



CONTINUITIES OF GENDERED VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT MAKING POLITICAL ECONOMY VISIBLE

*Insights by
young Feminists from the global South*

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN)



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Title: Continuities of Gendered Violence in Conflict Making Political Economy Visible

Insights by young Feminist from the global South

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Introduction

Vagisha Gunasekara

Background

“Political Economy of Conflict and Violence against Women” is a research project initiated by DAWN as a contribution to advancing advocacy and scholarship on gendered violence in conflict-affected regions of the world. This project commenced after collective reflection on prevailing ideas about conflict and violence that are central to peacebuilding discourses and praxis. Diverse understandings and articulations of conflict notwithstanding, a narrow perspective of conflict and violence continues to dominate peacebuilding analysis. This project aims to advance a nuanced perspective on conflict and violence, through a broader, multidisciplinary and an interlinked ‘political economy lens’. We base this analysis on complex economic, social, political and cultural dynamics in various contexts, with special reference to some of the multilayered contexts of the global South. Through case studies of countries and areas both in conflict and post conflict in Mozambique, Palestine, South Africa and Liberia, we offer fresh perspectives on how violence against women is deeply embedded in local political economies of war, conflict and transition.

The case studies build on DAWN’s book *The Political Economy of Conflict and Violence against Women: Cases from the South* (Zed Books, London, 2019), a new collection addressing violence against women in conflict zones across the global South. This project deciphers entangled political, economic, social and ideological processes that produce conflict of which gendered violence is an integral part. The case studies can be best characterized as feminist interrogations of distinct political economies that demonstrate how sexual regimes and orders are linked to spaces of production.

In this series, we focus on four countries –Mozambique, Palestine South Africa and Liberia. The case studies shed light on a multiplicity of forms in which violence against women manifests in different contexts and at various levels. They provide a rich variation for the study of gendered and violent relations in political economies of conflict.

Approach and Methodology

At the inception of this project, we asked ourselves a crucial question – what do we mean by conflict? Posing this question clarified that the analyses of sexual and other violence during war and conflict assumed an imaginary ‘border’ between war and the temporal boundaries of “pre-war” and “post-war”. Therefore, violence against women during war and conflict tended to bear an ‘exceptionalised’ nature. However, our work over the decades with women who had experienced violence and in/security revealed that these conditions were mediated through a range of constantly changing social and economic structures - culture, religion, family, sexual division of labour and power, inequalities in employment opportunities and incomes, development practices, identity, sexuality and gender – that thread through times before and after, as much as during war and conflict. The principle question that drove this project helped us engage in the broader exercise of looking at conflict and peacebuilding as continuities, as opposed to a ‘race’ at the end of which there lie a narrow set of answers and singled-out agents to frame as perpetrators or victims and a limited set of time bound ‘solutions’ that peace processes ending in agreements often envisage.

What became clear from our past work was that war and conflict consist of complex, multi-layered internal and global political economic dimensions. This underlying web of

political economic processes of conflict and war is tightly knit to the nature of relations between the national and the global economy in post-colonial nation states in the global South. Hence, as much as these processes are deeply enmeshed in the causes and consequences of war and conflict, they also shape the aftermath of post conflict transition, reconstruction, recovery and peace. These rich and varied insights compelled us therefore to interrogate existing frames of analysis that sought to understand violence against women in conflict and war. This collection of case studies, in many ways, is a modest attempt to challenge ourselves to ‘read’ or ‘map’ how patterns of violence against women are produced and reproduced in the broader relations between national and global economy, as well as in the political (and military) relations of conflict shaped by prevalent internal and external ideological and political paradigms and geo-political contentions.

This series brings together the work of a group of young feminists from the global South. They set off from their own experiences, of conflict, formal peace processes and transitional justice mechanisms. The authors are diverse in their background, experience, and academic and disciplinary orientations. They work in different political, economic, social and cultural contexts and some have approached writing about the political economies of violence against women in their own countries as much (or more) from lived experience and experiential insights as from formal or scholarly re-search, which we consider entirely valid and in keeping with feminist epistemology. The methods they have employed in developing the case studies are based on observation, reflection, activism, advisory roles, qualitative research and shared experiences.

Main Findings

The case studies provide fine-grained analyses of how gendered violence is embedded in diverse political economies. The case study on Mozambique titled *Reimagining Conflict: the (in)visible web of conflict in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique* sets the tone for the series by **situating conflict and violence within the context of a thriving extractives industry in Cabo Delgado**. Instead of providing an in-depth analysis on a focused subject, the author Angela Collet chooses to identify spaces of conflict and gendered violence during a decade of structural shifts that were ushered in by the “big investment boom” in megaprojects of oil and gas and other mining ventures. The author carefully outlines the multi-dynamic context into which the extractive industries are ushered. This context is characterised by a heterogeneous social space with different ethnolinguistic groups, waves of migration and miscegenation. Strong patriarchal norms and persisting gender inequalities define this social space. Despite the accelerated economic growth primarily driven by the extractives industry and the proliferation of multilateral aid programmes targeting food security, nutrition, agriculture and education, income inequality and poverty are on the upward trend. The author factors in Cabo Delgado’s ecological changes by drawing attention to increasing evidence of climate change, and the devastating impact of Cyclone Kenneth in March 2019.

Collet (2020) interrogates the **compatibility of the profit orientation of the extractives industry with inclusion and sustainability**. She problematises the position advanced by the Government of Mozambique, UN agencies and civil society organisations (CSOs) on environmental compensation, including the idea of ‘rewards’ and funds by extractives companies, rather than approaches of ‘preservation’, ‘respect for nature’ (espoused by local communities) and ‘ecological justice’. She also interrogates **whether rapid economic growth such as that which has dawned upon Cabo Delgado with the extractives industry**

has, in fact, helped alleviate poverty and inequality of the local population, especially in the face of a migratory and expatriate workforce that is now occupying the area to work in the mines and related industries. In a context where 'free-rein' is given to 'big capital', Collet (2020) outlines mutual dynamics that explain various conflicts, ranging from insurgent attacks waged by disgruntled young men who are excluded from the economy and political spaces, youth who struggle with reconciling their local culture and the 'work culture' promoted by the extractives industry, and clashes between local and indigenous ideas respecting and working with nature to the market-oriented view of 'conquering' nature. In this context, the author charts out several spaces of gendered conflict, such as at the confines of one's home where men contain their wives through violence, restraining them from attending functional literacy classes, entrepreneurial activities, early pregnancies, premature unions, polygamous relationships and by assigning excessive domestic (productive and reproductive) workloads. The case study of Mozambique sets up a working framework of conflict by interlinking various political and economic dynamics that can be broadened and further explored. This can also be explored in relation to post war transition and recovery that is envisioned primarily in terms neoliberal economic interventions, which serve not to resolve and end the causes of conflict but to create consequences that can only result invariably in further conflict.

The case study on Palestinian workers in Israeli Settlements by Kholoud Al Ajarma (2020) – The Colonizer and Gendered Economic Violence: the impact of prolonged Israeli occupation in Palestine on women's economic survival - situates women's experiences, violence and violations of Palestinian people's rights as workers against the backdrop of Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands. Drawing on her interviews and observations of Palestinian women workers in Israeli settlements, Al Ajarma (2020) demonstrates the embeddedness of violence against women in the Israeli settlements on Palestinian lands that are deemed illegal under International Law. She charts out the gradual dispossession of Palestinians since 1948 with the "Nakba" – the mass exodus of Palestinians between 1947 and 1948 to make room for the Israeli state. Rural Palestinians who mainly engaged in agriculture became the most vulnerable due to the incremental and continuous confiscation of land and natural resources and the restrictions on the movement of people, goods and labour. Al Ajarma (2020) points to the 2007 blockade of Gaza and the construction of the "Apartheid Wall" as a recent milestone of the continuous dispossession of Palestinian people. Through this annexation, she argues, Israel has acquired the main aquifers and prime agricultural land, depriving the Palestinians of access to water, housing, land property, health care and employment opportunities. Under the circumstances of economic hardship, lack of alternative livelihoods, high unemployment and the declining quality of life, Palestinian women have no option but to work in the Israel-controlled settlements in order to support their families. As she argues, Israel has effectively orchestrated the creation of a large residual (and dispensable) Palestinian labour force within the political economy of settlements.

Al Ajarma (2020) then demonstrates the nature and the spaces in which violence against Palestinian women takes place. She outlines violence in economic relations such as low wages, harsh working conditions and long workdays. The brokers who supply cheap Palestinian (female) labour to the Israeli settlements play a key role in inflicting coercion and violence vis-à-vis their role in this distinct and unregulated political economy. Making disproportionate profits by supplying labour, these brokers act as both 'saviours' who find Palestinian men and women work, and as exploiters who confiscate large sums of money from the daily wages of the workers. The case study elaborates gendered

violence that is produced by economic necessity, which is constructed by the deliberate destruction of indigenous industries, including agriculture, by Israeli occupation.

Heanneah S. Farwenee's (2020) account of Liberia titled *Political Economy of Wartime Violence against Women: the case of Liberia* situates intimate partner violence against rural women in Montserrado County, Monrovia within political and economic dynamics of the Liberian war. The author's interviews with and observations of six women who live in rural communities reveal the experience of violence in the context of war and in its aftermath. With the lived experiences of the six women in Montserrado, Farwenee (2020) takes us back to the centrality of the deeply gendered physical, sexual and emotional violence during wartime. She draws attention to 'fear' as the predominant state of mind of the women living in extreme poverty and unable to participate in their local economies. The women categorically stress the physical and psychological abuse from their partners that have debilitating effects on their mobility, and thereby the capacity to participate in the local economies. Through women's narratives, the author demonstrates the nature of structural violence women face from the family, repressive governance structures, a patriarchal legal system and a male-centric rule of law at the community level. The women's narratives also reveal how women's needs as individuals are often circumscribed by the needs of the family in the collectivist Liberian culture.

Dela Gwala's (2020) case study on South Africa titled *Undercutting the lives of South African Women: Sexual violence and the NGO funding crisis in post-Apartheid South Africa* reveals that despite high levels of sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence in post-Apartheid South Africa, a legacy of the country's conflict, the government and the international donor community are rapidly curtailing funds to address this issue. She argues that these actions by the government and the international donor community are 're-traumatizing' the people (mostly women) and perpetuating an insidious form of structural violence. The author draws from multiple accounts of the Apartheid era to show high levels of endemic violence that take an explicitly gendered and sexual form. She points to the continuation of violence as a legacy of intermittent repression and state brutality.

During its transition period, the country invested in strengthening and re-creating its formal democratic structures, rather than addressing glaring socioeconomic inequalities. The country's transitional justice mechanisms acknowledged the inherent gender-based violence much later, but even when it received attention, it took a distinct form. The formal mechanisms of transitional justice and reconciliation in post-Apartheid South Africa tended to focus on sexual violence that was politically driven. All other forms of violence, the everyday terror experienced by women, for example, was swiftly ignored.

As Gwala (2020) highlights, the South African peace and transitional justice process adopted the narrow, but dominant view of conflict and violence, and as a result, the international donor community rushed into support "Thuthuzela Care Centres" (TCCs), a one-stop-shop for victims of sexual violence. However, with the assumed 'end' of the South African conflict, funding for these institutions, which came primarily from the international donor community and to a lesser extent from the South African government, is barely trickling in. The author sheds light on the challenges faced by the TCCs in delivering an indispensable service to women of South Africa in the current funding environment. In light of growing inequalities and increasing levels of sexual violence against women in South Africa, the author argues that erroneous and short-sighted

perspectives of conflict and violence have produced warped visions of rectifying past injustices. Furthermore, she asserts that the South African state and the international donor community must be held responsible for fueling and perpetuating the trauma in historically marginalised communities.

Taken together, the case studies offer a nuanced reading of gendered violence within rapidly changing political and economic configurations at global and local levels. Each author pegs herself to a particular mode of power and control within a selected space, and this determines how they 'read' and 'map' violence. Collectively they argue that end of conflict and war rarely marks an end to violence against women and draw attention to the significance of structural violence, long-term oppression, discrimination and impoverishment in the lives of women that are the hallmarks of structural violence.

Mozambique

By
Angela Collet

Reimagining Conflict: the (In) visible web of conflict in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique



***Conflict:** From the Latin for “to clash or engage in a fight”, a confrontation between one or more parties aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means or ends. Conflict may be either manifested, recognizable through actions or behaviours, or latent, in which case it remains dormant for some time, as incompatibilities are unarticulated or are built into systems or such institutional arrangements as government, corporations, or even civil society. (Glossary, UNPEACE - Africa Programme, 2005)*

Ideas about conflict are central to discourses and praxis of peacebuilding. But diverse conceptualisations of conflict notwithstanding, in many cases, a narrow perspective continues to dominate peacebuilding analysis and strategies. Based on complexities in contexts of our current fierce world, nuanced analyses demand an expanded, multidisciplinary, interlinked *political economy lens* (as put forward by DAWN, 2019) on conflict. Strategies that lead to structural and sustainable change towards peacebuilding require an understanding of intersecting inequalities underlying the context and root causes of conflict. As currently recalled with regard to the Northern Mozambique (Habibe et al., 2019) context of conflict, the complexity of the phenomena requires more in-depth interdisciplinary research that takes into account a multiplicity of historical, social, political, economic and religious factors. Moreover, it suggests that more than bringing conclusions, research can lead to a series of questions.

So, what do we mean by conflict? Reflecting on this question is an exercise in looking at conflict and peacebuilding as a continuous learning process rather than a race, chasing

for narrow answers or single agents to blame or criminalise¹. A holistic perspective of conflict goes beyond the boundaries of national settings and accounts for historical patterns of structural inequalities and intersecting and layered power relations in any given context. For instance, it is critical to understand “that violence is at the heart of social organisation, and gender relations and violence are mutually constitutive” (Confortini, 2006 in DAWN 2019). Within this perspective, it is key to reflect that “the root causes of violence may well be present prior to, during and in the aftermath of conflict and war” (DAWN, 2019:01) and that social justice and democracy² are key factors to be addressed at the core of the conflict and peacebuilding debate. As noted in the pan-African feminist digital platform Africa Feminism (2019)³, a notion of Feminist peace also relates to:

“Equal participation at all levels and in all peacebuilding processes. Equal participation would entail addressing gender power relations within households, the community and institutions, interrogate the use of power and masculinities that perpetuate inequalities and normalize the abuse of women. All these different forms of inequalities exist in situations of conflict and post conflict settings”.

The exercise of looking at the same situation from various perspectives does not mean to lose focus. Metaphorically, we can think of it as a holistic view of the forest, which in turn can allow us to gaze at each tree, that are also at the core of the ecosystem, and all of which enable us to live and breathe. The present analysis is based on multiple lenses, including interlinkages (DAWN, 2014) and a *body sensitive*⁴ look at conflict situations that the author employed as tools to overcome some of the challenges historically faced by advocates for social justice in dealing with apparently conflicting approaches: combining holistic and crosscutting analysis (i.e. *gender integration, inclusion, diversity, etc.*) to attain quality focused results for social interventions (i.e. context specific thematic challenges and enforced discriminations). In this way, the exercise proposed is to look at the various domains of (in)visible conflicts, through diverse complementary approaches/lenses carefully applied according to the context.

An *Intersectionality lens*, originally inspired by reflections on *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color* (Kimberley Crenshaw, 1991:05) gives visibility to multiple discriminations, for instance, to “the fact that women of color are situated within at least two subordinated groups that frequently pursue conflicting political agendas (...) and experience racism in ways not always the same as those experienced by men of color, and sexism in ways not always parallel to experiences of white women”. Also, to bring to light that “gender subordination and discrimination also result in violence against women, as do vulnerabilities inherent in multiple and intersecting identities such as class, ethnicity, religion and other socio-

¹ A key question for feminist reflection in that sense (by Mbembe, A. 2003: 12 on *Necropolitics*): “Is the notion of biopower sufficient to account for the contemporary ways in which the political, under the guise of war, of resistance, or of the fight against terror, makes the murder of the enemy its primary and absolute objective?”

² An Interview on South Africa’s Violent Democracy notes that “For von Holdt, Violence and democracy are not mutually exclusive” and “today’s violence is closely linked to the important changes unfolding in South Africa”. *Global Dialogue*, ISA digital magazine <http://globaldialogue.isa-sociology.org/south-africas-violent-democracy-an-interview-with-karl-von-holdt/> (access, 02/10/2019). See Also: Karl von Holdt, 2013 on *new forms of violence and the reproduction of older patterns of violence*.

