganda.

The majority of the former 1.8 million IDPs have returned home or have identified new villages to settle, but reintegration is still a fragile process that will need time and support in order to consolidate. Most of those that return are women.

Post-war latent conflict in Northern Uganda was characterised by the spirit of revenge, land grabbing, war trauma, and lack of knowledge about rights or even intimidation to exercise them. There are laws for the protection of land rights but there is no clear way to implement them because access to the legal justice system is limited and difficult.

Uganda can be classified as a highly Christianised country. Most Ugandans are practicing or loyal members of a church.

## **The post-war trauma for women**

The results of the war for women and girls according to the annual reports presented by TEWPA (2012), ISIS-WICCE (2013) and UOMU (2012) to the funding partner organisation were dramatic:

- Abduction
- Sex slavery
- Rape
- Cutting of facial parts
- Death through torture
- Permanent deformation including vaginal fistula after obstetric disorders
- HIV/AIDS
- Other sexually transmitted diseases

Many women were without shelter and sleeping under the trees with their children. They gave birth under trees. Many women had lost their husbands, sons and relatives. Taking care of young children after left behind by the deceased husband puts a heavy burden on women. Trauma and stigma from rape and torture resulted in women being shunned by their spouses and communities. A great number of the abducted young girls and women returned with children fathered by their abductors and on their return, the women and children were also shunned. They now live as outcasts in their communities. This poses yet another problem of identity. It may also result in new conflicts owing to property and land ownership. Women may also find it hard to love and take care of the children resulting from rape by soldiers or rebels.

## **Women's organisations in Northern and North Eastern Uganda**

The Teso Women Peace Activists (TEWPA) is a rural woman's based organisation founded in 2001 to respond to the challenges of unrest as a result of armed conflicts manifested in different forms in the Teso and Karamoja regions. TEWPA has strengthened the capacity of rural women in conflict resolution and transformation processes and stimulates dialogue through active involvement and participation of women, youth and other strategic stakeholders.

Isis-Women's International Cross Cultural Exchange (WICCE) is a global women's rights organisation that utilises creative strategies to generate and share information and knowledge to enable women to enhance their leadership potential and participate in decision-making. A partnership between Isis-WICCE at a national level and TEWPA at a regional level resulted in a joint intervention aimed at trauma victims in the Teso sub-

region. An integral part of this programme is the exchange visits between trauma victims from different post conflict parts of the world. TEWPA has journeyed with Isis-WICCE to Nepal, Ethiopia, Somali Land, Rwanda and others on peace missions to identify different coping mechanisms of trauma victims.

TEWPA further produces and disseminates documentation on women led peace, reconciliation and conflict transformation initiatives in the programme areas. Some of the activities of this programme facilitate a broad range of community activities such as: cleaning wells, planting trees, charity walks/work and easy writing. The data collected from the field also feeds into the documents on monitoring of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 Uganda National Action Plan.

The Lira Women's Peace Initiative (LIWEPI) and the Kitgum Women's Peace Initiatives (KIWEPI) support the reintegration and resettlement of communities in Northern Uganda. The Conflict Transformation programme also focused on the rehabilitation of formerly abducted girls. Fifteen formerly abducted women and girls in Aromo Sub County were provided with skills in tailoring and goat rearing to support their livelihood and ensure effective reintegration and resettlement.

The Uganda Orthodox Mothers Union (UOMU) is a faith-based organisation that was formed in 2003. UOMO is a member of the Ugandan Joint Christian Council. As a legally registered faith-based corporate body it is supported by three churches: the Church of Uganda, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Uganda Orthodox Church.

UOMO has been recognised within the church and outside for their role in women empowerment. Their strength is especially in empowering women within and outside the church structure to become agents of change with a strong focus on peace building and conflict transformation. UOMU's mandate is to empower women to effectively participate both in the development of the church and communities to build on sustainable conditions for conflict transformation. Activities include: organisation of events like World Women's Day of Prayer; celebrating International Day of Peace to allow women to articulate issues that greatly affect them; working with communities on women rights and obligations including gender-based violence in the northern part of Uganda; organising participation in community dialogue meetings on marriage and divorce bill; and sensitisation on gender-based violence.

