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Terrain of Contention: Women's Role in Peace-building and Development in Kadoma, Zimbabwe

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ABSTRACT: *This paper examines the role played by women in peace-building and seeks to unpack the dynamics surrounding the policy making process. The study adopted a descriptive and explanatory approach in which qualitative methods were employed. Thus, a case study approach was adopted using the Women Coalition of Zimbabwe. A sample of 15 women was selected using purposive sampling and in-depth interviews were used to answer the research question. In addition, document review of existing literature, reports, minutes and research papers were scrutinised. Research findings reflect that despite the traditional challenges that are faced by women they were able to contribute significantly to the conclusion of politically motivated violence (PMV) in Kadoma in Zimbabwe and have earned a position of respect in society that has given them a larger role to play in government and politics. Despite the fact that women are greatly affected by conflicts, their participation in peace-building has been limited. To date there is no specific law in Zimbabwe that specifically criminalizes perpetration of PMV per se, but there are various pieces of legislation out lawing acts of violence against other individuals. As such, this paper recommends constructive actions that assure productive involvement of women in peace-building and development. There is an urgent need for the enactment of a specific law that directly criminalizes politically motivated violence.*

Key words: Development, Gender, Peace-building, Violence, Women

Introduction

As global politics changed with as many women entering the field of politics and conflict resolution, the number of females in peace building increased especially at community level

where they are considered the heart of a community (Anasias, 2006; Beardsley, 2006). As a result, this study examined the role that is played by women towards peace building initiatives in Kadoma, a small town in Mashonaland West province in Zimbabwe as a result of politically motivated violence in 2008. The participation of women in peace building activities is a major issue in Kadoma and Zimbabwe as evidenced by the various conflicts that have been in existence since the formation of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), a party that strongly opposes the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African national Unity, Patriotic Front (ZANU, PF). Since the dawn of the new millennium some 19 years ago, Kadoma has nationally been considered as a very politically unstable city and violence is alleged to be more distinct in the district too. Thus, it became a target of the incumbent ruling government to intervene through its party to try and lure women through engaging them in various developmental projects.

According to a report by ZWLA (2011), these areas used to be strongholds of the ruling party ZANU (PF) and women were expected to continue to be loyal to the party. The violence was as a result of the shock because of the votes which were allocated to the opposition party, MDC. Such a development made peace building a necessity in the province and in the city (Simone, 2006; Barnet, 2007). The objective of having women who are capacitated in peace building initiatives and are knowledgeable to engage with citizens at local and national level towards ending politically motivated violence in Kadoma proved to be a huge step forward. Zimbabwe has a long history of political violence since colonial times, stretching to the liberation period of the late 1960s. Politically motivated violence (PMV) is defined as unlawful use of force violence against persons or property in order to coerce or intimidate a government or the civilian population in furtherance of political or social objectives (Anderlini, 2007; Madondo, 2008; ZWLA, 2011).

In Zimbabwe, PMV dates as far back as the pre-colonial era where violence was mostly driven and inspired by the struggle for land, resources and chieftainships. However, in the colonial era it was mostly centered on the struggle for land and ethnic recognition (Barry, 2004; Babbie, 2010). In the post-colonial era however, violence became much more pronounced and mostly centered on the struggle for political hegemony, and this period saw many Zimbabweans being exposed to all forms of violence particularly during and after elections. The most notable recorded politically motivated violence occurred in the events that followed the referendum of the year 2000 and the pre-election period of 2008. Post-election conflicts saw many people losing their lives, maimed, raped, abducted, losing properties and exposed to all forms of torture.

In all PMV cases, women have been exposed to violations such as rape and sexual violence, murder, threats and arson. This has necessitated a considerable number of civic and human rights organizations to intervene to address challenges facing women that have emerged internationally, regionally and locally. The United Nations plays an expanded role in spearheading women peace-building initiatives in Africa and the rest of the world. United Nations Security Resolution 1325 is a landmark international legal framework that addresses not only inordinate impact of war on women but also pivotal role women should play in conflict management, conflict resolution and sustainable peace (Simone, 2006; Save the Children UK, 2008). Resolution 1325 is important in promoting international law, women empowerment, military and global security whose four pillars rest on participation, protection, prevention, relief and recovery.

