Gender as analytical tool in Africa's Peace building process: A Commentary

Author: *Samuel Alfayo Nyanchoga*
Nantes Institute of Advanced Studies,
France.
Corresponding author: *Samuel Alfayo Nyanchoga*

Introduction

Gender as an analytical and inter-relational tool in peace process brings into focus the competencies, perceptions, challenges and experiences of both men and women in conflict management and conflict resolution. Men tend to dominate the process itself and institutions that deal with peace process and tilt the perceptions and policies that are applied in post conflict situations. Consequently women are marginalized as decision makers and in the activities that promote peace. To engender the peace process is to ensure that women interests and needs are taken into consideration in the peace process and secondly ensure their active participation. The application of gender as analytical and inter-relational tool in peace process has be to weaved through the prism of African culture, neo liberal context, emerging genders and interrogate the discordance that arises there of the inter-sectionality between the approaches. A gender-relational approach to peacebuilding implies a broadly based description of how gender roles and relations work in each particular context, including how gender differences intersects with other identities, the challenges and opportunities they present for transformative change. One critical aspect of gender that has been ignored in Africa are gender minorities namely the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons (LGBTI). These categories of gender minorities are largely absent from peace and security building process. The fundamental assumption is that

positive peace and security must be enjoyed by all citizens. However, a number of African countries reveal substantial degree of negative legal and violent activism against these category of gender minorities. To work with gender as analytical and inter relational tool to peaceful and secure societies means to challenge the simpler dichotomy of male and female and incorporate other emerging genders. It will be important to analyze this process from the prism of theory and praxis and its general applicability in the African context.

Gender and peace; theoretical and historiographical perspectives

Scholarship on gender, peace and security dates back to the beginning of the 20th century.

The interrogation of the historiography on gender and peace highlight diverse perspectives (Reardon 1985; Brock-Utne 1985, 1989; Ruddick 1989; Harris & King 1989, Sylvester 1987; Forcey 1991; Sharoni 1993,). The liberal feminist perspective point to the marginalization of women in the peace negotiation process (Forcey 1991; Sharoni 1993); yet the radical feminism on gender and peace argue that women may articulate a different "voice" on peace process (Gilligan 1982; Reardon 1985; Hartsock 1985; Harding 1986, 1991; Brock-Utne 1985, 1989; Black 1989; Ruddick 1989; Northrup 1990). These scholars point to women daily experiences and struggles that may be an asset in peace building process. The exclusion, oppression and discrimination have given women insightful perspectives on peace process than the male dominant groups (Hartsock 1985; Harding 1991).

Peace and security from strategic perspective

From the strategic discourse; peace and security is equated or perceived as national security. This means the absence of war, security of governments, political elites with little regard to the general population (Cohn 1989, 1993; Enloe 1990, 1993). From these perspectives governments invest in military technology and reliance on military to protect the citizens (Reardon, 1985; Harris & King 1989; Ruddick, 1989; Enloe 1990, 1993).

Peace and security from holistic perspective

The concept of security and peace implies safety for the people from violent and non- violent threats, freedom from fear and want; freedom from threat to human life, survival, dignity, functioning and sustainability. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948 article 1 called upon nations to participate and contribute to the realization of all-inclusive human peace and security. According to UDHR the concept of peace and security imply freedom from want and freedom from fear and covered all aspects of human life such as economic, food, safety,

health, personal, community, environment and elimination of sources of conflicts. The UN initiative in 2000 under the millennium development goals widened the scope of human peace and security to include reversal of poverty, hunger, child mortality and disease (Hossain and Isiaka, 2015:31-50; Hassan, 2015).

Inter-sectionality between gender, peace and security

The postmodernist or "post structural approaches to a gendered process to peace and security recognizes the multiplicity of voices, perspectives and experiences in human society that may contribute to peaceful and secure societies (Butler 1989; Nicholson 1990; Hirsch Fox-Keller 1990; Barrett & Phillips 1992; Ferguson 1993). Post structuralism focuses on the structures of hegemony and power and how they impede peace process as well as on the fact that peace rests on social justice, equality and equity in society. Post structuralism also contends that multiple actors such as women children play a critical role in peace process (Hirsch, 2012: 2-250).

