RECONCILING THE YOUTH:
GENDER AND PEACEBUILDING
IN A
POLARISED ENVIRONMENT

A compendium of papers and proceedings
of a symposium held
in Harare
on 9 October 2008

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Preface

Folklore has it that if the father is violent and abusive to the mother, the mother will pass down the violence and abuse to the kids who will in turn cascade it to the dog. The poor creature is left with no option but to vent its own frustrations on the cat. You know how it is in Tom and Jerry the animated cartoon the cat and the mouse have been enemies since time immemorial so the cat will pass down the venom on the rat that will then aggressively devour anything edible in the house. What if someone is to take it from a level higher than the domestic scenario to say; wont violence at a national level cogently precipitate into violence and abuse even on a personal man to man, man to woman, woman to woman and woman to man model? Won't general abuse at a national level culminate into pervasive abuse even along lines of gender? What are the relationship between gender relations and the general political relations prevailing in the country? Can't we expect more cases of sexual harassment rape and assault in a country undergoing an orgy of politically motivated violence? Isn't there a positive correlation between gender relations and political polarization and aren't we to facilitate a safe platform for reconciliation, healing and eventually peace.

The Situation
Executive Summary-Director

THE USE OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE MASCULINITIES AND PEACE BUILDING

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THE USE OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL THEORY IN ACHIEVING SUSTAABLE MASCULINITIES AND PEACE BUILDING

Abstract

While political conflicts in many countries have resulted in large-scale destruction and loss of life, this paper proposes how psychology can be successful in avoiding a violent conflict. The paper adopts a human factor and human rights framework of analysis as important mechanisms that draw upon psychological expertise in contributing to Africa's successful management of its political challenges. This article tries to problematize these complex ethical considerations and suggests ways that psychologists can evolve their roles as researchers, therapists, consultants and educators. The aim is to stimulate dialogue about how psychology can embed ethical activism into its professional identity and in human factor development from an African perspective.

Yet, the legacy of post colonialism and apartheid continues beyond the work of the conciliatory steps, and several social problems such as poverty, unemployment, crime, and substance abuse continue to affect many communities. Psychology is uniquely poised to assist in addressing these social problems and in contributing to the development of a community of peace. Academic psychology departments have to respond by implementing undergraduate and postgraduate programmes aimed at training professional psychologists and counselors ready to respond to community needs in post colonialism and post-apartheid Africa. This paper surveys the present political landscape in Africa, examines the part that a psychological change can be a catalyst in peace building mechanism, and calls attention to the role of psychology in contributing to national development by querying the internationally held concepts of human rights.

Key words: Masculinities; Peace Building; Psychology; Sustainable masculinities Psychopolitical literacy; Psychopolitical validity; Youth.

Introduction

Given the increase in human rights abuses and suffering in the world, psychologists bear an ethical responsibility to become more vocal and active on issues of social justice. Western psychology has failed to realize its full transformative potential, largely due to its preoccupation with the individual level of intervention, historical tendency to respond reactively to war and violence, and various cultural biases and ethnocentrism that exist within the field. Instead, psychology must take a more proactive, systems-oriented approach to addressing human rights issues. Due to the lack of guidelines in engaging in professional activism, psychologists must first more critically identify, challenge, and clarify relevant ethical concerns, including issues of culture, competence, and nonmaleficence involved in this type of work. By problematising these complex ethical considerations the author suggests ways that psychologists can evolve their roles as researchers, therapists, consultants and educators. The aim is to stimulate dialogue about how psychology can embed ethical activism into its professional identity and in human factor development from an African perspective.

The historic 1948 United Nations General Assembly adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) by the participating countries signaled an agreement that all human beings (*vanhu vose/ abantu bonke*) have dignity (*chiremerera*) and rights (*kodzero*) and are entitled to freedom (*rusununguko*) and security (kudzivirirwa). It is within this ambit that psychology and its interface with the law as enshrined in the human rights paradigm question human behaviour (maitiro evanhu/ ezenzo zabantu) and mental process (*mafungiro evanhu or mifungo yavanhu/imicabago yabantu or indlela abantu becabanga ngazo*). Psychology therefore becomes a barometer through which human behaviour is queried for its appropriateness.