In making gender equality the UN only thematic mandate a new doctrinal imperative was created for ensuring systematic attention and resources to advancing gender equality within transitional recovery, reintegration and reconstruction efforts. Furthermore, other key frameworks for setting out parameters for implementing peace-building are CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action, and Millennium Development Goal 3. In Africa the frameworks are Solemn Declaration of Gender equality, the protocol of the African Charter on Human Rights ACHPR, African Union Policy on post conflict reconstruction development, Southern Africa Development Community, Inter Governmental Authority on Development IGAD, Economic Community of West African States ECOWAS gender equality policies on women being the center of peace building and Early Warning mechanisms (Stedman et al, 2002; Barnett, 2007; Madondo, 2008). All these frameworks focus on women being at the center of peace building and they provide strategies and activities that could be implemented through various strategies such as national action plans on peace-building. Formal peace processes can benefit from the participation of women.

In Kadoma women have been participating in peace-building through women organizations like women Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ). The WCoZ's engagement in peace processes considers international guidelines and ideals as set out in international conventions that Zimbabwe is a signatory or party to. The documents include key international and regional women's human rights instruments such as the UNSCR 1325, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), CEDAW, the Rome Statute of the Criminal Court, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the Protocol to the African Charter on the rights of Women in Africa, and the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equity in Africa. In the absence of adequate domestic legislation and

safeguards to guarantee effective participation of women in the public life of their country, these instruments have served as a standard against which women's participation in the peace process is assessed (MacPherson, 2008; Corner and Repucci, 2009).

Problem Statement

The central problem to be addressed in this study is the failure to recognise and credit immensely the role of women in the peace building process during conflicts in Zimbabwe particularly in Kadoma. Over the past decade the deterioration in Zimbabwe's governance and security landscape has been accompanied by an increasing awareness in the global arena of the need and utility of women's perspective and participation in peace building (Madondo, 2008; Zimbabwe Women's Lawyers Association, 2011). In 2000 the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) calling for the active engagement of women in peace and security. Furthermore, in 2008 SADC passed a protocol on gender and development to reflect the need for women's perspective and engagement in peace, security and development. Thus, Zimbabwean women have gone through a history of conflicts and recently politically motivated violence which has seen them going through many forms of abuse (Save the Children UK, 2008; Onyido, 2013). Historically women have been discriminated against and underrepresented in the traditional male dominated political and social economic structure of Zimbabwe because of many reasons which include tradition and culture. In the same vein, Kadoma and its residents is no different, their rights are violated and they have little access to peace building activities, yet their role can be effective because of their influence as mothers and nurtures. More so, women can play powerful mediation and negotiation roles. Nonetheless, this state of comatose in Zimbabwe and Kadoma in particular leads this study to explore and validate the esteem that women are regarded with as far as peace building is concerned and to establish if they can complement the role that males are playing trying to keep the world in peace through various activities.

Research Objectives

The foremost aim of the study was to explore the involvement and challenges faced by women in peace-building and development in Kadoma, Zimbabwe using Women Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) as a case study. The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- To investigate the role played by Women Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) in dealing with Politically Motivated Violence (PMV) in Kadoma.

- To identify strategies adopted by WCoZ in dealing with the causes and effects of PMV in Kadoma.

- To investigate the challenges faced by WCoZ in dealing with PMV in Kadoma

Review of Related Literature

Positive and Negative peace

Johan Galtung, the father of peace studies refers to the distinction between negative and positive peace (Lederach, 1995). Negative peace refers to the absence of war, fear, direct violence and conflict at individual, national, regional and international levels. It is negative because something undesirable is stopped from happening. It requires institutional reforms to prevent acts of direct physical violence committed by individuals or groups. Negative perception of a former enemy or conflicting party is neutralized or shifted after a violent conflict is settled. In this scenario, there may be little or no hostility but the conflicting parties may be skeptical to engage in positive interactions that might lead to building trust. During the period of negative peace, there is no emphasis on dealing with the causes of violence in peace because it involves the elimination of the root causes of violence, injustice and the conscious or conflict. Rather, it is limited by addressing the manifestation of factors that led to violence. Positive peace is more than the absence of violence. It is the presence of social justice through equal opportunity, a fair distribution of power and resources, equal protection and impartial enforcement of law (Maunganidze, 2009). Positive peace also refers to the absence of indirect and structural violence, the absence of unjust structures and unequal relationships. It refers to peace on different levels like behavioral, attitudes or structures (Simone, 2006; MacPherson, 2008). Positive peace is filled with positive contents such as the restoration of relationships, the constructive resolution of conflict and the creation of social systems that serve the needs of the whole population. Positive peace encompasses all aspects of a good society that one might envisage for oneself which includes universal rights, economic well-being, ecological balance and other core values. It describes a situation where justice and fairness reign, it seeks to promote and improve the quality of life.