Gender, peace and security in multi-lateral context

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820, of 2008 identified rape and sexual violence against women as a crime against humanity and as a threat to international peace and security. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 of 2000 on women, peace and security tasked member states to prevent conflict and violence against women, protect women and girls' human rights; encourage the representation and participation of women and women groups in peace building process; training and deploy women personnel in conflict resolution situations. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1888, adopted in 2009, provided for stronger tools in implementing 1820 resolution by mandating peacekeeping missions to protect women and children from rampant sexual violence during armed conflict.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1889 of 2009, called for the setup of global indicators for the implementation of Resolution 1325 and greater participation of women in peace building. In 2010, in response to Resolution 1889, through the efforts of the United Nations several member states some emerging from conflict situation established national action plans on the women, peace and security resolutions. Several multilateral actors and institutions also begun to take action on women, peace and security issues. For example the Strategic Commands of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization set up parameters for implementation of Resolution 1325 through training, staffing, standards reporting on issues related to women, peace and security. The African Union also through, its solemn declaration on gender equality in Africa in 2004 affirmed its commitment to human rights as enshrined in the Dakar Platform for Action of 1994; the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against

Women of 1979; the Beijing Platforms for Action for the Advancement of Women of 1999, the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action of 2000; the UN Resolution 1325 of 2000 on Women, Peace and Security; and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa of 2003 that transformed the African Women's Committee on Peace and Development (AWCPD) into the African Union Women's Committee (AUWC) and directorate on gender and development. These frameworks recognized the role and responsibility of women in promoting peace and security in their communities.

Inter-relational aspects of gender, peace and security

According to Myrttinen, Naujoks and El-Bushra (2014) gender is a relational process because of the ways in which identities are created in relationship with each other, in the context of the whole society. Gender identities are varied and transient and they range from, male female, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and intersex persons. The importance of one's gender identity in relation to other identities is dependent on the given societal circumstances. One cannot assume that his or her gender identity is more important than the other. The vulnerability and exclusion of LGBTI in Africa as the 'unwanted others' make it rather precarious for their participation in peace and security process. In South Africa the sexual harassment of the lesbians, in Burundi and Uganda, homosexuality is illegal and LGBTI issues are largely a social taboo while in Kenya there is a declared 'official silence' on the gender minorities. All this points to the grim possibility of incorporating these categories in building peaceful and secure societies in Africa.

Gender identity and access to justice in post- conflict environment

The ability to access formal, informal and transitional justice is determined by one's gender identity. The response to women and girls victim of violence and conflict including rape face challenges in Africa. In Northern Uganda for example after many years of rebel activities women and girls victims of war and violence find it difficult to seek justice. The justice system appears not responsive to constraints of women as men dominate many of the institutions and sometimes women victims are required to facilitate the arrests of the perpetrators. There are other barriers to seeking justice such as financial constraints, religious and cultural factors that compel women to settle disputes outside courts (FIDA-Uganda, 2011:1-46). Another case of Sierra Leone after many years of violence and conflict; women also face similar challenges in seeking redress. These obstacles include; knowledge of the law and mechanisms for redress, physical accessibility, affordability, timeliness, linguistic accessibility, legal, cultural accessibility and social stigma. Others factors are political including political environment, policy decisions, funding and institutional challenges. There are capacity constraints and resource shortages,

staffing, equipment, resources and structural environment that constraint women from seeking justice (Denney and Ibrahim, 2012).