³ Helen Kezie-Nwoha. 28/06/2019: <http://africanfeminism.com/what-feminist-peace-means-in-changing-contexts-of-conflicts/> (access 02/10/2019)

⁴ This approach has been applied since 2011 within the human development work carried out by the author in Cabo Delgado, through the independent project *IRUTHU* (meaning “Body” in local language Makua).

cultural belongings which also exacerbate such violence.” (DAWN, 2019:02). Through a gender perspective, *intersectionality* also helps to address masculinities and make clearer that while women, intersex or trans persons are to some extent subject to discrimination, multiple factors combine to determine their *social location* (See AWID, 2004), agency and/or vulnerability to face conflict situations.

While sexual violence (rape and other types) is undoubtedly a key dimension to be tackled through a gender-based analysis on conflict, there are key spaces to broaden the spectrum of the analysis: looking at gender beyond a synonym of “women”; interrogating cis-heteronormativity; and interlinking sexual violence to other socio-economic and cultural dynamics, reaching beyond a narrow perspective in which “the focus on sexual violence in conflict by international law results in sidestepping other types of direct physical and psychological violence and structural violence, inter alia, which result in the loss of land, displacement, lack of shelter, restrictions on livelihoods, access to commons and deprivation of sexual and reproductive health services.” (DAWN, 2019:01).

Bringing to light the multiple dynamics of power embedded in conflict situations is also crucial. As noted by Crenshaw (1991:12): “The struggle over which differences matter and which do not is neither an abstract nor an insignificant debate (...) these conflicts are about more than difference as such; they raise critical issues of power”. In that sense, *a lens on Necropolitics*, that looks at “contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death” (Mbembe, 2003:39) has also been central to the present reflection on (in)visible conflicts, including to better understanding that:

“The ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die.⁵ Hence, to kill or to allow to live constitute the limits of sovereignty, its fundamental attributes. To exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power.” (Mbembe, 2003: 11)

“The historical self-creation of humankind is itself a life-and-death conflict, that is, a conflict over what paths should lead to the truth of history: the overcoming of capitalism and the commodity form and the contradictions associated with both.” (Mbembe, 2003: 20)

The *Necropolitics* lens used here also sees death as symbolic processes, manifested through gradual individual or collective disempowerment, weakness in access to rights and social justice, invisibility, inequalities in treatment and depression (from recurrent experiences of discrimination and stigmatisation), among others. Advancing on a feminist reflection on some of Achille Mbembe’s` key proposed questions on Necropolitics, that draws⁶ on “what Michel Foucault meant by *biopower*: that domain of life over which power has taken control”⁷, can be a core exercise to deal with (in)visible conflicts.

⁵ Mbembe, 2003:01 FN 01: “The essay distances itself from traditional accounts of sovereignty found in the discipline of political science and the subdiscipline of international relations. For the most part, these accounts locate sovereignty within the boundaries of the nation-state, within institutions empowered by the state, or within supranational institutions and networks”.

⁶ Draws on the concept of biopower and explores its relation to notions of sovereignty (*imperium*) and the state of exception (Mbembe, 2003:12)

⁷ Foucault, *Il faut défendre la société*, 213–34. In Mbembe, 2003:12

Under what practical conditions is the right to kill, to allow to live, or to expose to death exercised? Who is the subject of this right? (Mbembe, 2003: 12). Arriving at answers to these and other interrogations on *necropolitics* is also an exercise in opening the social justice spectrum and merging concepts and perspectives without losing sight of its different standpoints. It is within a complementary view that a decolonial approach has also been a key tool, especially to bring to light the determinant role played by contextual history and structural racism/ethnic racial discrimination in reinforcing conditions of greater vulnerability to conflict, less visibility of violence faced and restricted access to mechanisms for guaranteeing human rights to black communities of northern Mozambique.

Both agency and vulnerability are to be examined, as conflict can be seen in multiple and consecutive ways in a variety of forms, going from *deprivation of liberty* to the exercise of freedom of expression. A combined look at power relations and multiple identities related to conflict situations also implies a focus on processes of empowerment and representation, an area of conflict of ideas among progressive advocates for social justice. This includes acknowledging the importance of the key voice and expertise of those whose bodies and concrete conflict experiences put them in a *standpoint of speech* (See Djamila Ribeiro, 2017) to better analyse, advocate and be *acknowledged as an expert to generate public policies* (See Mauro Cabral, 2012). This identity journey also requires a conflictual but essential collective- or self-reflection on how privileged bodies both individuals and groups can fruitfully engage in global social justice causes, guided by human Affect/Affection and sense of citizenship, without losing sight of the predominant role of the ones whose bodies are shadowed and most affected by multiple inequalities and necropolitics that create conditions for greater vulnerability to conflict.

As an ongoing process of reflection, the following lines are based on shared experiences, through a decade of observation, activism, advisory roles and qualitative research⁸, in a period marked by the introduction of the extractive industry in the context of Cabo Delgado, Mozambique. Rather than providing in-depth analysis on a focused subject, the choice made here was to share excerpts of fieldwork notes and available data, as a contribution for future analysis.

Cabo Delgado: A decade of structural shifts and resilience, in multi-dynamic contexts

- In the past decade, the Province of Cabo Delgado, in the North of Mozambique experienced the consequences of a “big investment boom” (Feijó and Maquenzi, 2019), with significant change in the volume of investments. Development programmes shared the scenario with the starting of *megaproject extractive investments of oil and gas/hydrocarbons and mining companies*⁹ within a multi-dynamic setting:
- A heterogeneous social space with different ethnolinguistic groups, migratory phenomena and miscegenation: northern coast associated with the ethnolinguistic group Mwani (mostly Islamic); northern part, with the Makonde (mostly Christians); and the South, with the Macua (majority of the population mostly Muslim; (Feijó and Maquenzi, 2019),

⁸ 2011 to 2019: engagement in 13 projects implemented in districts of Cabo Delgado (governmental and non-governmental led development programs).

⁹ Exploring Ruby, Graffiti and other minerals. Montepuez Roby Mining (District of Montepuez) and Syrah Resources (Balama District) have fully started activities, others are in process of implementation.

- Strong patriarchal norms and gender persisting inequalities and also significant changes¹⁰. Socio-cultural structure setting including dynamics of matrilineality, patrilineality and ambilinearity¹¹; polygamy; high rates of early unions and child pregnancy; silenced barriers to denounce domestic violence; and women's agency through the exercise of sexuality coexisting with strong gender-based vulnerabilities;
- Despite the strong pace of investments, poverty persists (Feijó and Maquenzi, 2019), and income inequality increased (Gini index)¹²;
- Significant national biodiversity conservation areas, marine and coastal: Quirimbas National Park;
- Increased multilateral development programs – food security and nutrition; agriculture; gender education/training and others linked to the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals;
- Increased Private-Public-Partnerships, with legislation that still lacks specific provisions regarding the challenges brought to light by the extractives;
- Since 2017, violent “insurgent conflicts” as they are generally referred to, despite the nature and causes being still unclear – with hundreds of people cruelly killed (total numbers still also unclear), population displacement and houses burned near the region where extractive investments operate;
- Growing local evidence/awareness of the negative impact of climate change in agricultural production;
- Cyclone Kenneth (March 2019) devastating part of the Province.

These contextual factors overlap and intersect within a wider canvas characterised by extractive industries and mega development projects. Focusing on the context enables us to offer a relatively nuanced reading of visible and invisible conflicts, and their continuities and ruptures in Cabo Delgado.

Locating (in)visible conflicts: arenas that require further reflection and analysis

Market/profit-orientation, inclusion and sustainability: *conflicting development agendas?*

During the past decade, diverse socio-economic and environmental programmes were implemented in the Province of Cabo Delgado as part of the national strategies to advance the SDGs. As prioritised in the National Development Strategy 2015-2035, a focus on inclusive and sustainable growth led to intersecting affirmative actions to promote women's economic empowerment and youth inclusion within the “extractive industry value chain”, to be achieved through skill and professional training, adult education and literacy classes and entrepreneurial/financial management capacity building, among other means. The Strategy is also intended to specifically promote the inclusion of rural population in the market economy and income generation of agriculture producers, to strengthen domestic markets.

¹⁰ Field notes: Cabo Delgado Gender Most Significant Changes Study. AKF Mozambique, 2014 (Unpublished work).

¹¹ Government of Cabo Delgado- DPMAS, 2009. *Perfil de Género (Gender Profile of Cabo Delgado Province)*

¹² Gini index from 0.42 in 2008/09 to 0.47 in 2014/15. Source: MEF/DEEF, 2016.

On environmental sustainability, from the projects put forward by Government, UN agencies or CSOs focus on the approach of environmental compensation, including the idea of ‘rewards’ and funds by extractive companies, rather than approaches of ‘preservation’, ‘respect for nature’ (important in the context, as an ancestral cultural value) and ‘ecological justice’ as demanded by some CSOs and local community leaderships, that require structural changes in the market-led approach, i.e. decrease in financial investments based on the extractives and agribusiness to the detriment of environmental conservation and food sovereignty and autonomy of small agriculture producers¹³. With regard to the BIOFUND¹⁴, President Nyusi stated: “It is up to us to resist the discourse which claims that nature should be blindly subjugated to the needs of economic progress. Mozambique will not be Mozambique if it loses its natural heritage.”

In practice, however, the last decade of experience in Cabo Delgado brought to light challenges to conciliate market- and profit-orientation, inclusion and sustainability (SDGs/National Development Strategy) in a context of raising agribusiness and extractive investments. A series of youth debates on inclusion in extractive industry¹⁵(2017), raised concern on whether mega-investments based on the capitalist, profit-led approaches could, in practice, be consistently implemented together with food security, social inclusion and environmental conservation policies aimed at enhancing national sovereignty and tackling structural inequalities through redistributive actions, that challenge the system of accumulation of capital. Compensation policies were also questioned in terms of corporate social responsibility actions or fiscal benefits, with conditionalities or otherwise, included in the contracts of the extractive companies, but limiting the increase in public tax revenue: do these strategies lead to structural sustainable inclusive economic growth?

On the financial side of things, last June, the news that “Anadarko Petroleum approved a \$23 billion¹⁶ Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Project in Mozambique which could help transform the economy of one of the world’s poorest countries”¹⁷ was proudly shared by the Government. Undoubtedly, the context is to be transformed but the nature of the transformation remains unclear. In practice, can economic transformation be consistent with ecological justice actions that are part of the 2030 agenda? Understanding human conflict in the exploitation of natural resources is a critical step, for everyone, towards the efforts to tackle conflicting development agendas. Recent analysis on the conflict in Pemba initiated relevant analysis that can illuminate the potential for mutually reinforcing synergies among the various crises that recently affected the country: conflict, environmental and financial spheres (see extracts in Box I).

Yet reinforcing an intersectionality/gender perspective is a major challenge, including for national CSOs. Despite various sectoral debates and research on the social/gender impacts of the extractive industry and strategies implemented (i.e. gender focal points in each government sector and in some companies) to link income and other inequalities based on gender, race/ethnicity, place of origin, etc., affirmative actions are still seen by

¹³ See also: CSOs from Mozambique, Brazil and Japan reiterate opposition to ProSavana: <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/civil-society-organizations-from-mozambique-brazil-and-japan-reiterate-opposition-to-prosavana/>. (Access 02/10/2019)

¹⁴ See <http://www.biofund.org.mz/en/> (Access 19/09/2019)

¹⁵ Plataforma Inclusão, 2018. Extracts of Final Report/Video Report debate (Maputo, May, 2018)

¹⁶ National Petroleum Institute. Other media sources give different figures that vary from 20 Billion to 25 Billion.

¹⁷ Source: <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-gas-riches-near-as-25bn-lng-plant-approved-134613/> (Access 02/10/2019)

many as a 'privilege' for women, youth and people with disabilities. Implementing integrated/inter-sector actions remains a challenge, particularly because collaborative work and participatory approaches require more time, usually not available in result/market-oriented projects that prioritise one-off, quantitative outputs rather than process or structural change outcomes.

Rapid economic growth - low inclusiveness: socio-economic conflicts

In the past decade in Mozambique, extractive industry investment has substantially contributed to rapid economic growth (average GDP growth of 7%)¹⁸. During the same period, there was an increase in inequality¹⁹ and unmet expectations that growth would greatly impact poverty reduction²⁰. Data pointed to a geographic concentration of poverty, with higher incidence in rural, northern (including Cabo Delgado) and central areas of the country²¹. In general, the past decade was considered a period of low inclusiveness, as growth mainly benefited the non-poor²².

A recent study (Feijó and Maquenzi, 2019) on Cabo Delgado notes a historic persistence of poverty in the region. A triad of mutual dynamics²³ are used to explain the conflicts of Cabo Delgado: (a) *poverty settings* as the main '*fuel*'; (b) raised expectations and inequalities as the '*oxygen*'; and (c) violent and extremist identity movements as '*the ignition*' for the insurgent attacks. To this analysis of "violent radical movements, with regional dimensions, function as the ignition in an environment marked by poverty and socially flammable, is fed, in turn, by (historical) social inequality and frustrated expectations" (Feijó and Maquenzi, 2019:22)

Analysis on the persisting inequalities in the region, including gender-based, and their mutual relationship with conflicts manifested in various forms should not be dissociated. However, their dynamics need to be better understood and interlinked, so as not to lead to narrow conclusions that risk either providing direct connections that are already shown to be not sustainable, or that criminalise the victims. Current debates refer to local youth, with their historical multiple vulnerabilities who joined the 'insurgent' groups, as part of a context of unmet expectations of inclusion within the opportunities brought by the extractive industry. With regard to this concern, the Pemba Declaration calls the Government to review their military action strategy to include training in human rights and citizenship as well as focus on amnesties and incentives for social re-inclusion²⁴.

Indeed, the frustration of expectations is to be noted as a potential source for raising conflicts within the population. When extractive investments started, they were promoted as being able to usher in mass creation of jobs as well as improved access to public services such as schools, hospitals, energy, etc. Analysis recalls that optimistic speeches

¹⁸ MEF/DEEF (2016) and World Bank (2016).

¹⁹ Gini index from 0.42 in 2008/09 to 0.47 in 2014/15. Source: MEF/DEEF, 2016.

²⁰ See: (1) Feijó and Maquenzi, 2019: General decrease in the incidence of multidimensional poverty, especially in the extreme south of the country, although there it is still very high in central and northern Mozambique; (2) Household Budget Survey (IOF): slight reduction in consumption-based poverty from 51.7%, IOF 2008/09 to 46.1% , IOF 2014/15); increase in the number of poor by approximately 700,000 (11,136,448, IOF 2008/09 to 11,826,280, IOF 2014/15).

²¹ MEF/DEEF (2016) and World Bank (2016)

²² World Bank (2016)

²³ Making an analogy with the explanatory phenomenon of fire.

²⁴ <https://omrmz.org/omrweb/wp-content/uploads/DECLARAÇÃO-DE-PEMBA-FINAL.pdf> (Access 10/10/2019) Free Translation

were responsible for the exaggerated social expectations (Sekelekani, 2018). Along the way “the implementation of investment dragged on for years with periods of absence of reliable and timely information locally available, frustrating the expectations of the population. The low access to information was fuelling rumours and various speculations” (Feijó and Maquenzi, 2019:08).

A report of a mining company expressed that it was particularly conscious of the importance of economic inclusion and actively seeks out ways to cooperate with women’s and youth groups and find ways to create local employment in readiness for when the Cabo Delgado Province benefits from the boom associated with oil and gas production²⁵. While it is a positive discourse, it is known that corporate social responsibility strategies have limitations to respond to structural inequalities and pose other challenges such as conflicting roles among public-private partnerships, often resulting in weakening the role of the State in providing quality public services and guaranteeing human rights for all.

Human and natural resources: conflicts and synergies

In the past decade, the Cabo Delgado province has experienced a chaotic process of extraction of natural resources. Uncontrolled human pursuit of financial gains was conflicting with a diversity of environmentally related challenges. On the one hand, you find local citizens who share a feeling of lack of respect for their own local and ancestral natural resources that are deeply acknowledged as core to the continuation of the life cycle. For instance, Cyclone Kenneth, which strongly affected Cabo Delgado in 2019, was seen by many as a warning sign from nature of the inability to match human exploitation of resources with environmental preservation. This is also related to the ancestral knowledge that any persons seeking to extract resources should ask permission from nature through ceremonies. As a natural disaster, the cyclone generated an opportunity to expand strategic debates on the interconnections of current climate, conflict, economic and social crises. However, fragmented sectoral strategies seem to have prevailed. For instance, despite the fact that Cyclone Kenneth severely affected the same villages that were subject to insurgent attacks, post-conflict and post-cyclone actions were mostly dealt with as two separate situations (sometimes taking place in the same village but run by distinct teams).