Efforts to achieve positive peace emphasize establishing peace through world order by supporting international law, compliance with multilateral treaties, use of international courts, non-violent resolution of conflicts, participation in international organizations, trade and commerce. The efforts also emphasize establishment of social equality and justice, economic

equity, ecological balance, protecting citizens from attack, meeting human basic needs. They further emphasize establishing a civil peace that provides the constitutional and legal means necessary to settle differences non-violently, eliminating indirect violence that shortens lifespan, sustains unequal life chances or reduces quality of life for any citizen (Corner and Repucci, 2009). The concept of positive effort to build a society that reflects these commitments means practicing conflict resolution as a foundation for building peaceful interpersonal and institutional relationships. The implication on PMV is that as positive peace is emphasized it automatically gets rid of politically motivated violence. A culture of peace is an integral approach to preventing violence and violent conflicts and an alternative to the culture of war and violence. It is the promotion of sustainable economic and social development, respect for human rights equality between men and women and democratic participation. A culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems, have the skills to resolve conflicts and struggle for justice non-violently, live by international standards of human rights and equity, appreciate cultural diversity, and respect the Earth and each other (Anderson and Rieff, 2004; Potter, 2007).

Role of Civil Society Movements in Peace building

Civil society include human rights groups, women associations, the press, trade unions, student organizations and the modern NGOs, local and international. Civil society is a political arena where governance and development, including peace building goals are contested (Skoufias et al, 2011). They closely interact with the state and are shaped by the enabling environment defined by the state. It acts as a link between state and citizens in promoting values, accountability, and voice and channeling information. While civil initiatives often emerge when states and markets fail, they cannot fully replace state functions and formal political processes. For instance, civil societies groups in Kadoma have been incorporated into peace processes because they can popularize peace deals and put pressure on belligerents to mobilize popular support for the peace process. However, some civil society groups can also play the very useful roles in securing peace deals, and ensuring those agreements are respected (Ile and Mapuva, 2010). The civil society, in the post war situation is extremely relevant in the process of peace building. Kadoma being a vibrant city and hive of activity has diverse civil society groups which include community faith-based organizations', women's groups, student and youth groups, human rights and governance groups, civic education groups professional and media groups, trade union groups as well as Community Based Organizations' (CBOs). Since the formation of the inclusive government

focus of civic society has been more on peace building and constitutional reform among other functions.

Precisely, Kadoma has been for over a decade and a half in a political, economic and social crisis, deeply exacerbated by political and violent developments that followed harmonized elections held in 2008 in which it voted for the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). In this context civil society have played a crucial role in the peace process of mitigating conflict, healing and national reconciliation by implementing a number of activities to protect victims, support right defenders (Maunganidze, 2009; Onyido, 2013). Over the past years CSOs have worked with the Organ on National Healing as well as engaged in the Monitoring and Implementation Committee and Zimbabwean multi-partisan panel. Building capacities for conflict resolution at all levels is a universal priority with education as its most comprehensive means. CSOs in Zimbabwe are active in conducting public campaigns to raise awareness of the impact of conflicts.

Empirical Evidence on the Role of women in Peace building

A number of studies were done in Africa and Latin America on the role of women in peace building. In 2006 a study was done in Uganda on how women groups and activists in Uganda engage in the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security (Lefko-Everett, 2007). The findings revealed that there is an implementation gap between intentions for implementing UNSCR 1325 and action for change in Uganda. Another study was done comparing the roles of women in peace building in countries emerging from conflict. A comparison was done for Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala. It was revealed that women had been marginalized before but were making room for them and were becoming part of peace building efforts (Beaver, 2010). In Sierra Leone a study was done on the role of women in conflict management. The research revealed that there had been improvements in the participation of women in conflict management. The government was making efforts to include women in peace building. Therefore from these studies it is clear that women are starting to get involved in peace building even though it is still at a very low level.

Theoretical Framework

Feminist Theory

Feminism is the belief in the social, political and economic equality of the sexes. Feminist theory is an outgrowth of the general movement to empower women worldwide. Feminism can be defined as a recognition and critique of male supremacy combined with efforts to