Contemporary world problems that are abound with questionable human behaviour (*hunhu*) which is normally scrutinized, analysed and contested using the human rights lens. These repertoires of questionable human behaviour encompass, genocide (*kuurayana*), human cruelty (*kuitira vamwe vanhu utsinye kana kuva netsino*), international wars (*hondo dzepasi rose*) slavery (*utapwa or kuva nhapwa*), torture, discrimination (*rusarura*), racism (*rusarura ganda*), sexual violence (*kushungurudzwa panyaya huye nenzira dzebonde*), and human trafficking (*kutengeswa nokubviswa kwavanhu munzvimbo dzavo*). The central theme in these behaviours is lack and or absence of *UNHU* on the part of both perpetrator and deprivation of *hunhu/ubuntu* on the part of the abused. The perpetrator is seen as an individual who fails to qualify to be called a person (*munhu/umunthu*).The perpetrator is referred to as *arasa hunhu* (has thrown away his/her personhood) and

subsequently *haana ganda* (has no skin). The victim or survivor on the other hand has their personhood *(unhu)* violated and thus becomes degraded (*kuderedzwa unhu hwake*).

Despite the general opinion that sexual violence, oppression, (*udzvinyiriri*), political violence, human cruelty, brutality and other human rights violations are the purview of the law and politics, psychology can squarely take these problems as its areas of focus and study. Thus, from an African psychological point of view, an individual's morals, dignity growth and development reflect the central tenets of the human factor of approach of *hunhu/ubuntu.* According to Gobodo-Madikizela and Foster (2005) psychology has tremendously contributed as an academic and practical discipline to the human rights agenda. However, the psychology curricula of any African university or Technikon have a remarkably invisible presence of the interface between African psychology and human rights. Specifically, there is no African psychology of politics, African psychology and politics, African psychology in politics, African psychology of human rights or African psychology and human rights and African psychology in human rights, LET ALONE AFRICAN PEACE PSYCHOLOGY, yet African psychologists grapple with such issues as sexual violence, child abuse, post traumatic stress disorder, gender based violence that may be associated with genocide, violent wars, pre and post election violence which are all grotesque human brutalities.

This paper therefore examines the question of how human rights issues can be incorporated into the discipline of psychology and help to develop appropriate human factor potentialities that regulate and control unwanted human behaviour incompatible with human factor development and desirable competencies. The later will lead to the development and evolvement of human beings capable of living harmoniously with other humans. The resultant is the development of an individual with desirable characteristics and personality traits congruent with the notion of *hunhu/ubuntu* and a well and justice society.

What are the connections between men and masculinity on the one hand and peace and war on the other? What are the best ways to change the traditional perception of masculinity to make it more favourable to peace? In what ways can we best educate boys and young men to embrace the spirit of a culture of peace? How should peace-building strategies handle questions of masculinities? These are crucial questions that have, until now, rarely been tackled. Each of us as an individual person is a culmination, or a fruition, of the fifteen-billion years it has taken to create us. We did not make this up; rather, we were made up by it. There is the possibility of going extinct, but we're the first species ever to face consciously its own potential for extinction. This awareness that we could destroy ourselves if we don't wake up as a species becomes an ultimate evolutionary driver. In fact, this challenge may be the

precise conditions required for the higher order of life to evolve. Crises are pressing us toward transformation. The study of masculinities and their relationship to violence is important in a number of ways. Firstly, it reflects a healthy concern not to reduce the equation between men and violence to simple biological determinism. Secondly, it aims to dispel the notion that there is only one way to be a 'real man'. The very notion that there are masculinities rather than a single masculinity acknowledges that there are potentially many ways 'to be a man'. Much of the literature has set out to prove this by demonstrating empirically the great diversity of lived experiences which cannot be described as conforming to hegemonic models of masculinity, and which suggest the reality of multiple masculinities.