Part of the ‘chaotic’ extraction processes affected the Conservation Area of the Quirimbas National Park, which, in turn, has increasingly been subject to intense poaching activities mainly focused on killing elephants for ivory extraction, and uncontrolled wood extraction, both legal and illegal. A recent study also points to the illicit local economy as one of the main sources of financing current violent insurgent conflicts.²⁶ The ocean, its resources and its life synergies with the local population are also at stake: “where 10 years ago lived families of artisanal fishermen with close interaction with the sea, today there are unauthorized access spaces. Access to the sea is conditioned and, in some areas, prohibited for fishing. As compensation, a monthly value of 5,000 meticaís was awarded to the affected families (...) local fishermen could get a revenue (...) clearly superior to the current compensation”. (Feijó and Maquenzi:07)

²⁵ Gemfields, Report 2018: 60 https://www.gemfieldsgroup.com/reports_and_presentations/annual-report-31-december-2018/ (access 01/09/2019)

²⁶ IESE, 2019: 30-32.

The use of an intersectionality lens and decolonial approach focuses on the trends involving how humans are dealing with natural resources. It calls attention, for instance, to young black women and girls with increased burdens of work (cumulative domestic, entrepreneurial and agriculture tasks) while black male youth (with a gender role of working in activities that require physical strength and dealing with valuable goods) has been attracted to work in illegal mining with high vulnerability to accident risks. This year, an artisanal ruby mine in Cabo Delgado collapsed during the rainy season, leaving 10 dead²⁷. This invisible (due to very limited international or national media coverage) and preventable accident was not the first and reinforces the need to strengthen a focused look at conflicts involving the relationship between humans and natural resources. The fact that this region has increasingly been affected both by rising inequalities, accidents related to chaotic mineral exploitation and by unusually heavy rains throughout the year in periods that historically were non-raining seasons, constitutes an opportunity to bring to light more holistic strategies that promote both resilience to climate change and inclusive growth that values the human lives of African local communities while respecting their natural resources.

Within the highly unequal power dynamics, the view that the knowledge of local populations is less valuable prevails. Programs promoting adult education and literacy, for example, have raised a key debate. Although most of the population believes that formal study can help improve their lives, there is a shared feeling that their local, ancestral, historical knowledge is to be equally valued. Environmental conservation is an area that they have rich empirical knowledge to share. Notes shared in Pemba on the historical roots of the crises in Cabo Delgado²⁸ bring insights for interlinking various areas of conflict and proposing further reflection on the idea that Cyclone Kenneth was unleashed by the same extractive forces that feed the armed insurgency.

Locals and outsiders: identity conflicts on labour and land rights

“We have a ‘culture of work’, but within our culture!” This phrase expressed by an activist theatre group²⁹ from Cabo Delgado summed up a debate that gained space and became central in the past decade. Extractive companies and subcontracted firms suggested or imposed their own patterns of work on the local contexts, some for necessary scientific reasons, others just desired for the execution of the tasks. In many ways, the culture of work brought by the megaprojects conflicted with the local communities’ own local culture of work.

The fact that a significant part of the population had their first experience of permanent, paid work in the past decade opened a whole new set of socio-cultural challenges related to conflicting perspectives from companies and local workers on the meaning of ‘work’. While some company agents suggested or imposed, depending on the cultural sensitivity of the corporation, that local workers should learn from the standard type of work patterns demanded by extractive companies, some local workers resisted accepting another way of living brought in from outside. When expatriate workers settled in socio-cultural

²⁷ See <https://clubofmozambique.com/news/cabo-delgado-artisanal-ruby-mine-collapse-leaves-10-dead/> (access 02/10/2019)

²⁸ Source: Paolo Israel, Universidade do Cabo Ocidental (Pemba, 2019): Apontamentos Sobre As Raízes Históricas da Crise Corrente. https://omrmz.org/omrweb/wp-content/uploads/Israel_Apresentação_Pemba.pdf (access 01/09/2019). Free translation

²⁹ Theater group Matibule e Amigo (presentation, 2017). Plataforma Inclusão Project

contexts different from their own but with salaries and benefits significantly higher than the local or national labour force, veiled inequalities tended to become visible and non-violent conflicts revealed, initially through demand for inclusion in local consultations, more recently through marches and direct demands made to the companies.³⁰

Intersectionality of inequalities and discriminations based on gender, migration status, religion, place of residence and origin among others were also unveiled. For instance, recent qualitative data (**Feijó and Maquenzi, 2019**) reveals feelings of discrimination and expressions of conflict that are aggravating the situation in Cabo Delgado, along with an increased flow of migrants representing greater competition from the ‘vientes’ (outsiders) to the ‘natives’ (original peoples). Among the local youth, a perception developed that the opportunities benefited those from the South or Maputo as well as ‘foreigners.’ Despite investment, there is locally the conviction that “little has been done for the local population, mostly Muslim. This discontent increases social tension and insecurity in the region”. (Feijó and Maquenzi:08). Activities to promote inclusion of women faced great challenges both because they were more likely to face multiple discriminations as black Muslim women, black local women, black migrant women, etc. and because of strong gender roles in regard to labour and tasks that are subject to pervasive social norms present in the human resources in the companies, amongst male household members, government officials, etc.).

A frequent complaint was that certain jobs performed by foreigners or Mozambicans from outside the Province could be carried out by ‘locals’ and that the use of criteria based on tribalism and regionalism that were seen as harmful practices and discontinued in post-colonial processes has unfortunately returned. Inequalities among Mozambicans started to be expressed in layers: local residents in districts where the companies operate demanded fair and transparent criteria for hiring locals and “outsiders”, nationals from other regions or foreigners. As noted by Sekelekani (2018 in Feijó and Maquenzi, 2019), youth gathered in Palma where most extractive investments are, protesting an alleged blockade to job opportunities in construction work, claiming that such opportunities were seized by individuals from the South. Wanting equal treatment of workers, such as between locals and non-locals or women and men, has also been a key demand.

Youth debates on inclusion in extractive industries demanded a balance between “work cultures” and “local cultures”³¹. The aim of searching for a balance was clearly to avoid cultural conflicts and to preserve the feeling of peace, considered extremely valuable by local populations. With rising inequalities, peaceful coexistence can become a challenging process that requires mutual respect, adaptation to habits, attitudes and different ways of thinking and acting. Language barriers aggravated by existing discrimination based on race, ethnicity, gender, generation and nationality, amongst others, make it even more difficult, requiring specific culturally sensitive policies to overcome.

As noted, inclusive policies still lack a focus on autonomy and equality in decision making as well as on social justice in combating racism, xenophobia and sexism, among other practices deep-rooted in unequal power relations. For instance, an intersectionality and decolonial lens reveal that frequently heard arguments, usually by privileged groups,

³⁰ Field work notes and reports - Plataforma Inclusão project, 2017

³¹ Debates facilitated by the Open Terrace Center (Cabo Delgado), in 2018.

that locals, women or youth lack “autonomy”, “individual free enterprise” or “initiative” or show *passivity, laziness or little interest* in work can be understood as a return of neocolonial thinking, terms such as “re-colonisation” started to be raised within the local population.

Resettlement processes have also been subject to conflicting negotiations and relationships. Issues related to timing, compensation, guaranteeing fertile and sufficient land (Velasco, s.d.³² in Feijó and Maquenzi, 2019) are among the challenging advocacy areas brought to light by CSOs. Some empirical examples are: involuntary conflict between populations seeking to resettle and resident population in the places of destination, motivated by compensation values of money and quality of residences; perceptions that the displaced people receive more benefits than the hosts; anticipated increased pressure on available resources including arable land and firewood; political conflicts among traditional leaders; and cultural and spiritual difficulties such as loss of cemeteries, transfer of graves and treatment of sacred sites (Feijó and Maquenzi, 2019). Challenges on how to guarantee the effective participation of women in resettlement consultations when gender inequalities in the context result in limitations on speaking the official language and lack of empowerment to speak in public; and on land property rights in both monogamous and polygamous family units were some of the gender related examples that, through an intersectionality lens, call attention to the specific barriers faced by rural women.³³

Such dynamics that put local populations` land and labour rights at stake alert that gender, class, religion, age, race/ethnicity and other intersecting inequalities can potentially boost conflict situations. Opening mindsets for diversity, improving mutual understanding and respect to find the balance between human rights and culturally sensitive approaches are core steps to facing conflicts.

Unequal violent silenced conflicts

“Do you want to know how we die? No one ever comes here to find out how we live.”
(*Peasant from Palma district, Cabo Delgado. Novel ‘Confession of the Lioness’, by Mia Couto*)

Until a few years ago, tourists could frequently be heard expressing admiration at the capacity of the population of Cabo Delgado to interact in a peaceful multicultural environment. This pursuit of peace existed within a context of multiple inequalities and respect for diversity. When violent conflicts broke out in 2017, they took everyone by surprise. Two years later, the question of how the apparently united, peaceful environment could have become so fragile is still frequently asked.

In violent ‘insurgent’ conflicts, hundreds of people³⁴ were brutally killed, many by decapitation, houses were burnt, and populations of entire villages displaced. Though

³² VELASCO, Palmira (s.d.) “Em que ponto se encontra o projecto de gás do Rovuma?” in Sekelekani. Acesso em 02/10/2019: <http://www.civilinfo.org.mz/files/Em%20que%20ponto%20se%20encontra%20o%20projecto%20de%20gas%20do%20Rovuma.pdf>

³³ Preliminary results - Research on the Impacts of the megaprojectis to women and girls in Cabo Delgado. DPMAS, 2013.

³⁴ Numbers differ, “hundreds” have been used by most of the studies and media so far, since there is no official number of deaths yet.

they occurred near the region where extractive investments operate, no direct relationship is confirmed so far. Access to information on the attacks is severely restricted. For that reason, civil society (See box 1 Pemba Declaration, 2019) recently demanded that the Government removes any obstacles to access information for journalists, researchers and citizens of the places where the conflicts took place. Two years have passed and the reasons for the attacks are still unknown. National and international newspapers³⁵ and the few existing studies produced refer to various factors, none of them yet confirmed. Lack of inclusion among youth groups in regard to opportunities created by the extractive companies was pointed out as a possible motive for young men to have joined the insurgent groups (**Feijó and Maquenzi**, 2019).

Official statements on TV and in newspapers and speeches urge youth and women not to accept job offers from unknown sources. A small amount of unofficial news refers to women who were kidnapped although no cases have yet been officially confirmed. Research carried out so far points to a diversity of factors, including an increase of religious extremism as a regional and global tendency (Habibe et al. 2019); reconfiguration of power relations and shifting dynamics within ethnolinguistic groups; and stigmatisation of the (Islamic) coastal population with reinforced feelings of self-exclusion (**Feijó and Maquenzi**, 2019).

For those who are from the region or are committed to social justice, the silence involving these conflicts is becoming unbearable. The invisibility of these severe conflicts clearly expresses the lack of importance given worldwide to populations in remote areas of Southern Africa. Invisibility as noted by LGBTI CSO LAMBDA is a core indicator of discrimination³⁶. In a scenario of intersected discriminations and necropolitical conflicts affecting LGBTIs, people with disabilities among other minority groups often go unmentioned by a major segment of the media.

With this very worrying scenario of increased human rights violations and invisibility, Mbembes` (2003) necropolitics lens becomes critical to bring to the centre of the conflict and peacebuilding the need for an intersecting view of trends of structural racism, ethnic, gender and generational discrimination and unveil unequal power relations and inequalities embedded in the silence, invisibility and lack of data on crimes affecting socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

Most of the analyses on the current insurgent conflicts taking place in the Province of Cabo Delgado still lack a gender perspective. Efforts that are not focused on the Cabo Delgado context serve as key sources of information for future strategies on conflict: i.e. a recent study on the Impact of Armed Conflicts on Life of Women and Girls in Mozambique (Field Research Report in Nampula, Zambézia, and Sofala And Gaza Province, see ASFC, 2019). Also, to be noted is that a national action plan for the implementation of the UN Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security was launched in 2008³⁷ and is highlighted by the government³⁸ as a condition to sustainable development, to be reinforced by the existing legal framework for the promotion of

³⁵ Media sources include: <https://clubofmozambique.com> ; <https://cartamz.com>; <http://opais.sapo.mz>

³⁶ See, in Portuguese: <http://www.lambdamoz.news/invisibilidade-indicador-de-discriminacao-> (access 02/10/2019)

³⁷ Partnership between Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action, UN women and Norway and Iceland

³⁸ see <http://www.mgcas.gov.mz/st/Site/FrontOffice/default.aspx?module=article/article&id=11048&idseccao=25> (access 1/10/2019)

gender equality. In Cabo Delgado, the Plan was presented this year and some actions begun in some districts.

Corruption – transparency – social justice: conflicting or complementary ethical dynamics?

Another domain of conflict expressed throughout the past decade refers to corruption and lack of transparency. Conflicts about justice tend to arise when local populations feel the criteria to access opportunities created through efforts towards inclusive development in extractive contexts, including jobs, education and training are unfair or not clear. Rapid and illicit enrichment without effort is also a source of anger that can lead to conflict, as happens when vacancies are filled by recommendation or favouritism such as nepotism, tribalism, or regionalism. An intersectionality lens calls attention to facts that tend to affect mostly young women: sexual harassment, including the exchange of sexual favours for jobs or education/training opportunities, is an example shared by youth in debates.³⁹

Within these settings, people either maintain silence, especially since corruption is seen as 'normal' or engage in struggles for social justice. Some corporations included anti-corruption/sexual harassment policies or provided a communication channel for those who wish to complain. Youth debates⁴⁰ rigorously demanded corruption and sexual harassment be discontinued. In partnership with the ILO, the government launched a campaign "Job vacancies are not for sale!"

Anti-corruption strategies still lack a more consistent link to social justice, poverty and inequalities as it does with conflict and peacebuilding analysis. Reflections on sexual harassment as a type of corruption are also to be further explored, especially as a demand that came from young women. CSO strategies focus more on institutional corruption instead of corruption in its intrinsic dichotomy. This is to guard against the probability of spreading anger from a feeling of injustice throughout the population but also as part of the historical structural unequal power relations that make individuals both practice and comply with corrupt practices by others.

(In) visible conflicting gender power dynamics for structural social change⁴¹

In the past decade, gender equality actions were put forward as part of social development programs that existed in the context before the extractive industry began investing, as well as directly linked to the impacts of the extractive industry. Analysis, debates and focused policies aimed to prevent situations of increased gender inequalities and conflicts. Analysis on the gender impacts of extractives pointed to interlinked dimensions and challenging trends in the areas of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights,

³⁹ Excerpts: Youth employment and Inclusion Dialogs (Report Plataforma Inclusao, 2016); Field notes, Terraço Aberto Debates, 2014.

⁴⁰ Excerpts from reports: Youth employment and inclusion dialogs (2016). Plataforma Inclusao project, 2016.

⁴¹ Unpublished work. Excerpts from reports and fieldwork notes (activities led by the author) including: *Research on the gender impacts of the extractive industry in Cabo Delgado Province* (2013); *Research on the Gender Most Significant Changes in Cabo Delgado* (2013); *Gender Market Hub linkages; Domestic determinants to women' and girls' access to education and entrepreneurial activities; Social determinants of domestic violence* (2014); *Gender Institutional and community approaches; Gender household dynamics; Women entrepreneurs and gender equality in access to markets; Gender Based Violence and Early Marriages; Women's access to Adult Literacy Education* (2015); *Gender Integration in Public Sectors* (2016); *youth inclusion/inclusive and sustainable growth* (2017); *Governance and inclusion* (2018); *Inclusive education* (2019); *Gender integration in revewable energy and climate change* (2019).

resettlements, migration, education, employment/entrepreneurship, economic empowerment and governance, among others. Gender integration researches also pointed to significant changes since the beginning of the decade. Key areas to be noted are:

Education: domestic violence was observed in contexts where husbands still ‘do not allow’ their wives to attend functional literacy classes. Contradictions exist between ideas on the promotion of women’s empowerment and societal norms that guide husbands to limit women’s access to education. Age intersects with gender inequalities when middle aged women tend to find greater barriers to accessing education because of societal roles of taking care of the household and babies and to give priority to young family members, either to go to school or enjoy leisure time.

Entrepreneurial activities - domestic violence: in some cases, husbands tended to react with violence to women’s economic gains due to the fear of losing their power over women. This potential increase in women’s vulnerability to domestic violence impacted gender project strategies, i.e. those that focus on activities directed at households or couples. Many husbands who encourage wives to sell/trade still assume the profit is their property. There are cases where wives give the full amount of their sales to their husbands, due to the fear of being beaten if the amount differs from ‘expected’ or if an excess is assumed to be as a result of sex trade.