change it. The goals of feminism are to demonstrate the importance of women. To reveal that historically women have been subordinate to men and feminists have tried to bring about gender equality. Simply put feminists fight for equality of women and argue that women should share equally in society's opportunities and scarce resources (Potter, 2007; Beaver, 2010; Skoufias et al, 2011). Hence, there are liberal feminist, Marxist, socialist and development feminists. Theoretically, liberal feminism claims that gender differences are not based in biology and therefore that women and men are not different at all. Their common humanity supersedes their procreative differentiation. If men and women are not different then they should not be treated differently hence, women should have the same rights as men and the same educational and work opportunities. Thus, it was Marxist feminism that put housewives into the structure of capitalism. Marxist and socialist feminists severely criticize the family as a source of women's oppression and exploitation (Coletta and Cullen, 2000; Burgess, 2003; Peberdy, 2009; Onyido, 2013). They argue that the source of women's oppression is their economic dependence on a husband and their solution is full time jobs for women. Development feminism made an important theoretical contribution in equating women's status with the control of economic resources (Moser and Moser, 2005). Thus, radical feminism as movement popularized and brought women attention to the control of economic resources and political involvement.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive and explanatory study in which qualitative methods were employed. Qualitative research was used to gain an in-depth insight into matters that affect human behavior and is characterized by its aims which relate to understanding some aspects of social and its methods which stimulate words rather than numbers (Barnett, 2007). The methodology was adopted for the study mainly because methods aim to understand the experiences and attitudes of people when it looks to answer the phenomena of the role of women in peace building through the case study of Women Coalition of Zimbabwe and its activities as well as interventions in Kadoma, "The City of Gold." The case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources. This ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood. The target population was women involved in peace-building and development in Kadoma District. A sample of 15 women was selected using purposive sampling and data was collected using in-depth interviews, observations and documentary analysis.

Ethical considerations

The study on Politically Motivated Violence is a very sensitive area and therefore preset minimal risk to participants pertaining to exposure. Care was taken to ensure that participants fully understood the nature of the study and the fact that participation was voluntary. Ethical considerations taken into perspective entailed; freedom from coercion, all respondents as well as research assistants freely responded to questions or participated freely without being duly forced. The right to full information, the researcher was privileged to have an explicit right to full information for academic purposes after signing an oath. Participants were assured on their right to participate and protection from unnecessary risk, and every member of the population or research assistants participated without being subjected to unnecessary risk. Right to privacy, dignity, and protection from embarrassment and stigmatization, as such research participants were neither stigmatized nor embarrassed but rather enjoyed their privacy and dignity (Babbie, 2010).

Research Findings and Discussions

The study was carried out in Kadoma with specific reference to Kadoma Women Chapter, Kadoma Young Women Organisation as well as Women Coalition and other female organizations that were sampled out. There are various justifications which could be made to this sample representation gender wise. The first one could be the fact that the case study is of a female organizations, hence their domination in a study of this nature could be drawn from the fact that they are the owners of the study and they automatically represent themselves in large numbers so as to make an impact. This could have motivated other females to participate due to the fact that their partner organizations which represent women have been part of the case study of this research. The other reason could be that most women are not perpetrators of politically motivated violence but are just victims of political abuse hence they find themselves in a position where they have to influence political violence in one way or the other. Males on the other hand find it difficult to participate in such programmes because they are in most circumstances, the ones who instigate politically motivated violence.

Role played by Women Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ) in dealing with Politically Motivated Violence (PMV) in Kadoma

WCoZ is always engaged in peace building activities in the Kadoma District. For instance, they have a project currently being run in Kadoma which is called Peace Building Project. The June 2008 political violence saw many women and children being raped, tortured and even killed by state security forces and political supporters from mainly ZANU PF (ZWLA,

9 | P a g e

2011). During this period, many women and children sought refuge from the WCoZ membership, in the form of food, clothing, security and other needs. Since this was an emergency response, WCoZ membership noted that there was need for the organization to engage in peace building activities, through engaging with policy makers towards promoting peace in Zimbabwe at local, national, regional and global level. Furthermore, women's organizations also noted that there was need to strengthen the capacity of women in engaging in conflict mediation and conflict resolution at the local level (Maunganidze, 2009; Ile and Mapuva, 2010). It is in light of this background that WCoZ in partnership with woman kind and in collaboration with four member organizations and provincial chapters in Masvingo, Midlands and Mashonaland Central, managed to secure funding for three years in coordinating peace building activities implemented in the above provinces from 2010-2013. The project was entitled "Increasing women's participation in Zimbabwe's peace building process", taking into account Zimbabwe's transitional phase and national healing process. The key outcome of this project was to have a movement of women's rights activist who are capacitated in peace building and are able to engage with policy makers at local and national level towards ending politically motivated violence in Zimbabwe (Save the Children UK, 2010; ZWLA, 2011).