Similarly gender minorities face even greater challenges among justice and referral service providers, policymakers and in programme interventions. These forms of gender identity are undermined by 'heteronormativity' of the heterosexuality' as the only normal sexual orientation or marital relations between women and men. Men and women who transcend these norms or challenge these roles face discrimination and violence and greater challenges in seeking justice. To ignore these gender categories in our legal framework and social network is to court insecure and non- peaceful societies. The case of increased collective violence or collective rape against lesbians in South Africa is not in any sense an alternative to creating peaceful and secure societies but the moralization of violence against a section of human society and violation of fundamental human rights. South Africa through its constitution has denied the right to associate to this group as a specific gender category (Martin, Kelly, Turquet, & Ross. 2009).

Cultural barriers and power dynamics

Many of the African societies have hierarchized power structures and this limits access to power and decision making to all groups in society. In Burundi for instance, the hierarchy of power or the dominant role of elders in northern Ugandan society does not promote gender based issues or social equality. The importance of one gender in peace process depended on the societal circumstances. For instance the presence and importance of heterosexuals in a peace brokered process in either northern part of Uganda or in south Africa will face restrictions and limited freedom because their social spaces are constrained by what society approve as socially normal and acceptable behaviour. It is also important to note gender identities and roles in peace process are highly ritualized. It is not uncommon to find out that certain ritualistic roles exclude women, children and the youth and other socially marginalized gender minorities. In dealing with trans- border conflicts between the Oromo of Ethiopia and Turkana of Kenya; or between the Samburu and Turkana; there is overwhelming dominant role of male elders yet the active segment of society that perpetrate the conflicts are male warriors and most affected are children and women. The locus of societal power in the peace process falls in the hand of the male gerontocracy, state machinery and political elites. The presence of women is peripheral and restricted to activities like singing, dancing, arts and drama. The consequent impact of this is lack of sustained peace and secure societies (Patta, Hussein, Diba, Molu, Tumal, Eugenie,and Adan, 2011).

Gender and reintegration

Gender is an important factor in determining the reintegration of former combatants and returning populations with specific support programmes taking into consideration their needs and identities. The reintegration in Uganda of NRM combatants was often hampered by the lack of education, gendered stereotypes that women and girls would easily fit into the informal sector. In northern Uganda, some former Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) abductees and in Burundi women and girls preferred to migrate to cities' informal sector some engaging in prostitution and hawking. Consequently many female-headed households arose in post-conflict Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi swelling the socio-economically vulnerable sections of post-conflict societies in the region. The reintegration of other gender minorities such as the same-sex couples remain obscure. This is not withstanding the empowerment projects aimed at improving especially the economic conditions of women in these countries (Mazurana and McKay 2004).

Gender mainstreaming of the security sector

This is a strategy for making women, men and gender minorities' concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that all gender identities fit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.

In the context of security sector reform, gender mainstreaming involves considering the impact the security programmes have on the different security needs of women, men, boys, girls and gender minorities. Gender and security sector reform is a process of transforming security sector for several reasons. This includes the promotion of gender initiatives such as gender training for security sector personnel and mentoring schemes to facilitate the professional development of female and other gender minority police officers. The gendered budget ensures that resources are being distributed equally. The promotion of equal participation of men, women and gender minorities in security sector reform processes and security sector institutions is a method of strengthening local ownership as well as increasing representation and effectiveness. In relation to security sector reform processes, this may involve ensuring that women, gender minority, and men are equally involved in security sector reform needs assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and that representatives of women participate in security sector reform policy and decision making. Because men are over-represented, promoting equal participation generally involves increasing the recruitment, retention and advancement of women and gender minority.

Dealing with male-dominated, militarized command structures is still a military challenge. Recruiting more women into newly reconstructed security sector institutions and ensuring that the newly reformed justice institutions take into

account the needs of, gender minority, men and women will be instrumental in reforming the security sector.

According to the UN 2008 report gender security sector reform is key to developing security sector institutions that are non-discriminatory, representative of the population and capable of effectively responding to the specific security needs of diverse groups. Gender dimensions are often included in security sector reform processes as part of a country's commitment to UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) (UNSCR 1325), which calls for wider female participation in all aspects of post-conflict reconstruction and for more consideration of the specific needs of women and girls.