Intergenerational gender conflicts: lack of dialogue between parents and children on SRHR is a common pattern, negatively influencing girls’ access to information and public services. It is also a determinant factor in conflicts between parents and adolescent girls/boys.

Unequal distribution of resources and decision-making: Husbands do not typically distribute resources transparently. For some couples, it is normal to give an ‘extra’ for the man to decide what to do. In cases where the women engage in entrepreneurial activities, they tend to cover most of the household expenditures, based on the idea that is the wife’s role to take care of the household. When women try to access equality in household decision making, conflicts tend to arise. In some contexts, young women tend to be more educated and able to negotiate better, keeping some money for their own desired products.

Unequal gender roles: despite the significant changes of the past that have placed women as directors, as Governor, and in other leadership posts, gender roles were reinforced with the increased employment opportunities brought by the extractive industry. Women were associated with certain types of work and fruitful conflicts for equality took place in cases where women proposed to engage in tasks/professions not seen as ‘feminine’. Change in gender roles also occurred through affirmative action, for instance, when one company proposed a woman as a ‘machine operator’. Affirmative action also leads to conflicts of ideas/approaches with those who still see it as a ‘privilege’ instead of a mechanism for reducing inequalities based on traditional gender roles. Also, to be noted and to be further studied are rural young women and men tending to maintain most of the societal gender roles, despite their increased educational levels and access to information on human rights.

Poor confidence or jealousy as a great source of domestic silenced conflict: as a result of efforts in promoting women’s empowerment both economic and educational and in roles of governance, restrictions on women’s mobility were noticed, particularly on

participating in adult literacy or entrepreneurial activities. In governance activities, some husbands accompanied wives or delegated friends to 'take care' (control?) of them.

Women's psychological conflicts: 'inferiority complex', shame, fear, lack of self-esteem or courage were identified as strong barriers to women's process of empowerment. These are internal conflicts that don't yet receive the necessary focus from gender equality projects. An intersectional perspective of these trends brings to light that women with disabilities, living with HIV, the elderly, LGBTI and others who are also part of other historically discriminated groups face these barriers more strongly and/or violently.

Domestic violence as a silenced conflict: for the past decade, the increase in officially recorded incidents of domestic violence was first understood as a rise in violence. With time, it became clearer that the increase in number was not necessarily a 'negative' indicator, as if before it had happened with less frequency, but could be a result of successful strategies to spread information on the law against domestic violence (29/2009). The absence of data is a key area that requires further study to assess the impact of increased access to information in bringing to public attention GBV cases that were previously dealt with silently, as taboo and 'private' domestic violence conflicts.

Early pregnancies or premature unions: Informal negotiations involving payments or goods prevail as a mechanism of conflict resolutions for early pregnancy or premature unions. Silenced conflicts, because girls tend to be in strongly unequal power relations, tend to arise when girls are hindered from attending school or meeting colleagues. Government has started campaigns for girls to attend school despite early pregnancies. When such campaigns fail to tackle household dynamics, i.e. through sensitisation, conflicts tend to arise either because parents don't agree with the policy or it is opposed by mothers and grandmothers who get the extra burden of household and babysitting work. Similar situations arise when girls are pressured to reconcile teenager activities with the role of a mother. Recently, early pregnancy cases under the law involving both girls and boys have increased, leading to conflicts among their families and challenges for legal assessment on children having consensual sex leading to pregnancy. Multiple challenges are expected in the application of the recently approved Law to Prevent and Combat Premature Unions in this province, which has one of the higher rates of such violations in the country⁴².

Unequal polygamous relationships: unequal sharing of financial resources, of crop division or land rights to multiple wives in cases of polygamy, are noted as a silenced conflict and potential cause of violent domestic conflicts but are not yet given the necessarily focused attention. Men expressed conflict in having to make unwanted decisions as when they feel "pressured by society to get another wife" when their income increases.

Women' excessive workload (productive and reproductive spheres): identified occurrences of sexual violations when a woman refuses to have sex and her husband forces her, with a focus on women entrepreneurs/agriculture producers who argue that

⁴² see <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/child-marriage/mozambique/> (access 02/10/19) and UNICEF 2015 (Casamento Prematuro e Gravidez na Adolescência em Moçambique: Causas e Impacto <https://www.unicef.org/mozambique/media/586/file/Casamento%20Prematuro%20e%20Gravidez%20na%20Adolescência%20em%20Moçambique:%20Causas%20e%20Impacto.pdf> (access 02/10/2019)

they have excessive workloads and by night feel too exhausted to have sex. In general, it was noticed that women entrepreneurs either accumulate tasks, both productive and reproductive or tend to leave the household tasks to girls in the family. An intersectional lens shows that girls also tend to be overloaded with work, handling both school and household tasks.

Conflict of tradition and human rights: Strategies thus far have failed to create possible channels of communication or consensus in regard to the content and age of entry into initiation rites. Further reflection and consensual strategies are needed since legal application on the age of consent and SRHR of adolescents are still unresolved debates. While these in-depth debates are carried on, household availability of resources to pay for the ceremonies is often what determines when a girl or boy participates in the rites. Depending on the context, boys can participate at five years old and girls at nine years old.

Gender based violence beyond ‘women’: as part of the multiple efforts to combat GBV, diverse workshops on masculinities and engagement of men in the promotion of gender equality were held in the region in partnership with HOPEM - Men for Change Network in Mozambique. LGBTI groups have also been proactive in the region, especially through support of the organisation LAMBDA, as part of an effort to document facts and credible evidence for advocacy against gender-based violence in line with the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review mechanism (UN Human Rights Council).⁴³

Box 1. Human *conflictuality* in the exploitation of natural resources in Cabo Delgado Province - reflections and perspectives.⁴⁴

A conference organised in August 2019 by CSOs⁴⁵ in Pemba (Capital of the province of Cabo Delgado) has initiated an exercise of framing relevant reflections through a broad conflict analysis. Among the key interlinked points raised, the reflections carried out in Pemba would get strengthened if its various specific assessments were further looked at through a gender perspective. A brief overview of the content of the 11 presentations⁴⁶ give an idea of how the notion of *conflict* can be looked at, through a variety of interlinked perspectives and themes: *Conflict of interest; conflictual relationships; insurgent separatist conflicts; Oil and Gas Conflict Resolution: consensual conflict resolution; ethical virtues in conflict resolution; causes of conflicts (political, environmental and social); conflict resolution (negotiation, conciliation and mediation); human conflictuality in the exploration of natural resources; Labour and social conflicts; Ethnic-religious conflict; land conflicts; conflicting relationships (Conflict between local communities and foreign miners; Conflict between locals and companies; Conflict between host and resettled communities); social conflicts (“we” and “them”); identity / cultural conflicts; Political conflicts*⁴⁷.

⁴³ See http://www.lambdamoz.news/workshop_nampula_mrpu_lambda (Access 08/10/2019)

⁴⁴ Conference Conflitualidade Humana na Exploração dos Recursos Naturais – reflexões e perspetivas – Pemba, 24/08/2019

⁴⁵ Observatório do Meio Rural (OMR), União Provincial dos Camponeses (UPC), Centro de Integridade Pública (CIP), Diocese de Pemba and Departamento de Ética, Cidadania e Desenvolvimento da Universidade Católica (UCM).

⁴⁶ Available: <https://omrmz.org/omrweb/conflitualidade-humana-na-exploracao-dos-recursos-naturais-na-provincia-de-cabo-delgado/>

⁴⁷ Free translation. List is not exhaustive but to give an idea of the diverse ways in which the concept of *Conflict* can be understood and applied.

The final Pemba Declaration⁴⁸ noted that:

- The situation in northern Mozambique in general and Cabo Delgado province, in particular, is worrying due to the transformations⁴⁹ generated by the exploitation of natural resources;
- Such exploitation takes place in a chaotic manner, in a scenario that began with an absence of the State and widespread opportunism. Harmful practices in the informal and chaotic exploitation of natural resources have been interrupted by the repressive *defence and security forces* (limiting thousands of people's access to natural resources such as gems, graphite, land, fishing resources, but also wood and ivory);
- Resettlement processes have been chaotic, where the State appears in alliance with the “*big capital*”⁵⁰, aggravating the situation of the poverty of the populations;
- The phenomena of widespread poverty has coexisted with the emergence of high but frustrated social expectations that generate conflict;
- The intensification of the military conflict with the protagonists of the armed attacks aggravates the poverty levels in the province, making many young people vulnerable to be captured by violent movements, feeding on a vicious cycle.

Final remarks

The fourth of October is Peace Day in Mozambique. In 2019, it marked two years of suffering, fear, vulnerability and invisibility brought to the region of Cabo Delgado since the armed conflicts started. In the Provincial capital of Pemba, some people went to the streets to March for Peace. The little media coverage given to the March noted that citizens see no reason to celebrate and urged for the armed conflicts to end.

The reflections shared though this case study noted a variety of potential perspectives through which it is possible to examine conflicts. The shared excerpts of studies, fieldwork and observations, complemented by key analyses produced in Mozambique are meant as a contribution to ongoing debates in search for ways to deal with the complexity of our time by combining holistic/crosscutting analysis to quality focused outcomes in development interventions in conflict settings. Questions and insights for further reflection noted through this case study include:

- The combination of diverse approaches helps to carry on the exercise of strengthening an understanding of the complexity of our fierce world⁵¹ by

⁴⁸ Pemba Declaration: August 23th, 2019 by Comissão Episcopal de Justiça e Paz (CEJP), a União Provincial dos Camponeses (UPC) de Cabo Delgado, o Departamento de Ética, Cidadania e Desenvolvimento da Universidade Católica (UCM), o Observatório do Meio Rural (OMR), o SEKELEKANI, o Centro de Integridade Pública (CIP) e Justiça Ambiental (JA!). Free translation

⁴⁹ Presentations of the Conference included examples of transformations (socio-economic, populational, political, cultural domains).

⁵⁰ Original in Portuguese, Free translation. Meaning refers to strong capitalist schemes, including big investors and exploitative industries.

⁵¹ See DAWN 2014

interlinking political economy perspectives of conflict (socio, economic, political, cultural and environmental) without losing focus. The use of multiple lenses to look at (in)visible conflicts helps to identify common patterns of inequality and discrimination without losing sight of the specificities of the context in which the conflicts take place. In the present exercise, combined lenses were useful in their way to grasp complexity and look at the context through various specific angles and/or focus.

- While the use of the framework of conflict can be broadened and further explored, it is to acknowledge that the notion of conflict is already present and is useful to address, through a variety of standpoints, diverse interlinked terrains of social justice (see Box 1 for examples).
- Strategies to tackle the challenge of combining focused and holistic perspectives to conflict may require the exercise of strengthening collaborative, rather than competitive, shared work with partners including individuals, institutions, sectors, intra-households, communities or at state levels that share the common struggle for social justice. Efforts of integration and opening mindsets instead of looking at realities through a narrow, “either or” perspective, reinforcing any form of fundamentalism seem crucial to gather powerful progressive synergies to propel violent conflict resolution.
- Acknowledgement and sensitivity to deal with identity and representation, opening up space for those whose bodies are most affected to take leadership and participate meaningfully in decision-making in conflict settings/processes affecting them. Revising personal privileges and changing patterns of multiple discriminations that are part of the root causes of violent conflicts are major challenges to be faced, including by progressive actors.
- Through work with vulnerable groups, whether or not in situations of violent conflict is, apart from the focus on violence prevention, also key to address agency and autonomy of the actors, instead of reinforcing a victimisation approach.
- Expanding the lens on conflict is also about reflecting that: conflict prevention and peacebuilding is a daily path that goes through private and public spheres; conflicts are not only negative because non-violent conflicts can be constructive for debate and as a tool for empowerment through self-affirmation, freedom of expression and/or proactive actions in reaction to multiple inequalities and discrimination or environmental degradation; conflicts can also be an individual/personal process that doesn’t necessarily require immediate social relations to take place.
- Feminist perspectives on necropolitics could be further analysed, including intersectionalities of determinants of vulnerability and invisibility and the impact of fear on human rights defenders.
- Dealing with (in)visible conflicts require an in-depth (self)reflection on ‘fear’ and binary thinking and their interconnections. Connecting multiple synergies to gather “knowledge against fear” and enjoy a lively, interdisciplinary field of

different methodological approaches and academic forms (Butler, J. in SPW, 2019⁵²) seems to be key to advance gender strategies to deal with both violent and non-violent conflicts. Debates on questions such as ‘does all the complexity of the world only fit in two possibilities? Who do we effectively include and who do we leave out?’ can be productive. These among others (see de Mauro, Martin. 2015) may help to open spaces for key fruitful debates and (self)reflections on existing fundamentalist mindsets where only two possibilities exist, which tend to limit the ability to look at diversity, integration, solidarity, cooperation, mutual learnings, decolonisation and intersectionality among other multi-perspectives to deal with complexities embedded in conflict settings.

- Root causes for the strong silence/invisibility and lack of response to informal news that pointed to kidnappings of women and girls require further collective reflections on how women have been specifically affected by the conflicts in Cabo Delgado. Understanding these facts as not just a problem of ‘women’ is crucial to advance strategies for conflict resolution. Moreover, acknowledging the presence of absence, including the fact that the absence of data is core data and that invisibility is a core indicator of discrimination⁵³, is key to deal with current conflicts and post-conflict scenarios.
- Strategies for conflict resolution should not disregard ancestral knowledge coming from local communities. Experiences of a complementary decolonial and human rights approach in Cabo Delgado, i.e. in regard to local content/ ‘culture of work’, have been successful in showing that local knowledge that doesn’t limit/violate the exercise of human rights is to be valued and taken in as a key part of development strategies.
- Working on human rights in conflict situations and dealing with people who are in constant fear, require that advocates also takes care of themselves. For instance, activism to encourage women to fight together for change, to say yes to themselves: ‘Yes, I want to be myself. I want to take control of my life.’ (Graça Samo⁵⁴) should be accompanied by a constant reflection that “owning our bodies depends integrally on having access to the social resources for assuring our bodies’ health and well-being; self-ownership and proper caretaking go hand in hand with shared ownership of the commons” (Ros Petchesky⁵⁵).
- Interconnecting patterns of conflict based on multiple inequalities and discriminations that are occurring in diverse parts of the world are a key to expand the lens on (in)invisible conflict. Through a necropolitics approach we can further reflect on the pattern of inequalities and discriminations, interconnections and root causes of invisibility currently affecting, for instance, both the rural black youth population of Cabo Delgado and black boys from favelas of Rio de Janeiro where

⁵² Sexuality Policy Watch, interview with Judith Butler: <https://sxpolitics.org/judith-butler-on-gender-ideology/20136> (accessed, 03/10/2019)

⁵³ See LAMBDA see, in Portuguese: <http://www.lambdamoz.news/invisibilidade-indicador-de-discriminacao> (access 02/10/2019)

⁵⁴ Source: <https://learningpartnership.org/who-we-are/partnership/forum-mulher>

⁵⁵ Article by Petchesky Ros, 2013: “The body as property: a feminist revision”. <https://programaddssrr.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/the-body-as-property-a-feminist-re-vision.pdf> (access 02/10/2019)

daily brutality takes place, where a predominantly black and low-income population lives.⁵⁶

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⁵⁶ Article by Oliveira, Flávia. 20/10/2019: *É Necropolítica que se chama*: <https://oglobo.globo.com/opiniao/e-necropolitica-que-chama-23960866> (access 26/10/2019)

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Palestine

By
Kholoud Al-Ajarma

The Coloniser and Gendered Economic Violence: the impact of prolonged Israeli occupation in Palestine on women's economic survival



Overview

When Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 in the wake of the Six Day War, the international community used the term “occupation” to describe the situation which followed. However, some 50 years later, this state of affairs no longer matches the general understanding of the term “occupation”, which is by definition short-lived. Many commentators are more accurately identifying what has happened to Palestine as a stage of settler colonialism. The towns and outposts built on Palestinian land, in contravention of international law, are called by many “settlements”, a rather benign word, but are more accurately defined by many influential thinkers as “colonies”. For the purpose of this article, I shall use the term “settlement” and “occupation” to reflect the dominant discourse. However, I recognise that an alternative narrative of settler-colonialism is gaining strength and recognition and I fully endorse this stronger analysis.

In 2018, the Palestinian Social and Economic Policies Monitor – Al Marsad, produced a short film that reflected experiences of the Palestinian female workers in ‘Israeli’ settlements or colonies, as they are more appropriately called. The film, titled “Bloody Basil” featured several female workers who mainly work in agricultural settlements in the Jordan valley. The women featured in the film spoke of their experiences and the violations of their rights as workers as a result of the occupation’s policies that confiscated Palestinian farmers’ lands and turned them into workers in the settlements. The women explain how they would leave their houses at 5 am, be picked up with other women in a small van and driven into the settlement. They described the work as exhausting and

frustrating. They had to handle abusive treatment from supervisors and work under very difficult conditions. Almost all the women were controlled and made compliant by being told that if they did not want to work as instructed, there were many others who would take their place.