The programme of UOMO has allowed women to articulate concerns within the broader church community. Examples of concerns are for instance the corrupt judicial system. The UOMO members advocated for reforms using the church structures. UOMO works very closely with the Inter-religious Council of Uganda and the Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda. At the community level, it is important to mention that UOMO

women have developed links to the district programmes and this has improved their participation. The UOMO also rallied against a controversial marriage bill debated in Parliament during the year 2012. UOMO sensitised communities so that the law would protect women when their marriage was dissolved. The controversial bill failed in Parliament and was not enacted as a result of concerted national advocacy from religious and secular organisations.

## **Lessons learnt**

Religious and traditional leaders and the government of Uganda have played a significant role in sensitising community members to use non-violent means to solve existing family and community conflicts. However, some of the dogmas, traditions and beliefs both in church and society are still disempowering women and limit women's active participation in peace building. The biggest challenge with faith-based organisations is their strong male dominated structures.

UOMU acts within the framework of ecumenical collaboration in Uganda. It presents a strong voice of women. Women feel supported by their faith. The structural challenges that women face within the churches have been addressed by supporting the strengthening of collaboration of UOMO with other church structures as well as with secular organisations. For instance, collaboration with the Joint Christian Council of Uganda has been interesting to bring women's issues higher up the agenda of the Ugandan churches. However, the limitation is the focus of such interventions at the macro level.

The connection of the churches to community-based support focused on faith and values provides a very important framework to support women but does not have an ecumenical presence. Secular organisations are also better placed to address the government's policy, although the advocacy of the women in the context of UOMO proved to be successful in challenging the recent marriage bill. The collaboration with secular organisation was especially important to achieve this success.

Livelihood oriented activities by secular organisations are also an important part of the peace building package. These provide women's communities with assets, skills and tools, which contribute to the improvement of their living conditions. Secular organisations, such as Isis-WICCE have also played a key role in the important area of trauma healing and in organising international exchange for locally rooted community organisations.

Critically, the faith-based and secular organisations are complementary in their approach and in combination they may provide an important support system for community women. The collaboration between faith-based and secular organisations should therefore be encouraged and supported. In their

complementary strengths they may help women to overcome the trauma of war. As the saying goes, "One hand cannot tie a bundle."

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# CHAPTER 29. CONFLICT, CONTRADICTION AND CONSCIOUSNESS: AN ARTIST'S EVOLUTION



## **The art of Milly Buchanan**

The Cover of this book depicts a painting by Milly Buchanan. Milly Buchanan was born in Monrovia, Liberia in 1944 to a German-Jamaican immigrant and a Liberian aristocrat of Americo-Liberian descent. Milly's artistry began in Vevey, Switzerland, where her talent was first noticed, at the age of 10, by a prominent Swiss artist, Guy Baer. In order to paint her portrait, Guy Baer gave her a sheet of paper and some charcoal-sticks and told her to draw the three eggs before her to keep her still--the portrait he painted of her, "Jeune Liberienne" was sold to the Jewish museum in Vevey. Thereafter, Guy Baer tutored a young Milly once a week for nearly a year, imparting his classical technique in oil painting, which still characterizes her work today.

Her early work, mostly still-life, landscapes, and portraits, clearly followed the great European Masters of 15th century, but Milly developed her personal style of Afro-Cubism in the late 70's. Reminiscent of Picasso, Braque and Modigliani --her favorite artists to date-- Afro-Cubism was her shattered-glass art expression of the social-political turmoil in Liberia.

Milly uses the African concept of "Self"--meaning oneself, within one's tribe, and one's culture and land--to express her observations as an artist. Her work became influenced and affected by the culturally uprooted society in Liberia, the practice of "converting the natives to democratization", and

her internal conflict of Christianity versus pagan ancestral worship. Her paintings vibrate with five or six layers of colors, a representation of the overlay of educated behavior atop the raw inner artist. And much of her work includes an “eye”, which represents witnessing the timeliness of art, a female breast indicating the progeny of art, and the “dove of spiritual peace” as the Holy Ghost.

The 27 oil paintings in her “Crying-out” series are Milly’s purest afro-cubist expressions and reflected the social, political, and economic turmoil that engulfed the Americo-Liberian society. The tumult drove Milly to other African countries in search of a common-denominator to art forms, and found inspiration as an artist caught-up in conflict, contradiction, and consciousness.