Constitutional amendment

Reforming the security sector in Kenya for instance by restructuring National Intelligence Service has its challenges. The national intelligence security act first and foremost violates bill of rights because of the arbitrary powers bestowed upon National Intelligence Service officers to detain suspects, search and seize private property and monitor communications in pretext of protecting national security. It also violates the rights of refugees and freedom of association and assembly. Countries such as South Africa may need to repeal from its national constitution the discrimination against people on the basis of sexual orientation, including by tackling the rising tide of violence against lesbian women and also demonstrate its commitment by ratifying the UN's declaration on sexual orientation and gender identity condemning violence, harassment, discrimination, exclusion, stigmatization, and prejudice based on sexual orientation and gender identity (Martin, Kelly, Turquet and Ross 2009).

Benefits of security sector reform

Effective Service Delivery

One of the key tenets of security sector reforms that the security sector should be designed to serve the security and justice needs of the population. A person's gender including sexual orientation plays an important part in his or her own security needs. Women, men, girls, boys, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons have different experiences in areas such as sexual violence, trafficking in human beings, gang violence, and robbery and their security must factored in securitization of programmes and policies.

Achieving Security Sector Objectives

The gender perspectives are a useful tool to achieving the security sector's objectives. For example, in order to encourage women who have been victims of sexual violence to report the crime; it may be important to give them the option of

speaking to a woman police officer, perhaps in a police station. In cases where men are affected similar provisions may also be needed.

Forming Partnership

It will be important to form partnerships between security providers (e.g. police, justice institutions and prisons), health care providers and civil society organisations, as part of a holistic approach to security sector reform. The health sector may need to work with civil society organization and security sector to promote emergency contraception services and other health services and make them available and accessible to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

Collaboration

Collaboration between security sector institutions and civil society groups involved in gender issues can increase the effectiveness of the security sector. Such groups can deliver training, support policy development, and on an ongoing basis, provide complementary security and justice services and keep security forces informed about issues within communities.

Appropriate Staffing

If security sector institutions lack either male or female staff at any level, their staff will possess a smaller skill set, limiting their operational options. This is in line with the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 that mandates member state to recruit and staff the security sector in line with specific needs.

Cultural Aspects

Certain security roles might for cultural reasons only be able to be performed by personnel of a particular gender, requiring both male and female personnel for effective operations. For example, in many cultures it is inappropriate for a male police officer or soldier to search a woman. Likewise, in intelligence-gathering, civilians may only be willing to speak with security sector personnel of a certain gender.

Local Ownership

Local ownership has been recognized as a key pillar in ensuring that security sector reform is both implemented correctly and sustainably. The reform of security policies, institutions and activities must be designed, managed and implemented by local actors rather than external actors. Given that security and justice needs vary by gender, it is important to ensure that people of different genders are consulted and involved. In practice, this can be achieved by involving women's groups, youth groups and other organisations that work on gender-related security issues such as human trafficking, gang violence and human rights.

Oversight and Accountability

Improving oversight and accountability of the security sector can ensure the sustainability of security and peace by building trust among the population and by deterring security sector personnel from abusing their power. To be effective, it is essential that security sector oversight bodies and accountability mechanisms (parliaments, national human rights institutions, complaints bodies, local security fora etc.) adopt a gendered perspective. This involves both giving particular attention to the different types of violations committed by security sector personnel against people of different genders, and monitoring the quality of services delivered to people of different genders.

Police ratio to civilian population

The United Nations recommended ratio is one police officer for every 450 citizens. This is far from being a reality because in some counties such as Kenya Police force of about 40,000 translates to one police officer for every 1,150 civilians. Even in these circumstances the police forces are also underfunded and poorly equipped. This is compounded further by poor pay, poor housing and corruption affecting the provision of security to the public. Countries may need to recruit more police force along gender lines to bridge the gap.

Conclusion and Recommendations

A gendered approach to security and peace will contribute to civilian ownership of the processes. The involvement of the community may take the form of neighbourhood policing; using local-level communications/ newsletters, face-to-face meetings with organized by the security personnel in order to improve perceptions of the community of the police.