What “Bloody Basil” reflects is a glimpse of the Israeli violence against Palestinian women which is a routine aspect of their life under occupation. Various UN bodies have expressed concern about the human rights, humanitarian and security issues that occupation brings, with an emphasis on the situation of women. The Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, on her mission to Israel submitted to the Human Rights Council in 2017 highlighted the linkage between the prolonged Israeli occupation and violence against women⁵⁷. Both Palestinian men and women face numerous human rights violations inflicted on Palestinians, including property destruction, house demolitions, settler violence, forcible transfer as a form of collective punishment and targeting of human rights defenders⁵⁸. Economically, the colonisation and occupation of Palestine (since 1948) – but more specifically after the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 - have had a significant impact on the Palestinian people which manifested itself in the intensified denial of Palestinians’ human rights including access to land, water and natural resources. The detrimental Israeli measures against Palestinians also include blockades, control over markets, and restriction of movement.

In this case study, I focus on a specific segment of the Palestinian population: women workers in Israeli settlements. Drawing on interviews conducted mainly among Palestinian female workers in Israeli settlements, I argue that Israeli settlements, which are constructed on Palestinian lands and are deemed illegal under International Law, have a devastating impact on the lives of Palestinians in general and Palestinian women in particular. Due to the difficult economic conditions, lack of alternatives, high unemployment rates, and the gap in wages and quality of life between the Israeli and Palestinian economies, many Palestinian women find no option for employment other than to work in the settlements, under Israeli control, to support themselves and their families. I will reflect on the conditions in which those women find themselves and how the settlements’ economy contributes to greater marginalisation of Palestinian women and socioeconomic disadvantages. The settlements, sites of militarised political control, is the primary theatre of extraction, both of land, resources and labour of thousands of working-class Palestinians, including women.

Political and economic context

For over half a century of the Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem (Occupied Palestinian Territory), Israel has established and continues to reinforce an asymmetrical power relationship with the Palestinians, through a matrix of control which is all-embracing. For example, the Palestinian people are denied access to their own land, water and natural resources, while their property and assets are being confiscated or destroyed. Gaza continues to be blockaded by air, sea and land and

⁵⁷ Human Rights Council. 2017 Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, on her mission to Israel. <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/report-of-the-special-rapporteur-on-violence-against-women-its-causes-and-consequences-on-her-mission-to-israel/>

⁵⁸ Ibid.

is where living conditions are bordering humanitarian collapse⁵⁹. Fifty-two years of policies and measures, imposed by the occupying authority, have set the Palestinian economy on a debilitating path of de-development and dependence for the Palestinian people. The process of de-development began in 1948, when a balanced agricultural relationship with the land and many indigenous industries, as well as local Palestinian culture, were crushed after the Nakba (meaning catastrophe in Arabic and refers to the mass exodus of Palestinians between 1947 and 1948) to make room for the Israel state. Jewish workers were given preference over Palestinians as a deliberate policy to suppress those who remained within the borders of the new state and, of course, these Palestinian citizens of the new Israel were placed under military rule until 1966. The Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in 1967 then brought Palestinian economy into direct contact with that of Israel and represented the second major dislocation of the economy since 1948.

Throughout the years of its occupation, Israel has continued its measures to undermine the Palestinian economy, which was largely agricultural and relatively small compared with the industrialised economy of Israel. By 1967, the total GNP of the West Bank and Gaza Strip combined equalled only 2.6 per cent of the Israeli GNP⁶⁰. Due to the Israeli control over Palestinian resources, in particular water and the most fertile land, the Palestinian economy remained weak and dependent whilst the Israeli is the large, dominant one. For example, the field of agriculture became vulnerable due to the incremental and continuous confiscation of Palestinian land and natural resources and the excessive Israeli restrictions on the movement of Palestinian goods and labour.

Israel assumed total control of the Occupied Palestinian Territory's economy until the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994. However, the Palestinian people have never enjoyed full, sovereign control over their economy, natural resources and society. As the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and Gaza remain under occupation, Palestinians have to face tight restrictions on movement, loss of land and of other natural resources, a fragmented domestic market and separation from neighbouring and international markets. In addition, the tight blockade of Gaza since 2007 and the construction of the Apartheid Wall have undermined development. Since 1967, Palestinians have lost access to more than 60% of West Bank land and 66% of its grazing land. The Apartheid Wall has effectively annexed to Israel the main aquifers and much prime agricultural land, whilst the fertile Jordan Valley is dominated by illegal Israeli agricultural settlements which use a disproportionate amount of precious water resources.

Following the 1995 Oslo II agreement, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip remained under occupation and restrictions on the movement of people and goods, control and loss of land, water and other natural resources continued. The city of Hebron, for example, is divided into two areas: H1, under control of the Palestinian Authority, and H2, representing 20% of Hebron, under Israeli control. In East Jerusalem, Israeli law has been applied and provides the status of "permanent residents" of Israel to Palestinian residents but effectively treats them as immigrants in their own lands. The blockade of the Gaza Strip has led to a critical socio-economic and humanitarian crisis for Palestinians residing there, involving limited access to water, housing, land, property,

⁵⁹ International Labour Office. *The Situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*. Geneva: 2018.

⁶⁰ Roy, Sara. "The Gaza Strip: A Case of Economic De-Development." *Journal of Palestine Studies*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1987, pp. 56–88. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/2536651

health care and employment opportunities; women particularly suffer the disbenefits⁶¹. The domestic market is fragmented and separated from neighbouring and international markets. Since 2007, a tight blockade has been imposed on Gaza whilst the expansion of Israeli settlements and closure policy in the West Bank (including the construction of the Israeli Apartheid Wall) and the isolation of East Jerusalem from the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory continued.

The West Bank has been divided into Areas A, B and C, each of them having a different status of governance. In Area A, representing 18% of the territory of the West Bank, the Palestinian Authority (PA) exercises control over security and civil matters. Area B is administered by the Palestinian Authority, which has control over civil matters, while the Israeli authorities jointly with the PA have military control. In Area C, which constitutes 62% of the West Bank, the Israeli authorities have full control over security, planning and construction⁶². This division of land does not guarantee rights for Palestinians, especially those living in Area C. Within Area C, Palestinians have limited access to water, electricity, education, and other state services. Palestinians face daily human rights violations in these areas including house demolition, denial of construction permits, army raids, and violence by Israeli settlers. It has been reported that 70,000 Palestinians living in Area C have been subjected to settler violence, including harassment and violence causing severe physical harm and significant psychological impact especially on women, who constantly fear for their lives and those of their children⁶³.

An important instrument of the Israeli colonisation and control over Palestinian lands and resources is the development of settlements (more accurately described as colonies). The Israeli settlements are illegal Jewish-only communities built by Israel for Israeli settlers on West Bank lands which have been occupied since 1967. Settlements enjoy the approval and direct or indirect support of the Israeli government although illegal under international humanitarian law⁶⁴ which bars an occupying power's transfer of its civilians to occupied territory. However, the existence and expansion of these colonies continue and, in parallel, systematic discrimination against Palestinians and in favour of the settlers: this is manifest in the provision of services, protection, and freedom of movement in favour of the settlers at the expense of the Palestinian population, not to mention the application of military law to indigenous Palestinians, including children.

As in other colonial processes, the Israeli military relied on settlements as a strategy of establishing territorial claim and control over an indigenously populated area. While illegal under the 4th Geneva Convention and numerous UN resolutions, some 620,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) in about 131 settlements and 110 outposts (settlements not officially recognised by the Israeli government)⁶⁵. The settlements have a destructive impact on the human rights of Palestinians that extend beyond the hundreds of thousands of dunams [1 dunam = 1,000 sq. meters], including

⁶¹ Commission on the Status of Women. 2016. Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women-Report of the Secretary-General. <https://undocs.org/E/CN.6/2016/6>

⁶² www.ochaopt.org/location/area-c

⁶³ A/HRC/35/30/Add.1, Paragraphs 35 and 36, 8 June 2017

⁶⁴ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2007. The Humanitarian Impact on Palestinians of Israeli Settlements and Other Infrastructure in the West Bank, July.

⁶⁵ the Israeli information centre for human rights in the occupied territories (2019). Settlements. <https://www.btselem.org/settlements>

farmland and grazing areas, that Israel appropriated from Palestinians in order to build them.

Israeli citizens are incentivised by the Israeli government to move to settlements. The many benefits provided to settlers and settlements by the Israeli government include government subsidised housing, higher salaries for teachers than in Israeli areas, subsidised transportation for students and prioritised scholarships. Economically, Israel has established several industrial areas in or near settlements in the West Bank. The Israeli West Bank Industrial Zones are fortress-like hill-top factory complexes connected to nearby hill-top settlements. The government has heavily subsidised the building of these areas. Government subsidies also include leasing fees for land, access to research grants, and income tax breaks. While Palestinian communities and settlements are physically located side by side, they exist in what Human Rights Watch has called a “two tier system of laws, rules, and services... which provide preferential services, development, and benefits for Jewish settlers while imposing harsh conditions on Palestinians.”⁶⁶

Settlers and settlements remain a central pillar of Israeli colonial structure as they provide a means to create a claim over Palestinian land, as well as allowing the institutionalisation of a legal system of segregation, which is a common feature of most colonial projects.

The Israeli military, for example, has instituted two different legal systems in the West Bank: one for the settlers and the other for the Palestinians. The settlers are governed by Israeli civilian law while the Palestinians are ruled by military law. Settlements became administered like any town in Israeli areas, including rights to local planning, to levy taxes, right of zoning and urban planning, which were all forbidden to Palestinians. Furthermore, more land and resources have been expropriated to create hundreds of kilometres of roads for settler use only; roadblocks, checkpoints, and other measures that limit only Palestinian movement have been erected based on the location of settlements. At present, settlements cover 538,130 dunams – almost 10% of the West Bank. Together with their regional councils - including vast open areas that have not been attached to settlements- the area under the direct control of settlements has been raised to more than 40% of the West Bank, and 63% of Area C. Along with this governmental land grab, settlers have exploited the enforced separation between Palestinians and their land by means of building houses, outposts and roads, grazing livestock and taking over natural water sources – all outside the vast areas already allocated to the settlements. Further, Palestinian landowners have been effectively denied access to much of their farmland, which means the destruction of their main source of livelihood leading a large segment of the Palestinians labour force having to work in Israeli areas including the settlements.

Palestinian movement, including farming access, remains restricted around and within Israeli settlements where prior coordination or special permits are required. The approval rate for permit applications to access land in this area during the olive harvest fell from 58% in 2016 to 55% in 2017. Over 10,700 applications by farmers were either rejected or were still pending by the end of the 2017 olive harvest⁶⁷. In addition, many Palestinian

⁶⁶ “Separate and Unequal: Israel’s Discriminatory Treatment of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories”, Human Rights Watch, 2010.

⁶⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). 2016. The Monthly Humanitarian Bulletin: November 2017.

farmers complain that the window of time allocated for harvest activities with Israeli army protection is insufficient and leaves farmers vulnerable to settler attacks⁶⁸.

With the Palestinian economy and labour market experiencing further deterioration designed by the Israeli colonial project, tens of thousands of Palestinians find themselves forced to seek employment in Israel and the settlements as a means of economic survival. Palestinians have been obliged by economic necessity to undertake work within illegal colonies on what is, in reality, their own land. Labour thus became a blatant expression of economic subjugation and frequently used as a method of control.

The economy of the settlements

Under Israeli occupation, the Palestinian and Israeli economies remained dissimilar and unequal; Israel has the large, dominant economy and practices policies that keep the small Palestinian economy weak and dependent. Immediately following the 1967 occupation, Israel targeted Palestinians (especially youth) for much needed labour in Israeli areas. Further, Israeli economic policies and unemployment among Palestinians provided Israel with a large pool of workers, mainly for low-paid - unprotected jobs. Israeli policies denying various aspects of economic development in the Palestinian areas led to these huge unemployment numbers, creating a pool of workers ripe for exploitation. The unemployment rate in the Gaza Strip increased in 2018 to reach 52% compared with 44% in 2017, while in the West Bank it was 18% in 2018 compared to 19% the year before, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) said in the latest results of its Labour Force Survey 2018.

The weak Palestinian economy in addition to the high unemployment has led a large number of Palestinian workers seeking employment, some outside of Palestine such as in the Arab Gulf countries or in Israel and Israeli settlements. It is important to emphasise, as briefly mentioned before, that many Palestinian workers in illegal Israeli settlements work on confiscated lands originally owned by their families or one of their relatives, adding psychological injury to physical and economic detriment. However, due to the Israeli policies, they would not be able to access these lands, even for work, unless they obtain work permits from the Israeli authorities. The permit is often managed by people known as “brokers” who work as intermediaries between Israeli employers and Palestinian workers.

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the number of Palestinians working in Israel and Israeli settlements was about 127,000 in 2018 with the largest share of those, 59%, having a work permit while 30% worked without any permit, putting their security and even lives in danger⁶⁹. Further, the number of employees in Israeli settlements was 22,000 in 2018 compared with 21,000 in 2017. Palestinian workers in Israel since 1967 have been predominantly male, with the construction sector being the highest work market. In 2018, for example, the construction sector recorded the highest employment rate in Israel and Israeli settlements, which was 64% of the total Palestinian employment in Israel and Israeli settlements. Other fields of employment are restricted to

⁶⁸ Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO). Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, Brussels, 20 Mar 2018.

⁶⁹ PSBS, 2018.

mainly agriculture, industry and services. Palestinians are permitted to work in these labour-intensive sectors as employers have difficulty finding Israelis who are willing to perform this work for the low wages they offer. In business and labour practices in Israeli settlements, abuses of Palestinian workers' rights including the denial of benefits and underpayment are common practices. Palestinians are denied industrial rights such as organisation into trades unions. The Israeli Histadrut labour organisation offers no protection to Palestinian workers and is widely viewed as an instrument of Israeli governmental policy with regard to the Palestinian workforce.

In the agricultural sector, over 90% of the workforce are now from Thailand, displacing Palestinians from this work opportunity, which was hazardous, but at least gave minimal income. This point underscores the fact that Palestinian labour is seen as worthy of exploitation when needed but can be dispensed with at the earliest opportunity when a more compliant migrant workforce becomes available. Unlike in the state of Israel, at this moment Palestinians remain a necessary labour pool in the West bank.

Industrial zones and other economic projects are central in the Israeli settlements. Due to the benefits provided by the Israeli government to businesses in the settlements, these industrial areas continue to grow. Further, Israel has moved many of its polluting industries from places inside Israel to areas near the 1967 border or inside the settlements. For example, a pesticide factory in Kfar Saba settlement which produces dangerous pollutants was moved to an area near Tulkarm, inside the West Bank. The wastewater from this factory has damaged the local citrus trees and polluted the soil in the area, in addition to the likely problem of tainted groundwater. Israel's strategy to expand the territory controlled by Israeli settlers also includes the agricultural takeover of large swathes of Palestinian lands and turning them into agricultural businesses in which Palestinian workers are targeted and exploited.

The majority of the Israeli settlement farms in the occupied West Bank are located in the Jordan Valley and Palestinian women form a significant labour force in these areas. In the next section, I shall focus on the Palestinian workers in the settlements and more specifically on Palestinian women labourers.

Palestinians working in Israeli settlements

The Israeli occupation and continued settlement expansion profoundly affect the daily lives of Palestinian men and women seeking to earn a living. It restricts their rights to freedom of movement and residency, and access to resources, to work and education, all of which are closely interlinked. The United Nations has repeatedly called on the Israeli government to cease settlement activity in the territory occupied since 1967. The United Nations has expressed condemnation of the settlements on various occasions including the 2016 Security Council resolution on the issue (No. 2334) where the Council condemned the "construction and expansion of settlements, transfer of Israeli settlers, confiscation of land, demolition of homes and displacement of Palestinian civilians, in violation of international humanitarian law and relevant resolutions⁷⁰."

The wages of the Palestinian labour force are far below the Israeli minimum wage in most cases. Sadly, however, those wages – in many cases -- can be more than the amount

⁷⁰ <https://www.un.org/webcast/pdfs/SRES2334-2016.pdf>

Palestinians earn working in a Palestinian-owned business elsewhere in the West Bank, where unemployment is high and salaries are low. For most Palestinians who have a job in Israel, their work remains associated with high costs, vulnerabilities and hardship. Palestinian workers encounter many difficulties, including checkpoint crossings where they face inhumane and humiliating treatment and where they have to queue for long hours in crowded surrounding before being able to enter Israeli areas. Many workers are forced to leave their homes in the West Bank long before dawn and waste energy and many hours waiting due to lack of efficiency in the checkpoint system and abuse and harassment by soldiers and security personnel. Furthermore, working conditions are often precarious. Occupational injuries and fatalities of Palestinian construction workers at Israeli construction sites are frequent, mostly falls from a great height as construction increases. After these accidents, Palestinian workers are left to pay for hospital bills and are given no benefits or compensation.