WCoZ is also networking with like-minded organizations under the banner of the Peace building Network of Zimbabwe, NANGO, IDAZIM, Gender Links and other academic institutions and NGOs in an effort to develop alternatives to the current political environment, through engagement and influencing policies and laws that protect the vulnerable groups including women (Madondo, 2008). Furthermore, WCoZ uses the UNSCR1325 in its lobbying and advocacy activities, to ensure that women and girls are protected from all forms of violence, including politically motivated violence, through engaging specific government ministries such as the Ministry of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development and the Organ on National Healing, Reconciliation and Integration (ONHRI). Innovative strategies have been developed to ensure compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law by all actors, military as well as non-state. Applied judiciously targeted sanctions on individuals and parties to conflict may have a restraining effect and deter violence. Provision of human and financial resources to deliver care to victims of violence and providing ongoing training for all actors remains critically important (Onyido, 2013). Participants noted that the government needs support for the development of national action plans on women, peace and security. It was also agreed that there is need for a Security Council monitoring system to ensure systematic integration and implementation of resolution 1325 in the council's work.

Strategies of peace-building

In Kadoma it has been observed that community ownership is essential for success and sustainability of recovery efforts as well as for building consensus around recovery objects and reinforcing local capacities. Government transition strategy and plan, based on a clear strategy and timeframe is key with capacity development as the main catalyst. National ownership cannot fully materialize if those national actors and institutions ultimately responsible for a country do not have the required capacities to manage and lead (Madondo, 2008). Crises are also opportunities for change and reform, the concept of build back better seeks to avoid simply rebuilding what existed before and places a premium on rehabilitation of services and institutions through the application of better standards and methods of reconstruction and the adaptation of improved policies (Corner and Repucci, 2009). Mahedwa Community Trust in Kadoma Chairperson had this to say,

> *"Most of our group members concur that the majority of residents in Rimuka do find solace and sense of belonging to projects and institutions in which they have more interaction and also ownership. Their contributions and community is transcends all."*

In this regard, the bottom-up participatory approaches foster national and community ownership beyond the central governmental level. It is essential for sustainable results-oriented solutions to the delivery of goods and services and the empowerment of vulnerable populations.

It can be noted that, participation of women throughout the transition process is present with special focus on the marginalized and vulnerable. Flexible funding, adequate predictable and flexible funding is essential to support peace building efforts. Appropriate funding mechanisms are indispensable to have an impact on the ground in a timely manner. There are two times element dimensions in peace building, timely quick-impact interventions are critical in influencing peace building outcomes, however peace building is a long-term process that may take a generation to bear fruit (Peberdy, 2009). Rapid response is sufficient for success. Enforcing the rule of law is essential if post conflict societies are to attain lasting sustainable peace. The rule of law is needed in the local justice system, the police force, and prison system. Typical measures include training judges, prosecutor, police and correctional staff as well as advising local politicians and jurists on constitutional matters and setting up independent courts (ZWLA, 2011). In conflicts with multiple actors, negotiation and mediation are often used as conflict resolution tools, however gender is rarely considered

when choosing participants to be part of negotiating teams. Lasting peace is only possible when all members of a society regardless of gender are taken into account during peace.

Challenges faced by WCoZ in dealing with PMV in Kadoma

There is a noticeable gap between policy and implementation that must be closed hence, more need to be done at the country level to mainstream gender perspectives at every stage of conflict prevention, resolution and management as well as peace building. Gender perspectives have not been mainstreamed in all policy processes to make sure that peace building activities do not disadvantage women. More so, there is lack of respect on international laws as applicable to women and girls. The government of Zimbabwe is not taking special measures to protect women and girls from politically motivated violence and to end an impunity that includes those responsible for committing sexual violence against women.

Conclusion

Women should be the strategic partners in peace building because they are the primary victims and survivors of conflict. There is an urgent need to talk about the role of women as strategic partners in ensuring sustainable peace in communities. There is need for visibility and participation of women in peace building efforts. Women must be included in coming with their own ways of addressing conflicts from their own level as stakeholders in violence and conflict. Peace building should not be left to the political players alone but should foster the ability of women to promote the conditions of non-violence. Peace building should include women because they clearly have a role to play by virtue of their unique experiences. During conflict times they may miss out on education, get raped, become sex slaves and suffer some forms of violence that might need to be addressed when considering sustainable peace strategies. Communities or states that have ignored or have not appropriately recognized the positive contribution that their women make in their society remain developmentally behind or become dysfunctional (Stedman et al, 2002). Women have to shake off the restrictions of their cultures and live in a new way. Getting women into the negotiating room is just the first step of building foundations for lasting peace. Inclusion of women in peace building should be everybody's responsibility as it cuts across different layers of society.

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