The media has an important channel to create public awareness in understanding and participating in peace and security matters. The media should enhance the public responsiveness to security concerns and inform the public in a responsible manner. It should also be noted that the public has right to be informed on security matters. Engendering security sector is a crucial component of security reform. Increasing gender representation in the security sector can be a positive influence by meeting the needs and interests of various genders.

Research and academic institutions should assist in improving curriculum and conceptual understanding of gender, security and peace process. The security sector curriculum should promote democracy, different and emerging gender perspectives, human rights, good governance and the creation of a culture of accountability and transparency in the management of security sector processes.

It is also emerging from this article that we may not essentialize the meaning of gender as the natural distinction between men and women that eventually is reconstructed into social roles. It is also notable that one may not universalize the meaning of gender without the risk of ignoring emerging gender constructs and identities. The application of gender as an analytical category in peace and security building in Africa must take cognizance of all the emerging, divergent and discordant gender constructs and identities.

References

Avruch, Kevin and Joseph A. Scimecca, eds. 1991. Conflict Resolution: Cross-Cultural Perspectives. New York: Greenwood Press.

Avruch, Kevin. and Peter W. Black. 1987. "A 'Generic' Theory of Conflict Resolution: A Critique," Negotiation Journal, 3: 87-96 and 99-100.

Avruch,Kevin and Peter W. Black 1991. "The Culture Question and Conflict Resolution," Peace & Change, 16(1): 22-45.

Bailey, Martha J. 1989. "Mediation as a "Female" Process." Paper presented at the National Conference on Peace and Conflict Resolution, Montrieal 1989.

Barret,Michele and Ann Phillips. 1992. Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debates. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Barrett, Michele. 1987. "The Concept of Difference." Feminist Review, 26: 29-41.

Black, Naomi. 1989. Social Feminism. New York: Cornell University.

Boulding Elise 1984. "Focus On: The Gender Gap" Journal of Peace Research. 21 (1): 1-3.

Boulding Elise. 1992. The Underside of History: A View of Women through Time. Revised, Two Volume Set. CA: Sage Publications, INC.

Boulding, Elise. 1981. "Learning About the Future" Bulletin of Peace Proposals, 12 (2): 173-177.

Bourton, J and Dennis J.D. Sandole. 1986. "Generic Theory: The Basis of Conflict Resolution." Negotiation Journal, (October 1986): 334-344.

Bourton,J and Frank Dukes. 1990. Conflict: Practices in Management, Settlement and Resolution. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990).

Brock -Utne Birgit. 1989. Feminist Perspectives on Peace and Peace Education. New York: Pergamon Press.

Brock-Utne, Birgit. 1985. Educating for Peace: A Feminist Perspective. New York: Pergamon Press.

Brownlie and Goodwin-Gill (Eds. 1998), Basic Human Rights Documents. Oxford, England. Oxford University Press

Bunch, Charlotte. 1987. Passionate Politics: Feminist Theory in Action. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Burton, John W. 1990. Conflict: Resolution and Provention. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Burton.J 1990a. "The Role of the Scholar Practitioner in Conflict Resolution." A Paper presented at the University of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, May 1990.

Butler, Judith and Joan W. Scott. eds. 1992. Feminist Theorize the Political. New York: Routledge.

Butler, Judith. 1990. Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity. New York: Routledge.

Chodorow, Nancy. 1978. The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cocks, Joan. 1989. The Oppositional Imagination: Feminism, Critique and Political Theory. New York: Routledge.

Cohn, Carol. 1989. "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals." In Peace: Meanings, Politics, Strategies, ed. Linda Rennie Forcey, 39-72.

Cohn,Carol. 1993. "Wars, Wimps, and Women: Talking Gender and Thinking War." In Gendering War Talk, eds. Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Daily Nation, 22, 2009, "Kenya's most dangerous terrorist"

Daily Nation, June 24, 2009, "Al-Shabaab to amputate arms and legs of four teenagers". Nairobi, Kenya

Daily Nation, June26, 2009, "Somalia: Kenya Army Ready for Attack", pp. 1,4,5.