Andrew Ross, a former builder, turned academic, has written a book titled 'Stone Men: the Palestinians who built Israel'. He quotes a Palestinian stonemason saying: "They demolish our houses while we build theirs." Andrew Ross discusses how Palestinian "stone men," utilising some of the best quality dolomitic limestone deposits in the world and drawing on generations of artisanal knowledge, have built almost every state in the Middle East except their own.

The number of permits given to Palestinian workers is restricted by the Israeli government, so many Palestinians have no choice but to work without a permit. This results in workers being more vulnerable to exploitation by their employers, who may threaten to report the worker for working without a permit. Many Palestinians work in the agricultural settlements, especially in the Jordan Valley during the date and fruit picking seasons, among them children under the age of 14.

Palestinian women who work in Israeli settlements work predominantly in agriculture and as domestic workers in private households. Seeking work in the settlements is perceived as an economic necessity but also constitutes a moral dilemma for many workers. In the Jordan valley I interviewed ten Palestinian women who shared numerous daily challenges and struggles they faced as workers in the settlements.

The ages of the group ranged from girls aged as young as 15 years to women in their sixties. The need to support their families was the main motivation to work in Israel. For many, such work was the last resort when they were unable to find other jobs. Most domestic workers found their jobs through referral, usually from a friend or family member of the employer. Almost all female workers interviewed indicated that they did not have a written contract, reinforcing the informal type of employment relationship. Issues related to annual and sick leave, public holidays, working hours and working conditions were not part of the negotiated terms and conditions discussed when they start work. The women expressed concern over issues related to termination, dismissal and job security. Such an absence of any regulations of terms of employment would be deemed unacceptable in other developed economies. The presence of unions, legislation and access to industrial tribunals protects workers in modern states from the worst excesses of capitalism. No such structures exist for the Palestinian workers in Israeli settlements.

The development of the economy in the settlements and the related Israeli policies has led to a deliberate weakening, or de-development, of the Palestinian economy; this is not

accidental, but an integral part of the Zionist project. Such policies have led to social fragmentation and, within a system already pre-disposed to patriarchal organisation, have produced various forms of gender bias. Women are at the bottom of the employment hierarchy, to put it bluntly, and whilst all Palestinian workers suffer at the hands of the occupying force, women arguably suffer double discrimination: as women and as Palestinians.

In a nutshell, the settlements are a site of extraction, as colonies usually are for the coloniser, as I will discuss next.

The case of women workers in settlements: minimal rights and social stigma

According to local workers in the Jordan Valley, the number of Palestinian women workers in Israeli settlements is more than 5000, around half of whom are service providers in homes, schools and hotels while the rest work in agriculture. The numbers of workers vary depending on the seasonal nature of the jobs. Agricultural workers receive a third of the Israeli minimum wage, 50-60 NIS (\$15) for an eight-hour working day. This also applies to children employed during the picking season. By contrast, in the industrial zones workers (male) receive about two thirds of the minimum wage, around 80-120 NIS per day. Israeli minimum wage, by contrast, exceeds 29 NIS per hour (230 NIS/ (\$70)).

Furthermore, Palestinian women workers employed in West Bank settlements suffer from hardships stemming not only from problematic employer-employee relationships but also from political and social realities which make their situation even more difficult. I will start with the former and then discuss the social implications of women's work in the settlements.

Work conditions and brokers

Palestinian workers in Israeli settlements depend on their employers not only economically but even for the very permission to work. These permits can be annulled at any time, especially when workers demand their rights or try to unionise, or if they (or one of their family members) engage in any kind of political activity. In theory, Palestinian workers in Israeli areas are covered by Israeli labour law and collective agreements. In practice, however, significant protection gaps exist as many workers do not have written or oral employment contracts which offer access to rights and benefits. All interviewees emphasised the weak protection against occupational injuries; many women reported wage cuts or being threatened with dismissal if they merely complained about the harsh working conditions. In addition to the lack of job security, there are multiple types of occupational hazards and risks that women face in the settlements. For example, women working in agriculture have health risks due to the intensive use of chemical pesticides and machines, in addition to the risk of insect stings and sunstroke, exposure to high and low temperatures⁷¹.

Brokers benefit from the employment process and the resulting vulnerability of the workers. An example of worker exploitation is that brokers or employers may resell

⁷¹ Corporate Watch: "Apartheid in the fields" is a good reference point for this.
<https://corporatewatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Apartheid-in-the-fields1.pdf>

permits when an employer is allotted a higher quota than the number of workers needed. This practice results in workers being employed by an employer or company other than the one indicated on the work permit, which in turn can cause serious gaps in protection and undermine workers' ability to claim their rights in respect of wages, compensation for work injuries, or other social benefits. The reselling of permits is most common in the construction sector, but it appears that workers also frequently use permits issued for this sector for employment in other sectors. Brokers can make disproportionate profits from matching Palestinian jobseekers with Israeli employers. Due to the difficulty of obtaining a work permit, many Palestinian workers including women have to deal with brokers. These people are often Palestinian male contractors (though a few are women) who facilitate permits for Palestinians, a common practice for the past 20 years. The contractor's job is to bring workers to work when needed, to pay them and to make sure they do not demand a raise. Unregulated and unscrupulous brokers exploit women in need of employment by making them work long hours and confiscating for themselves large sums of their daily salaries. As a control mechanism, contractors can, in most cases, change the workers' workplace, fire them and prevent them from demanding their rights.

All interviewed women stated that they would not be able to find a job unless recruited by a broker. The women could not tell how a person can become a broker but stated that it's a person who has already established links with Israeli employers. Although disliked by the workers, the brokers are needed for employment, which gives them power over the workers.

The broker collects the women workers in the morning (often in a van) as early as 4:30 am or 5:00 am to reach the settlement by 6 am. The interviewees said the broker cuts transportation costs by carrying more women in the van than its normal capacity. For example, a van of seven seats would take around twenty women at one time. The women also believe that the broker deducts transportation fees from their wage. Often, a broker gets a fixed percentage from each woman worker and takes this from her wage before she receives it. Almost all women workers don't know the total sum of their actual wage. The employers pay the brokers for his services in bringing the female workers and the broker pays the wages to the women workers. The workers often do not even know the name of their Israeli employer. Testimonies of women workers in Israeli settlements assert the broker receives large sums of money from the Israeli employer for their service, inducing them to ignore any violations of Palestinian worker rights.

B. Violence against female workers

The interviewed women reported many violations of their rights both by the broker and the employer. Since their direct contact is often with the broker who oversees their work, the women spoke about treatment by male brokers that is frequently abusive, including insulting names and verbal insults. The women's phones are confiscated at the start of the working day and given back to them at the end. They are told it is to ensure their focus on work and not being distracted by social media or family calls. Women workers are also often blackmailed by threats of replacing them at any time by other Palestinian workers or migrant Thai workers. One woman reported that even a minor dispute with the broker, including asking for a rest during the day, might lead to their being replaced. Further, due to the control of employers in the permit system, an employee reported by the Israeli employer or the Palestinian broker could lead to refusal of a permit. Israeli

employers and brokers can use this as a bargaining chip to pressure workers. The fear of these measures prevents many workers from demanding their legal rights.

Female workers in the settlements are exposed to sexual harassment. All the women I spoke to in the Jordan Valley spoke of ‘other’ women being violated, mainly by the male brokers or the supervisors. One of the women reported that hints of a potential physical relationship with the broker might guarantee the woman ongoing possibility for labour. Due to the conservative local culture and fear of judgment and shame, women refrain from speaking openly and explicitly about the harassment and violations in the settlements. In cases of harassment, the broker does not intervene or defend workers due to his financial interest. Many brokers prefer to seek the services of women from outside their personal circles, networks and area of residence in order to avoid problems and complaints about their conduct becoming known. This aspect of mistreatment and control of women represents a pool of unexplored evidence against the exploitative practices within the Israeli settlements.

C. Social stigma and further responsibilities

Women’s desire to work and the lack of job opportunities combined lead them to accept any type of agricultural or service work, even though, among Palestinians, working for settlers is seen as a violation of their dignity. Many women I interviewed in the Jordan Valley reported avoiding marrying their sons to women who worked in the settlements. According to the women, brokers target young women because they are easier to control and can be more efficient workers. Often, however, younger women work in agricultural settlements without permits as most of the women workers who successfully obtain a permit are married. One of Israel’s preoccupations is security; seeing the occupied people as a constant threat (arguably assuming the suffering they inflict as something they would wish to resist) and assesses some people to be a greater ‘security’ threat than others. Young men are at the top of the list, while women generically occupy a lower place. Married women are an even lower rated threat due to the family responsibilities which Palestinian women, including workers, take with much seriousness.

Often women workers have to carry out family responsibilities and childcare in addition to their daily labour at the settlements. Domestic duties they bear are mostly carried out during the night or before going to work or after coming back. For example, several of the interviewed women explained having to wake their children in the pre-dawn before leaving to work so they can go to school. Some children end up not attending school due to lack of supervision. The daughters of working women also bear part of these responsibilities.

In addition to all this, Palestinian women often occupy a traditionally defined role within their families. In their households, women continue to be subjected to gender-based violence and other gendered human rights violations by Palestinian men. UN Women reported that the relationship between occupation violence and gender-based violence, including domestic violence, is complex and multi-layered⁷². The same report states that communities, men and women suffering from occupation are more likely to fall into a cycle of domestic violence⁷³. This is understandable, if not excusable. Many men feel

⁷² UN Women, “In-depth Gender Needs Assessment in Area C and Hebron H2” (2018) P.53

⁷³ Ibid.

intensely the humiliation of being placed in a subordinate, subservient position by the Israeli military, facing as they do routine humiliation, degradation of their masculine status, a sense of powerlessness and an inability to protect their families as tradition expects of them. Dr Samr Jabr, a Palestinian psychiatrist and researcher, has written strongly about the effect of humiliation as a weapon of colonisation, not simply as an accidental consequence of occupation. As she puts it: “These omnipresent acts of personal humiliation are not simply collateral by-products of occupation, but its core policy. An essential feature of the occupation is to target and undermine every facet of Palestinian identity, especially those aspects of identity that are a source of pride for the emerging intellectual and moral development of a Palestinian nation. Humiliation acts to crush the sources of autonomy and independence. It aims to reduce Palestinians to a state of passive silence⁷⁴.”

This psychological damage can impact negatively on personal relations at home, with the woman/mother absorbing the man’s frustrations in addition to her own, possibly suffering in other ways too as a result of the occupier’s violent – and deliberate - disruption of traditional male security and confidence.

Findings

Based on the interviews conducted among women workers at the Israeli settlements, I can summarise the key points as follows:

For women, as for all other Palestinian workers, working within illegal settlements is not a choice but an economic necessity consequent on the deliberate destruction of indigenous industries, including agriculture, by the occupying force. Israel sees itself as a major player in the modern industrial world and has exploited the natural resources of Palestine, in particular land and water, to provide the economic infrastructure for its people and its more technological industries. The need for cheap, malleable and compliant workers has resulted in the exploitation of Palestinian people as if they too are a natural resource to be used freely by the occupying power. This process violates international law, but the world community tolerates and even endorses it through preferential trade deals.

Employment opportunities offered to Palestinians embed violence in various forms at every level and stage of employment. This can be physical, emotional or psychological and involves, where women are concerned, coercive control rooted in an exploitation of strict norms of modesty and propriety which can silence women and prevent them speaking openly about the abuse of their persons or abusive language which disrespects them as women. Another aspect of abusive employment practice that is often facilitated by a broker involves the denial of basic rights, including respect for basic terms and conditions of employment.

Exposed in this way at work to multiple abusive practices, women can find the home environment is no safe refuge. Socially defined gender-based responsibilities are still fulfilled by Palestinian women, intensifying the workload they subsume. Additionally, their hard work in settlements brings no social kudos, but shame.

⁷⁴ Samah Jabr. Humiliation: The hammer crushing Palestinian society. June 30, 2016. <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20160630-humiliation-the-hammer-crushing-palestinian-society/>

Work normally brings financial benefits and enables social mobility and other material benefits. This is denied to Palestinian women workers because of the poor pay, lack of protection and rights. They work hard for minimal reward and must endure the indignity of labouring on what is their own land.

The humiliation and control of the Palestinians is not simply motivated by Israel's need for cheap labour. As Samr Jabr identified, such treatment is corrosive of the individual's spirit and reduces the worker to a servile position which makes her / him much less likely to resist injustice: a wholly dependent worker is a weak worker. There are many ways to undermine social fabric and national spirit and aspirations: exploitative and demeaning work is one such method. Whilst it is true that many capitalist employers adopt exploitative practices, the Palestinian experience is unique in that it takes place within a colonising project intended to deradicalise, weaken and ultimately displace the indigenous people. Exploitative and demeaning labour is a tool of a wider policy of colonisation.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This paper argues that the economics of Israeli occupation is a structural relation of domination by the colonisers towards a colonised population. Palestinian workers in Israeli settlements are an example of how Palestinians face a complex structural violence including lack of employment rights, exploitation by employers and brokers, harassment and threats in addition to social stigma and humiliation. Although some aspects of the violence that have been discussed above could be true for any other third world country, the existence of the Israeli occupation and its colonial strategies against Palestinian workers which affects the ways these workers are connected to global supply chains.

Companies doing business in Israeli settlements contribute to and profit from land confiscations and the violation of Palestinian workers' rights - and support the settlements which are illegal under international law. The ultimate and inescapable truth is that no settlement business should be operating and profiting from land and resources illegally taken from the Palestinian people.

Making recommendations to improve this situation on the assumption that this is a fixed arrangement would normalise a grave injustice. Essentially, it is illegal for Israel to colonise Palestinian land. It is also illegal for Israel then to transfer its population to that colonised land and expropriate resources for its own benefit. The treatment of the Palestinian workforce is a further injustice built on this illegality.

The core recommendation for restorative justice must be the enforcement of international humanitarian law and the implementation of UN resolutions. One practical step in the process would be for the EU to remove its preferential Trade Agreement with Israel by enforcing its own Article 2. This alone would have massive consequences for the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

With regard to other issues, such as domestic violence, the solution begins with the removal of the major causal factor: the humiliation and demeaning of Palestinian men at the hands of the Israeli military occupation. After that, Palestinian society, and Palestinian women, in particular, will take the issue into their own hands and provide a home-grown solution, independent of the colonising force or external agencies.

South Africa

*By
Dela Gwala*

Undercutting the lives of South African women: Sexual violence and the NGO Funding Crisis in post-Apartheid South Africa



Introduction

In 2018, in response to an increase in violent crime, particularly murder, former police minister Bheki Cele stated that South Africa is comparable to countries in the throes of military conflict despite being considered a bastion of peace (Green, 2018). Cele was not the first to compare South Africa to an unacknowledged battle zone. Many feminist activists have used this discourse to highlight the country's high levels of sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence. The 'war on women's bodies' has been a prevalent rhetorical tool deployed in movements, campaigns and literature for many years. The devastating impact of this widespread assault on women's rights and the bodily autonomy of marginalised groups has been compounded by the systemic injustice perpetuated by the South African government and the international donor community. This article will contend that inadequate state funding and withdrawal of international funding constitutes an insidious form of structural violence in this environment of endemic violent crime. International geopolitics and the economic policy of South Africa has severely gutted service provision for survivors of sexual violence. This article will focus on one of the main service providers who have been adversely affected by this tenuous funding environment: Thuthuzela Care Centres (TCCs).

The nexus between gender-based violence and structural violence

In *The Gendered Effects of Structural Violence*, Karie Cross (2013) contends that there is mounting evidence that structural violence has the capacity to cause more destruction to

a greater number of people than direct warfare or the violence of militarised conflict. Cross also affirms that there is a nexus between structural inequalities and gender-based inequities – particularly when it comes to structural issues such as access to healthcare. According to Cross, this increasing literature on the impact of gendered structural violence has not been comprehensively taken into account in the study of conflict and peacebuilding. Cross argues that globally there's a dearth of comprehensive data on violence against women and there's a tendency within the field to focus on political violence rather than the violence that often happens to women in private spaces. In her view, a gender lens needs to go hand in hand with the conceptual framework of structural violence.