However, what this all means for people living in contexts of war and polarised political environments cannot be overemphaised, and has been less explored. Proving that men do not always behave according to a hegemonic model of masculinity, is not the same thing as proving that the model exercises no power over them. Nor does it prove that there are alternative models of masculinity available. Lived experiences and lived expectations are two very different things.

The paper suggests that the 'normative model' of masculinity in society exercises considerable power over men, precisely because they are unable to behave according to it, but cannot afford not to try to live up to it. The relationship between the social and political acceptance which comes from being seen to conform to the norm, and access to a variety of resources, is a critical one in a conflict situation. As Kabeer (1994: 280) has argued, access to intangible resources (solidarity, contacts, information, political clout) 'is likely to be particularly critical in situations where market or state provision of social security is missing or where access to these institutions is imperfectly distributed'.

It is therefore not surprising that, despite the complexity of the socialisation process, the multiplicity of actors involved in tertiary education sector in Zimbabwe, and a context in which many talk of a 'crumbling social fabric', the normative model of masculinity has not been challenged and multiple masculinities have not emerged.

The well being of a society is directly linked to the well being of its youth and children. The foundations of such well being include a healthy personal identity and positive "connectedness" with family, community, culture, and local environment. This paper explores key elements of youth well being and development and the need to facilitate youth and children's positive relationship with the natural environment. It examines ways in which these connections can be supported by traditional indigenous teachings, and contemporary concepts of human rights. Wellness and justice have attracted recent attention in psychology. Both within our discipline and within society at large, more needs to be done to elucidate the link between the two while taking

into account the role of power and context. The paper suggest that wellness is achieved by the balanced and synergistic satisfaction of personal, relational, and collective needs, which, in turn, are dependent on how much justice people experience in each domain. An exploration of how affective, polarized, acquired, situated and invested cultural distortions misrepresent the two realms as isolated from each other. To help counter these negative outcomes, I propose psychopolitical literacy and psychopolitical validity, contact and dialogue. The more youth are exposed to these antidotes, the better equipped they will be to resist cultural distortions and enhance both wellness and justice.

Wellness and justice are central personal and professional values for many psychologists. Through primary prevention, wellness enhancement, and more recently through positive psychology the profession tries to combine quality of life with a meaningful life (Cowen, 2000; Seligman, 2002). This effort is necessary because neither wellness nor justice is distributed evenly, a state of affairs receiving increased attention in health (Murray & Campbell, 2003), counseling (Vera & Speight, 2003), clinical (Pare & Larner, in press), legal (Fox, 1999), community (Nelson & Prilleltensky, in press) and other areas of psychology.

Despite increased attention, important issues remain. These include (a) the connection between youth, wellness and justice, (b) the multifaceted and contextual nature of these constructs, (c) distorted and distorting messages about wellness and justice, and (d) strategies to overcome misconceptions. In this article we maintain that both wellness and justice are central to the good society, each of them constituted by complementary factors and considerations typically considered in isolation. The current fragmentation in theories of wellness and justice derives in large part from distorting messages propagated by the media, authority figures, and professional and disciplinary discourses. The goal is to institutionalise psychopolitical literacy rather than see it marginalised like past attempts to foster education for liberation. Merging psychological and political rationales is unavoidable, because, for example, conceptions of humans as solitary, selfish, competitive, and accumulative lead to different prescriptions for public policy than do alternative models. Psychologists who embrace an individualist ethos reinforce inequality and injustice and strengthen barriers to survival and meaning even when they believe they are merely helping people function more effectively. Psychology is not separate from politics merely because some wish it were so (Fox & Prilleltensky, 1996, 1997).