Truly a renaissance woman, Milly is also an architect, a conference interpreter and translator speaking five languages (French, German, Italian, Spanish and English), and a former model (including September 1971 Ebony Fashion Fair poster-model, Essence Magazine). Milly’s extensive sub-Saharan Africa life, coupled with her personal and professional relationships with Africans from all walks of life (the late President Sekou Toure of Guinea to recording artists Hugh Masekela and Miriam Makeba to uncelebrated market women, students, farmers, and fisherman) have produced a unique perspective from which to artistically represent the essence of the African struggle and spirit of resilience and hope. Milly is also a founding member of the Union of Liberian Artists an organization that creates a forum for the exchange of personal experiences in various refugee camps, motivates young self-taught artists to develop their skills, hosts art exhibits and promotes their works.

Retired since 1998 as Advisor on International Affairs to the former President of Liberia and mother of five adult children and twenty grandchildren, Milly now focuses all her time on painting. As she reflects on her artistic track record over some five decades, impressions of mindset redirection, national reconciliation, and reconstruction in her native Liberia can easily be seen in the vibrant colors of Afro-Cubism.

# CHAPTER 30. COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY CARE IN RURAL REALITIES THROUGH THE LENS OF JANNEKE VAN DIJK



**Mirjam van Reisen**

Janneke van Dijk is a Government Medical Officer at the HIV clinic at Parirenyatwa Hospital in Harare, Zimbabwe, focusing on the provision of paediatric HIV care. She worked as a resident medical doctor at Murambinda Hospital in rural Zimbabwe in 2000, experiencing the diversity of pathology seen at a rural African hospital, and the devastation of HIV when no treatment was available. In 2003, she settled in the rural village of Macha, Zambia and worked as a resident doctor and research associate, later becoming the Clinical Research Director of the Macha Research Trust. She has been a long-time member of the Triple C approach of Comprehensive Community Care. This approach integrated training and awareness with operational medical care in deep rural settings.

Janneke van Dijk holds a PhD from the Erasmus University in Rotterdam: *Rural Realities in Paediatric HIV Service Delivery* (2003). She is currently an advisor of the Tilburg University Globalisation, Ageing, Innovation and Care (GAIC) programme. She is married to Gertjan van Stam and practices photography as a hobby. She is originally from The Netherlands.

The pictures show rural women simultaneously as entrepreneurs, mothers and care-givers, all at the same time. It shows the integration of care, livelihoods, dialogue and negotiation – not as separate tasks or identities

but as an amalgamation of what constitutes a healthy village community. Her pictures show women as assertive and – often – happy members of a society where care is explicitly part of public existence. In this sense her pictures can be seen as a commentary of current metropolitan life, where care-giving is removed from the public arena and separated from economic spaces. Care-giving is here portrayed as an integral part of all daily activities.

Van Dijk shows care without reservation as a major part of community life that blends in with leadership roles, governance and the economy. In so doing Van Dijk points to the centrality of women as community builders in Southern African rural villages.

Picture 1: Portia, who continued the Murambinda Foster Home, established by her mother – after her mother's death, Zimbabwe



Picture 2: Women carrying baskets with baby in sling, Macha, Zambia



Picture 3: Opening of the Care House “Youth Day” in Macha, Zambia



Picture 4: Traditional Birth Attendant examining a pregnant woman during antenatal clinic at a local Rural Health Post in Zambia.



Picture 5: Mothers and their children attending a Mother and Child Health clinic at their local Health Post in Zambia.



Picture 6: Newly trained Traditional Birth Attendants providing HIV Counseling and Testing services at their Rural Health Post, Zambia.



Picture 7: Community volunteers watching an educational video on HIV in their own language, Zambia.



Picture 8: Women use their skills to make and sell baskets to provide for their families, Zambia.



Picture 9: Grandmother with children under her care, Zambia.



Picture 10: Women as seasonal workers at a *Jatropha* farm, Zambia.



Picture 11: Mushroom harvest, Zambia.



Picture 12: Women selling vegetables at a local market, Zambia.



Picture 13: Women fishing in a local river to add variety to the family's diet, and if plenty for sales



Picture 14: Cooking of Nshima, the staple food in Zambia





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