Daly, Mary. 1978. Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism. Boston: Beacon Press.

Davis, Angela. 1983. Women, Race and Class. New York: Vintage Books.

de Beauvoir, Simon. 1974. The Second Sex. New York: Random House.

de Lauretis, Teresa. ed. 1986. Feminist Studies/Critical Studies. Bloomington and Indiananpolis: Indiana University Press.

Denney L and Ibrahim, AF (2012) *Violence against women*

Dinnerstein, Dorothy. 1976. The Mermaid and the Minotaur. New York: Harper & Row.

Erin Patrick, Sexual Violence and Firewood Collection in Darfur", Forced Migration. Issue 27, Jan. 2007. Refugee Studies Centre

Ferguson, Kathy. 1993. The Man Question: Visions of Subjectivity in Feminist Theory. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Fida-Uganda (2011) In the Multiple Systems of Justice in Uganda; whither Justice for Women: Kampala Midas Publication

Forcey, Linda R. 1987. Mothers of Sons: Toward an Understanding of Responsibility. New York: Praeger.

Forcey, Linda R. 1991. "Women As Peacemakers: Contested Terrain for Feminist Peace Studies." Peace & Change, 16(4): 331-354.

Gorman, R.F. (1987), Coping with Africa's Refugee Burden: A Time for Solution. USA. Library of Congress.

Hassan S, 2015 *Human Security and Philanthropy .Islamic Perspectives and Muslim Majority.* New York: Springer.

Hossain and Isiaka 2015 Human Security in a globalized: Concepts and Issues in a Muslim World. in *Human Security and Philanthropy .Islamic perspectives and Muslim Majority*. New York : Springer.

Hirsch,A.K. 2012 *Theorizing Post conflict Reconciliation. Agonism, Restitution and Repair*. London: Routledge; Newyork: Taylor and Francis Group *in Sierra Leone .How women seek redress in http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/ publications-opinion-files/8175.pdf*

Martin A., Kelly A, Turquet, L and Ross. S (2009).Hate crimes: The rise of 'corrective' rape in South Africa. Action Aid London

Mueller Susanne 2011 "Dying to Win: Elections, Political Violence, and Institutional Decay in Kenya"*Journal of Contemporary African Studies, vol. 29 (1)http://blds. ids.ac.uk/cf/opaccf/detailed.cfm?RN=324993*

Mazurana, D. and McKay,S. (2004). *Where are the Girls? Girls in Fighting Forces in Northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique: Their Lives During and After War.* Canada: Rights and Democracy.

Oluoch, K, Implementation of International refugee Law: The Case of Kenya (Unpublished)

Patta S,V, Hussein, B. U., Diba K., Molu K, Tumal Orto, Eugenie R and Adan S. (2011)*The Long Conversation :Customary Approaches to Peace Management in Southern Ethiopia and Northern Kenya*. Working Paper 022 in www.future-agricultures.org

The Standard, 21.6.2009, "Minister Issues warning to Refugees". Nairobi, Kenya, p7

The Standard, 25.6.2009, "High Alert over Somalia", p1

UNHCR (1993), The State of World Refugees: The Challenges of Protection. New York, USA. Penguin Books

UNHCR (2006), Report on Dadaab in Brief. Nairobi, Kenya.

About Author

Samuel A. Nyanchoga *is a professor of history and peace studies. He is the current dean of the faculty of arts and social sciences at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. He has also served as the director of the institute for regional integration and development at the same university. He is also a recipient of many local and international research awards. He has consulted for organizations such as International Labour Organisation; Institute of Social Studies; Kenya Parliamentary Women Association; National Cohesion and Integration Commission; The Commission for University Education; Kenyan Human Rights Commission and AMISOM. He is also an external examiner for Kenyatta University; Mount Kenya University; University of Nairobi and Masinde Muliro University.*