Psychopolitical Literacy

Psychopolitical literacy refers to people's ability to understand the relationship between political and psychological factors that enhance or diminish wellness and

justice. As noted in Table 2, primary factors include affective, polarized, acquired, situational, and invested distortions. Psychopolitical literacy promotes a state of affairs whereby individuals, groups, and communities use power, capacity, and opportunity to fulfill personal, relational, and collective needs -- their own needs as well as the needs of others (Potts, 2003; Watts, Williams, & Jagers, 2003). Although evidence documents the damage powerlessness causes to personal, relational, and collective wellness, parents, professionals, preachers, and the popular media routinely emphasize apolitical factors such as biological determinants and personality traits (Chomsky, 2002). Doing so creates the impression that power is either unimportant or secondary to intrapersonal variables such as motivation, intelligence, helplessness, or locus of control. Psychological dynamics are important, but are themselves affected by power (Prilleltensky, 1997). The better educated about power we become, the better we can facilitate wellness and justice (Goodman, 2001), and the better we can teach it to our children and youth.

Our view of psychopolitical literacy is consistent with the preferences of many parents, teachers, and others who believe that socialization should encourage critical thinking about society (Ayers, Hunt, & Quinn, 1998; hooks, 1994). It shares underlying assumptions with Freire's "pedagogy of the oppressed" (1973), which emphasized education's inextricable links to a struggle over power; with feminist consciousness-raising groups beginning in the late 1960s that helped transform lives while dissecting the dynamics of sexism (Sarachild, 1978) Socialization agents should teach that the complementary parts of wellness and justice must be kept in balance for optimal individual and societal functioning. Not everyone agrees. Indeed, many people accept or endorse, rather than abhor, the inequitable distribution of resources and power (Foner, 2002; Hochschild, 1981). Although some elites support a more just distribution even at their own expense, it's hardly surprising that many work to maintain their privileged position. More troubling is that, partly because of acquired and political distortions, large numbers of relatively powerless people also believe the huge imbalance in wellness and justice is a normal and inevitable state of affairs. Individuals lacking psychopolitical literacy too often endorse myth-like values and assumptions that legitimize injustice (Fox, 1993b; Jost & Major, 2001). Nimmo & Combs (1990: 18), asserted that, "Once people believe in a myth, their skeptical sense vanishes, they accept it as fact, and -- most importantly -- the invented reality becomes reality itself, the only reality". This is why it is crucial to engage in the sociopolitical development of youth (Watts, Williams, Jager, 2003).

Socializing agents who transmit the kinds of distortions include the media, authority figures, and professional helpers.

Part of the problem lies in Hegemonic Masculinity. This refers to the dominant, prevailing, most common form of masculinity that is promoted through the various

agents of socialization. These agents are often invisible to both genders until identified through educational programs or workshops. For boys teasing, joking, name calling, isolating, ridicule, bullying and other violence are common ways gender is reinforced. Repeatedly admitting females only in halls of residence is violation of female students' rights to quality service and perpetuation and portrayal of hegemonic masculinity, in that it is based on the assumption that female students will not query phenomena, and expects them to suffer silently because they are perceived to be non-violent, less demanding and above all that females students will continuously express docility. Within families we typically distribute resources according to need, and at work (at least in theory) according to deservingness, but sometimes we use need outside the family and merit, effort, and other principles within (Clark & Grote, 2003; Fondacaro, Jackson, Luescher, 2002). Context is paramount. For example, if a deservingness principle such as merit unmediated by need or equality is the only criterion for resource distribution, we doom those who lack the capacity and opportunity to compete in a capitalist economy (Crosby, Iyer, Clayton, & Downing, 2003). An allocation regime that ignores individual circumstance easily degenerates into discourses that blame victims and justify inequality. To prevent one-size-fits-all approaches, thus, we need multiple allocation schemes that respond to variability in context (Bell & De-Shalit, 2003). Even under certain conditions of equality, for example, effort is a rational criterion; under conditions of inequality, need is warranted. Miller (1999: 32) attested that, "Among citizens, certain needs matter from the point of view of justice because if they are not met, the equal status of some citizens is put at risk." This is true if efforts are not made to address the deservingness and need states of college students in their quest for quality equitable education.