I contend that these arguments are true even for states that are not considered to be post-conflict or in a state of war. South Africa is often lauded on the international political stage for peacefully transitioning from an oppressive regime to a democratic nation-state. There were many incidents of state violence during the resistance struggle against the Apartheid government, but these are not often labelled as acts of civil war. Apartheid ended through a negotiation process between the former ruling Apartheid government and the liberation movement that ended the racist tyranny of this regime. However, the legacy of structural violence from colonial and Apartheid rule did not end when South Africa had its first democratic election in 1994.

The endemic violent crimes that currently mars the socio-political landscape of South Africa is often linked to structural inequalities that have continued from the past. According to the World Bank, South Africa is one of the most economically unequal countries in the world (World Bank, 2019). This is largely a legacy of British/Dutch colonialism and then Apartheid, which entailed the following: slavery, land theft, rampant police brutality against economically marginalised communities and the exploitation of cheap black labour that resulted from black people being forced off their land, being barred from well-paying jobs, receiving largely subpar primary education and having minimal access to tertiary education (Ramugondo, 2018: 2). Although it has been 25 years since the end of a regime that systemically marginalised black South Africans, it can be argued that the dynamics of wealth distribution in the country have not shifted significantly and that the current government has not done enough to transform the inequitable status quo.

It can also be argued that these historically based dynamics were further fuelled by certain members of the international community through their inaction and sometimes blatant support of the Apartheid regime in South Africa. Economically, the South African mining sector provided mineral resources such as gold or coal to countries in the Global North and in general South Africa provided a significant market for commodities from the Global North (SAHO, 2011). States such as Britain and the USA used their power in the UN Security Council to resist attempts from other states in the international community to economically sanction and isolate the Apartheid regime in South Africa until the mid-80s (SAHO, 2011).

This historical backdrop set the stage for the unchecked scourge of sexual violence that exists in post-Apartheid South Africa. In *'These Women, They Force Us to Rape Them': Rape as Narrative of Social Control in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, Helen Moffett contends that the high levels of gender-based violence in tandem with a deficient criminal justice and healthcare system have created the conditions for what she proclaims to be

“an unacknowledged gender civil war”(Moffet, 2006: 129). She roots this socio-economic and political crisis in a legacy that stretches from South Africa’s Apartheid past. In her view, the current climate of unbridled sexual violence is driven by the spectre of a political regime that engineered authority through violent domination - a regime that normalised systemic subjugation. Violence was sown into every sector of South African society and part of that was the patriarchal project of rape.

Gender-based violence as a legacy of Apartheid – the transition to democracy

In *Gender, Masculinities and Transition in Conflicted Societies*, Naomi Cahn and Fionnuala Ni Aolain contend that in practice, transition is not about peace; it is the pursuit of a less visible form of violence (Cahn and Aolain, 2010: 102). They suggest this assertion becomes evidentially more persuasive when the gender lens is applied to evaluate the transition of a repressed society to a more liberal or democratic society. This is apparent in the case of South Africa’s transition.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa was one of the fundamental mechanisms of transition from the white supremacist Apartheid era to the democratic post- Apartheid era (Kusafuka, 2009: 45). It was billed as an open forum for victims to testify about the injustices of Apartheid (Kusafuka, 2009: 46). It was also a national forum for the perpetrators of politically motivated violence during the Apartheid era to lay bare the truth of their crimes and seek official pardon through the amnesty process (Kusafuka, 2009: 46).

The overarching justification for the formation of this commission can be described as follows: “to investigate the nature, causes and extent of gross violations of human rights” (Kusafuka, 2009: 46). The ideological narrative that permeated this process was the assertion that truth-telling would be the bridge to national reconciliation (Kusafuka, 2009: 47). This national project was largely pursued without acknowledging the gendered nature of the South African experience (Kusafuka, 2009: 45). This oversight had a knock-on effect of rendering gender-based violence (primarily committed against women) mostly invisible (Kusafuka, 2009: 45).

The TRC’s lack of engagement with gender began with its narrow and problematic categorisations of human rights abuses. The recognised violations were as follows: “the killing, abduction, torture or severe ill-treatment of any person,’ or the ‘attempt, conspiracy, incitement, instigation, command or procurement to commit’ such acts” (Kusafuka, 2009: 48). Acts that fell into the category of gender-based violence were only acknowledged after civil society organisations drew attention to this oversight – these acts were then placed into the category of “severe ill-treatment” (Kusafuka, 2009: 48). Just before the public hearings were due to begin in 1996; a few gender activists began to question the commission’s overall gender-neutral framework (Olckers, 1996: 63). These activists posited that Apartheid era political violence was meted out along gendered lines (Olckers, 1996: 62). Due to socially enforced gender roles, men were often on the front lines of the struggle whilst women took care of the household. When the men were taken or killed by Apartheid agents there would be economic and social consequences for the women (Olckers, 1996: 64).

In response, the TRC put in place a gender specific plan that included ad hoc women's hearings, a policy that allowed for more sensitivity when taking statements, research focused on the gendered element of the Apartheid era and a chapter dedicated to women in the penultimate report (Kusafuka, 2009: 48). As acknowledged in the TRC report, these efforts were insufficient add-ons which ultimately treated gender as a marginal consideration (Kusafuka, 2009: 49).

From its inception, this commission was criticised for focusing on the suffering of selected individuals rather than the systemic violence of the Apartheid era state machinery (Kusafuka, 2009: 51). This emphasis on personal suffering of particular political agents hindered the gendered analysis that revealed that the Apartheid state used sexual violence as a political tool. This shut out adequate recognition for the everyday terror experienced by women. For example Apartheid security operatives would use the threat of rape to bully women and commit acts of rape as a punitive measure (Kusafuka, 2009: 51). This issue was brought to light during the women's hearings, but even in this specialised forum the Human Rights Violations Committee and the Amnesty Committee grappled with ascertaining whether an act of sexual violence was politically driven or not (Kusafuka, 2009: 52). Even in the heavily politicised arena of Apartheid era detainees, the gendered element went amiss. The torture of female detainees was notoriously sexualised and this calculated element did not get due acknowledgement (Kusafuka, 2009: 52).

In *Defining the Aftermath: sexual violence and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Beth Goldblatt and Sheila Meintjes (1998) lay out some of the reasons that women did not come forward and share their experiences of sexual violence – even when their anonymity was guaranteed in the women's hearings. Firstly, they outline the precarious status of women in South Africa. They argue that women are treated as second class citizens and their value as human beings is often devalued in every sector of society (Goldblatt and Meintjes, 1998:10). In their view, the separation between public and private affairs in South Africa creates conditions where violence against women can occur with impunity. The public arena, which is often gendered as male, is where political affairs and the significant business of the state takes place. The private arena is where sexual violence and domestic abuse is often relegated – this allows these forms of violence to be dismissed as personal matters that are not tied to the larger structures of how the South African state operates (Goldblatt and Meintjes, 1998:10).

Goldblatt and Meintjes also assert that economic marginalisation and gender-based violence are interconnected. The difficult socio-economic conditions that Apartheid created, in particular for black women, often left them trapped in abusive situations. Fuelling the silencing fostered by these unsupportive conditions is the belief that the suffering that black women experienced under the Apartheid regime was not as significant as the pain of black men. Many women internalised this belief and did not equate their experiences, particularly of sexual violation, as human rights abuses (Goldblatt and Meintjes, 1998:10). In fact, many women who testified during the TRC proceedings privileged the telling of the experiences of men in their lives rather than their own experiences (Olckers, 1996: 64).

In addition, Goldblatt and Meintjes point out that discourse around sex, in general, is shrouded in shame, which makes discourse around sexual violence more taboo. This has the knock-on effect of stigmatising the person who experienced sexual violation. In the case of Apartheid South Africa, both men and women were tortured in a sexually violent

manner but female survivors seemed far more reluctant to fully disclose the horrors of that experience during the TRC (Goldblatt and Meintjies, 1998:11). Goldblatt and Meintjies further explain this reticence by highlighting the fact that women who had sexual violence committed against them were seen as contaminated by the political enemy. Jessie Duarte, an anti-apartheid activist, contended that making a women's sexual assault public knowledge would dent their standing in their party and would overshadow their contribution in the political struggle (Goldblatt and Meintjies, 1998:11).

Goldblatt and Meintjies buttress Duarte's assertion by indicating that sexual violence that occurred within the liberation movements was often dealt with in a lacklustre manner (Goldblatt and Meintjies, 1998:12). One example of this is how the African National Congress (the ANC) presented a report on sexual violence in the training camps of their military wing – Umkhonto weSizwe (MK). The ANC indicated that gender-based violence had occurred but did not elaborate on how the perpetrators within their ranks would be held accountable (Goldblatt and Meintjies, 1998:12 -13). This is particularly concerning because the ANC has been the ruling party in the South African parliament since the early 1990s. Allegiance to the ANC and other political parties stopped some women from testifying in the women's hearings and those who attempted to share their stories were sometimes threatened with reprisal from their comrades in the movement (Goldblatt and Meintjies, 1998:13).

According to Goldblatt and Meintjies, the violence that is prevalent in post-Apartheid South Africa is a continuation of violence that has gone before – particularly the high levels of sexual violence (Goldblatt and Meintjies, 1998:13). The legacy of violent repression, state brutality and violence against women has stretched into the socio-political reality of present-day South Africa. They also assert that coming to terms with these historical continuities will require the work of women's organisations – especially those who place emphasis on the healing process of survivors (Goldblatt and Meintjies, 1998:7).

The role of the international donor community in the transition to the 'new' South Africa In the 1980s and 1990s, there was a shift in the mechanisms that the Global North utilised to bolster their political influence in the Global South (Hearn, 2000:815). During this period, Northern states began to widely deploy International aid as a mechanism of foreign intervention – particularly as a tool for democratisation. The birth of International funds being available for 'democracy assistance' largely came from the failure of previous strategies of intervention – which entailed supporting dictatorships that were sympathetic or strategically aligned with partner states in the Global North (Hearn, 2000:815). In South Africa, these new dynamics of International donor aid played out in the arena of the South African transition from Apartheid to post-Apartheid democracy.

In the 1990s, South Africa received most of its aid for the purpose of strengthening and re-creating its formal democratic structures rather than to deal with the issue of the vast socio-economic inequality that Apartheid had entrenched (Hearn, 2000:819). Donors in the Global North chose to invest vast amounts into South Africa's transition due to its strategic role in the past (Hearn, 2000: 821). South Africa had been a key player in the capitalist endeavours of Global North states and their corporations since the turn of the century. The Apartheid regime was a particularly useful economic and political ally to European states, the USA and Japan until the 1970s when political pressure began to build against the violent and racist policies of the Apartheid government (Hearn, 2000:821).

During Apartheid, there were international donors that provided support for civil society organisations. In the 1960s and 1970s, this funding came from Nordic states such as Denmark and Sweden (Hearn, 2000:817). In the mid-80s, economic sanctions against the Apartheid regime were instituted and at this point, the European Union and the USA began to make vast amounts of funding available for South African civil society organisations. This funding tapered off after the 1994 elections that brought Apartheid to an official end and ushered in the era of the ANC-led government (Hearn, 2000:817).

International aid was largely redirected to the project of democratic state-building: the TRC process, developing the constitution, national and provincial legislatures, reforming the South African police, local government structures. There was an emphasis placed on entrenching reverence for formal democratic principles while spending on substantive transformation of sectors such as healthcare, education and housing were seen as secondary initiatives that would ensure democratic stability (Hearn, 2000:820). This resulted in South Africa becoming what can be termed a ‘polyarchy’ – an elite driven form of democracy that allows socio-economic inequality to flourish (Hearn, 2000:818).

Gender-based violence in post-Apartheid SA and the current funding climate

There is overwhelming evidence to indicate that sexual violence in South Africa is an issue that has reached pandemic levels. Some studies indicate alarming statistics such as one in four women in the country has been raped in their lifetime (Shukumisa, 2017:2). Studies also show that very few survivors report incidences of sexual violence to the police – some indices place this at 1 in 25. In addition, the research also suggests that very few survivors of sexual violence gain access to essential post-trauma care such as health and psychosocial services or legal counsel (Shukumisa, 2017:2).

South Africa has comprehensive and progressive legislation meant to deal with both sexual crimes (Sexual Offences and Related Matters Act) and domestic abuse (Domestic Violence Act). However, what’s on paper does not match reality. Civil society organisations have contended that lack of political will to carry through legislated policies has resulted in widespread structural failures (Shukumisa, 2017:5). Some organisations have also asserted that official crime statistics released by the South African police grossly underestimate the extent of the problem. According to the literature, the South African police only take on 60 % of the cases reported to them. Some organisations contend that this was due to a lack of understanding and adherence to legislation that is in place (Shukumisa, 2017:28). Research has also indicated that performance indicators discourage the South African police from fully reporting the extent of the problem (Shukumisa, 2017:28).

In order to provide care for survivors of sexual violence, the Department of Health has allocated 265 public healthcare facilities nationwide to offer medical, psychological and sometimes clinical forensic services (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017: 2). Unfortunately, recent research indicates that most of these facilities do not operate to their full capacity and many of these facilities do not provide a number of services they are mandated to provide (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017: 2). A study done by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), which mapped the services of 63 % of the facilities, found that only 26 (7 %) of facilities offered the full medical care required for survivors to obtain comprehensive care

and only 42 % of facilities stated that they were equipped for all the medical examinations and treatments. Alarming, 7 % of the facilities reported that they do not provide services for survivors of sexual violence at all (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017: 2).

Recent studies also indicate that these services are chronically underfunded. In a statement to *The Guardian*, a South African-based MSF staff member, Garret Barnwell made it clear that current service provision is nowhere near meeting the demand (Summers and Jolaoso, 2017). He points to the current economic climate as a barrier to delivering adequate care. In his view, economic policy grounded in austerity is diverting funds from crucial services. Lisa Vetten, a violence against women researcher based at the Wits City Institute, buttresses Barnwell's argument by adding that South Africa is currently experiencing an economic downturn. Furthermore, she contends that international donors now consider South Africa to be a middle-income country and have diverted their resources elsewhere. In Vetten's view, this assessment of South Africa's economic capacity is deeply flawed and should be reconsidered. Vetten also asserts that the government is not willing to self-fund these services (Summers and Jolaoso, 2017).

Case Study: Thuthuzela Care Centres

Thuthuzela Care Centres (TCCs) were conceived as a “one-stop” care centre for survivors of sexual violence – a place they could receive legal counsel, medical services and mental health care all under one roof (Šimonović, 2016:14). This initiative is spearheaded by the National Prosecution Authority's Sexual Offences and Community Affairs Unit (SOCA). Nonetheless, it is a joint venture between the NPA and the Health, Justice and Social Development departments. This integrated approach is supposed to ensure that survivors are not subjected to the secondary trauma associated with a disjointed legal and medical process (Šimonović, 2016:15). The approach also aims to ensure higher conviction rates and to shorten the time that cases take to make it through the legal system.

A 2016 report by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women noted that there were 55 TCCs nationwide housed in public hospitals in areas with elevated rates of sexual violence. The Special Rapporteur also remarked that the quality of care offered differed from facility to facility and that there is a dearth of psychological support offered in these facilities (Šimonović, 2016:15). The Special Rapporteur's findings are backed up by a study done by Médecins Sans Frontières. In their research titled *Untreated Violence*, MSF reports that there's a marked shortfall in what facilities are purported to provide versus what services they actually provide. They stipulate that this gap in adequate care is most apparent when it comes to mental health services (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017:2).

In the report on violence against women, the Special Rapporteur indicates that the majority of the funding for TCCs is provided by the international donor community (Šimonović, 2016:15). This concluding note on the TCCs has far reaching implications. In MSF's report, it is clear that counselling services are given the least amount of financial backing (Médecins Sans Frontières, 2017:2). This is significant because mental health services are outsourced to Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that get very little state funding despite the TCCs being earmarked as a key component of the South African government's “anti-rape strategy” (Šimonović, 2016:15). In 2017, a coalition of 60 NGOs working on the issue of sexual violence conducted a study to evaluate the work that NGOs are responsible for in the TCC model and to lay bare the constant issues that they confront within this model (Shukumisa, 2017:5). One of the main findings of the Shukumisa

coalition's research was that the current funding model for the TCCs impedes NGOs from performing their necessary function. NGOs are the reason that TCCs are able to provide 24-hour services – their staff remain after hours when the day staff go home. Despite this, these organisations are not considered to be a crucial component of the TCC model, which puts them in the financially precarious position of relying on foreign funding.

NGOs that formed a part of the Shukumisa Coalition's report stated that the South African government needs to intervene and provide the resources to end this funding crisis (Shukumisa, 2017:27). The Coalition noted that the agenda set by international donors often did not align with the strategies in place in South Africa. The Coalition also contended that the short-term nature of donor funding impeded long term sustainability of services in the TCCs and often made it difficult to retain well-trained staff. Furthermore, some of the NGOs argued that some international donors are focused only on narrow statistical markers such as percentage of people tested for HIV rather than the overall well-being of those accessing the services (Shukumisa, 2017:27).

Conclusion

State and international institutions have the ability to fuel and perpetuate trauma – in particular, they often play a key role in re-traumatising historically marginalised communities (Burstow, 2003:1307). This trauma is amplified through not acknowledging the harm that certain forms of violence have caused. This is apparent in how sexual violence was largely invisibilised during the TRC process and in donor funding endeavours before and during the transition. This trauma is also magnified through minimising or failing to take seriously the harm caused, in turn, failing to provide the necessary care and assistance (Burstow, 2003:1307). The lacklustre service provision for survivors of gender-based violence is indicative of a state that downplays the impact of this trauma by stripping funding from services that would ensure the physical and mental wellbeing of survivors. International donors are also culpable as they invested in and pushed for a liberal democratic framework for South Africa that did not grapple with the chasm of socio-economic inequality and the endemic violence of the past. They further perpetuate this cycle of re-traumatisation by absconding from responsibility in present day funding initiatives that aren't in line with the needs of survivors and create short term solutions to long term problems.

In November 2018, a National Summit on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide was convened by the South African presidency. In his address, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa made the following statement about the TCCs: "Where these centres aren't working optimally, we would like to hear about it. If it's a shortage of money, we will make money available for them" (Pilane, 2018). This summit brought together civil society organisations, activists who focus on gender-based violence and government officials. This summit was in response to demands made by the intersectional *womxn's movement that had led a march attended by thousands of people nationwide (Ebrahim and Moosa, 2018). In statements made to the publication *Daily Vox*, some activists present voiced their concern that the South African government would not deliver on its promises and these declarations would prove to be prescient. Five months after Ramaphosa's proclamation, less than half the TCCs (40 %) had received word that international donor funding would be made available to them (Msomi, 2019).

**The term womxn is used to be inclusive of all femme-identifying bodies, not just cisgender women.*

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Liberia

By

Heanneah Sianeh Farwenee

Political Economy of Wartime Violence Against Women: The Case of Liberia



Abstract:

Intimate partner violence, which is also wartime violence against women, is an age-old problem across the world. In Liberia, it is still a considerable problem, incredibly prevalent and remains the most widely reported crime affecting hundreds of thousands of women and girls in every socio-economic group. It is the critical barrier to achieving the objective of equality. This study aims to describe the duality of experience and dynamics of intimate partner violence of rural Liberian women and girls with the emphasis on local political-economic processes, armed conflicts, and other crucial crises through structural inequalities in Liberian society. It is hoped that the experiences of the women and girls in this study will foster dialogue on promptly and effectively addressing the wellbeing of women and girls by eliminating all forms of violence in intimate partner relationships.

Introduction

Conflict-related violence against women and girls has been referred to as “one of history’s great silences” (Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, 2005, cited in Ward 2005 page 67.) In December 1989, civil war broke out in Liberia, resulting in different forms of conflict-related violence perpetrated on women and girls. Violence against women and girls has been a predominant feature in all societies and more so in Liberia, where women do not share the same social and economic rights that men do. There are existing and extreme forms of violence such as rape, sexual harassment, loss of livelihood, forced trafficking, maternal deaths and early marriages contribute to an exceedingly pervasive violation of human rights that has been increasing for the past two

decades. According to the Liberian Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection 2018 statistics, more than 500 girls are genitally mutilated, more than 200 girls are forced into prostitution and more than 500 women are physically abused by their intimate partners every year in a population of less than five million. (Liberia Ministry of Gender 2019). As the availability of resources evolves, an increasing number of post-conflict local and international NGOs are taking up the issue of violence against women and girls in post-conflict Liberia. Regardless of these efforts, programmes that address violence are grossly inadequate compared to the scope of the problem.

The protection of victims and survivors remains limited to non-existent while prevention initiatives are often ad hoc, and the justice system remains ineffective and often biased. In many instances, lack of government resources to support short-term funding and shifting of donor priorities have undermined sustainability and impact the ability to implement the comprehensive services required to combat violence against women and girls. However, the creation of new challenges for women and girls through economic globalisation and development provide opportunities for advancing women's economic equality and independence.

This study highlights global political economic processes and their effect on the prevalence of violence against women and girls at all levels within Liberia, with the emphasis on intimate partner violence against rural women through structural inequalities.

Objectives

The study aims to provide an understanding of the extent of intimate heterosexual partner violence against rural women and girls, considering the political economy situation in wartime violence; linking structural inequalities as well as political-economic processes from household to transnational levels within Liberia.

The specific objective of this study is to describe ways in which intimate partner violence affects rural women's and girl's contributions to the local economy and shapes economic processes that continue to make women and girls more vulnerable to violence.

Methodology

The use of an ethnographic approach as an effective tool to identify dominant socio-cultural discourses was used in this study because of its potential to highlight different aspects of a complex social phenomenon (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008, pp 242-243). This study focuses on structural inequalities, patriarchy and political processes of intimate partner violence in the Liberian context. The study was conducted in districts within Montserrado County, which hosts Monrovia, the capital of Liberia, where issues of inequalities are often reinforced. In an effort to gather the data, unstructured interviews were conducted with groups of women including, rural women leaders, marketers and other rural women. The method of frequency and percentage analysis was adopted. Participation in this study was by voluntary informed consent and results were communicated to the participants. Observation of social structures was also employed to validate findings.

This study was informed by context-sensitive application and analysed in alignment with feminist theories that analyse structures of power that oppress women and girls. Consistent with other studies of violence against women and girls, this study also found that violence against women and girls continues to remain prevalent in Liberia. In-depth interviews and observations were conducted in three different communities. The interviews were conducted in person with six women and girls between the ages of 15-60, who live in rural communities; two widows, three married women and one unmarried. The women were interviewed individually in their own time in secure locations, having to take account of concerns of their personal safety. The analysis primarily involved the desegregation of data and the identification of a broad range of structural inequality beliefs, attitudes and practices adhering to the grounded theory of this study. Selected data was ultimately synthesised into a coherent conceptual description.

Findings/Results

Throughout these communities, the prevalent issue that kept being voiced was that 'violence against them by men was the norm'. For instance, there were repeated comments such as: *'when your man beat you it's discipline'*; *'it is not a crime for our husband to mistreat you'*; *'it's our culture'*.

However, over time and with staying and working with women and girls in different localities, the narratives changed, especially when trust and rapport was built. It was then that these women and girls opened up about their experiences, as detailed below.

Garmai is a 53-year-old woman and high school graduate with four children. She lives in Todee, a rural area in Montserrado that is involved in farming and harvesting rice and is a major supplier of rice which is Liberia's local and most consumed food. As a farmer, Garmai works as a supervisor on the farms owned by a company that cultivates and packages rice. On her free day, once a week, she sells foodstuff at the local market. For more than three decades, Garmai has continued to experience physical and psychological abuse from her husband. She explained that at the age of 17, her parents forcefully had her married off to generate money aimed at sending her younger brother abroad. Her husband is mostly unemployed and spends most of his days at home, sometimes working as a wine tapper. He beats her all the time over everything. She stressed that his doing so is an expression of his anger. This implies that her husband is unable to control himself and vents his anger on her, causing injuries preventing her from earning a living both from her job and her mini business. Whenever there is confusion, whether or not she is guilty, he harms her through physical aggression (beating, slapping, kicking) and psychologically. Whenever he beats her, she becomes unable to work at her farm supervising job, which results in low harvesting, scarcity of rice on the market and loss of her salary for the time of her absence. It is also difficult for her to make market sales when he hits her. She has lost an eye from his physical violence, as was noted during the interview (June 29, 2019).

Another participant explained that she is currently in her second marriage- in both of her marriages, both her husbands have always maltreated her. Korto, who is 49 years old, is illiterate and lives in lower Montserrado. During the war, there was tribal conflict there and Korto, then 19 years old, said both her parents died from bullet wounds, and she was left with her aunt and her aunt's husband. At a checkpoint, in order to pass through, a soldier insisted on them giving her to him or he would kill them. Her aunt resisted and

the soldier, along with other soldiers, gang raped her aunt to death. Her uncle then gave her to the soldier, and he was let go. Though not through any formal or legal way, she was forced to become his wife. The soldier was an amputee and threatened to kill Korto if she attempted to escape, so she remained with him to protect her life. Soon after the war, she began selling dried goods, but her business later collapsed as her husband became a drug addict and squandered all the money, he demanded from her after each day of sales. She said that one year after he died, her ex-husband's elder brother claimed her as his wife and began mistreating her. At first, she used to work as a maid to feed her family while her husband worked at a palm oil mine, but he, unfortunately, spends his wages on alcohol and so depended on hers. However, she managed to establish a market table using palm branches to earn enough to pay off some of their financial debts, but this was destroyed by her husband – making her walk around to do her business while he collects whatever money she generates. Similarly, to the previous respondent, Korto's husband beats her all the time and even worse whenever he wants to have sex with her, especially when she does not give consent. When he beats her, she often becomes so ill that she has to be admitted to the hospital, making her unable to carry out business from which she is supposed to earn enough to feed the family. The consistent physical violence that has been inflicted on Korto, leaves her unable to explore economic opportunities or manage money and so she remains burdened with debt. She said she idolised her husband as a god because that is the way she has been disciplined.

In another community, a 32-year-old woman, Korpo, who lives in deplorable conditions at the extreme edge of a riverbank experienced rape and torture. She recounts how, in the height of the April 6, 1996 Liberia civil war, she was kidnapped by soldiers who raped her all the time. Pointing to scars on her body, she explained that she had been a sex slave for many soldiers at their residences. On several occasions she fell pregnant, but miscarried due to constant torture. Currently, Korpo lives with her husband who constantly bullies and violates her rights, blaming her for what happened to her. Due to her wounds, she is unable to work and is dependent on her husband. She feels that all hope is lost as she juggles with survival each day, hoping for her neighbours' sympathy to provide her with a meal, as she lacks the ability to be financially independent. With tears rolling down her cheeks, she disclosed that she really wants to open her own shop but she cannot, and it hurts her so much.

Another woman with maimed feet conveyed how every time she refuses to have sex with her husband, he calls upon members of the town leadership to tie her up, while he beats her mercilessly. For example, one day while they were quarrelling, her husband waved a knife across her throat and stood glaring at her while she bled profusely. She was so scared and thought she would die. She once attempted reporting the ill-treatment to the police as she was terrified and had bruises all over her body. Unfortunately, the police sent for her husband and without investigating, instructed him to take her back home saying, "go and settle it at home." The police also said for her to "learn to respect your husband, or else you will continue to suffer." The justice system as a structure not only fails to address gendered violence but continues to allow it to be perpetrated. She mentioned that she cannot leave him because they have children. A year ago, with financial support from a family member, she successfully established a loan business for market women in the community but was unable to sustain it due to her husband's abusive behaviour. Today, along with her two children, they are daily street beggars who go begging from community to community to survive.

Ma Kou, a widow, experienced verbal and physical abuse from her partner for 19 years until his demise. She is a teacher by profession, but her husband stopped her from working, despite her many pleas. She explained that she used to sneak out to a nearby school, but one day her husband found out. He humiliated her in front of the students and dared her never to do so again because doing such a job is not for women but men. She had money saved from her previous income and planned to buy shares in Orange, a local GSM Company. However, her husband demanded and misused the money that she had saved for years. She gave her only daughter to another family to look after. This stress caused her to have a mental breakdown and stopped her from associating with others in her community, and now she cannot afford to fulfil her dreams and ambitions.

One of the community women leaders, a widow, echoed the sentiment that many of the women in the community ‘always disrespect their husbands’. She stated that frustratingly, her peers do so sometimes by refusing to sleep (have sex) with their husbands, by going places and staying longer than expected, leaving their men lonely and so forth. She added that these are rules for their communities that she thinks women, including herself, must not violate.

In one of the communities visited, it was found that there is a group of elders who are charged with the responsibility of conflict resolution. They placed lower value on conflict affecting women, which increases the likelihoods of women experiencing violence.

As a researcher, to observe the daily lives of the respondents, I stayed in the communities of two of the women participants for over a week in each. Also, visits to the nearby social institutions for conflict resolution, such as the police stations in two of those communities, case files samples revealed a wide range of allegations along a spectrum of intimate partner violence and abuse, where unfair justice rendered.

The study found that some men feel insecure because their women work and earn money instead of them. However, some women respondents seem to remain in these abusive relationships based on the uncertainty of security in their lives and because they are afraid that they may be harmed whenever they began to think seriously of leaving. While some respondents remained with husbands based on financial needs, others preferred to stay with their partners for the sake of their children. Findings also showed that the beliefs of men maltreating their women for whatever reason(s) was considered a norm for some respondents and the communities, reinforcing patriarchy.

Discussion/Analysis

It seems that women generally experience emotional, social, sexual and physical violence during the war and more even after the conflict ended. For women in rural communities that reinforce patriarchal practices and beliefs, it is common for this to contribute significantly to women living in extreme poverty and making them unable to participate in their local economies. Regardless of the different levels of domination, these acts also affect morbidity and mortality. It is important to note the extent to which the women interviewed emphasised ‘fear’ as a way to characterise their relationships.

The respondents stressed that their abusive partners have disrupted their ability to participate in local economic processes by intentionally failing to provide money or not

allowing them access to money, socially controlling their mobility, as well as using physical and sexual violence- all of which have enormous economic implications. Among those respondents who reported experiencing disruption from work, one said she was unable to establish a business for herself and another reported to have lost her job because of the abuse. Yet another one missed work for days and was unable to make sufficient earnings. One survivor spoke of injustice from a structural institution which, rather than helping her, supported her abuser to inflict more abuse on her. The women in this study faced structural violence from the family, repressive governance structures, patriarchal legal justice systems and weak rule of law at the community level, all of which are heavily androcentric.

From a radical feminist perspective, the collectivist nature of the Liberian culture in which the needs of the family and family values take precedence over the needs of women as individuals, play an integral role in women remaining in abusive relationships that not only affects their financial wellbeing but the affordability of their basic needs. The constant occurrence of the violence leads to lasting emotional, mental and physical trauma to women and to those children who witness it. The women are denied their fundamental rights. Their mental health is ruined by patriarchal structures, there are direct costs including expenditure on treatment and social services as well as indirect costs including days of work lost leading to reduced productivity and the resultant impact on the overall economy.

Although the different forms of violence vary in nature, the women face insurmountable obstacles from their intimate partners, ranging from abandonment and low self-esteem to war waged on their bodies. Many of these women hesitate to seek help while those who battle against it are often difficult to identify. Radical feminism would argue that the occurrence of this violence, especially sexual violence, also hinders women from contributing to their local economy, lowering their economic potential and making them unproductive and dependent (Beechey 1977). This is evident from the participants' responses which together indicate that abusive relationships financially affect them and make it difficult for them to obtain or retain employment or to build economic security.

Communities that do not resolve violence are suppressing female power, autonomy in and outside the home as well as financial stability. Their men control every part of these women's lives through mental torture and physical abuse. A look at the causes leading to many broken women and problems within society at large, by themselves indicate that in addition to intimate partner violence, that of institutions including family, community leadership, police stations, etc., have stalled women's economic progress and stability. Three of the respondents interviewed, expressed different visions for their future, all of which emphasised economic independence and personal safety, with one desiring to establish and own a store while another desired to enjoy a life where she is financially capable of providing for her children and enabling them to thrive.

As evident from this study, the discussions established the significant negative impact that intimate partner violence has on the dynamics of the local economy, the economic costs of inaction and the urgent need for a systematic response by local policy/decision makers as well as civil society organisations in addressing violence against women.

About the authors

Angela Collet is a Brazilian Social Scientist, holding a MA in Development Studies - Population, Poverty and Social Development (ISS/The Netherlands). In Brazil, Angela has worked for IBASE (Brazilian Institute for Social and Economic Analysis) and ABIA (Brazilian Interdisciplinary AIDS Association). In 2003, she participated in the 1st DAWN Training Institute and has engaged with DAWN through activism, collaborative analysis and UN advocacy work (focus on interlinking gender, SRHR and Human Rights). In the past decade, Angela was based in the North of Mozambique (Cabo Delgado Province) where she worked as advisor to governmental and non-governmental inclusive and sustainable development programmes and founded IRUTHU project (meaning “Body” in local language Makua). Her feminist work and shared-reflections are focused on exploring innovative interlinked frameworks to intersectionality, rights-based, body-sensitive, decolonial/anti-racist and inclusive-arts education and human development programmes and strategies.

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