Thus, gender is socially constructed and varies with time and from culture to culture. Gender studies acknowledge a range of masculinities but the tough man/ strong man image is by its nature dominant because it is geared to domination and not to partnership. This is the masculinity most boys confront at school, in the sports arena and in the media. What is most helpful for men, young men and boys is when they learn about gender re-socializing. Although initially, the male ego struggles to attain self-defense, most males are relieved to find positive alternatives; the pressures to 'be a real man' are not unattainable for most men. Up to 75% report being very uncomfortable with many aspects of their socializing especially the way women and things pertaining to women (such as nurturing) are denigrated.

The practice of peace education in regions constituted by intractable conflicts between cultures, religions, ethnic fractions etc., is well established (Salomon, 2003; CERPE). According to Fisher (1997) intractable or protracted conflicts is characterized by its apparently irresolvable nature and as being centrally and totally violent (Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998). An evident example would be the conflict

between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda, the Kikuyus and the Mungikis in Kenya, Shona and Ndebeles in Zimbabwe, Karanga and Zezuru combatants' conflict during the liberation struggle (Sithole), Zanu PF and MDC or the Palestine Israel conflict. Importantly so, several work-shops with Palestinian and Jewish Israeli youths have been conducted in the peace education field, with the aim of transforming attitudes toward the other group, and perhaps also changing the relations between the antagonistic groups (Maoz, 2000; Salomon, 2003). Thus, changing the attitudes toward the other "group" is seen as an important and maybe necessary human factor for making it possible for people belonging to different cultures, religions etc. to "co-exist" or live together in a region or nation constituted by intractable conflicts.

In the following, I will focus on the aspects of contact and communication in peace education, aiming toward a comparative method for investigating any effects of dialogue concerning the conflict during the peace education encounter, beyond the effects of mere contact. Social psychological theories of prejudices and stereotypes and their role in intergroup conflicts and conflict reduction will serve as a barometer for accessing the possibilities of engaging the youth in peace building initiatives.

Stereotypes are cognitive phenomena, that is, beliefs about shared characteristics of members of one group, held by members of another group (Wright and Taylor, 2003). Prejudice is biased attitudes towards the members of an out-group (Dion, 2003), that is, a negative evaluation of the out-group in question (Wright and Taylor, 2003). Different explanations of prejudice have been proposed over the years, focusing on different aspects; personality, interpersonal processes, cognitive processes and intergroup-processes (Duckitt, 1992). While cognitive factors are central in the following, it is important to have in mind that these beliefs and biased attitudes exist in an intergroup relationship (male versus male and female versus female). Moreover, in the context of intractable conflicts, the conflict is usually a zero-sum conflict in some senses, and there is a fight over some scarce resources, as in Sherif's (1966) realistic-conflict theory. In such situations, stereotypes and prejudice can serve as justification of the actual intergroup relationship. Therefore, groups in conflict are highly likely to hold negative attitudes toward the antagonistic group (Hewstone and Brown 1986; Kelman, 1999; Maoz, 2003), even to the extent that each group delegitimises and in some cases dehumanises the other group (*kushaisa or kubvisa hunhu*) (Kelman, 1999). As espoused by Maoz, 2000, such negative stereotypes and prejudices are assumed to maintain the conflict and make resolution and reconciliation difficult, even in the presence of formal agreement. The youth may fall prey to protracted adult conflicts and get embroiled, particularly in the political landscape of a national scale. In the context of protracted conflicts and possible reconciliation, one stresses that these stereotypes are held by whole societies, and thus that transformation of attitudes at the grass-root levels is as important as, and

necessary, in addition to changes in formal diplomacy and negotiation (Maoz, 2000; Rouhana and Bar-Tal, 1998). Several social psychological theories of conflict reduction, resolution and peace education have focused on such negative beliefs and attitudes and how to alter these (Hewstone and Brown, 1986; Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998; Kelman 1999)

Contact

For Maoz (2003), the core business of peace education rests on the notion of changing attitudes and relations between groups in conflict through contact and communication. One important theory in the reduction of intergroup conflict is the contact hypothesis, which in its original form stated that "…..interaction between individuals belonging to different groups will reduce ethnic prejudice and inter-group tension" (Hewstone and Brown, 1986: 1). However, research has shown that this is true only under certain conditions, and that contact in fact can yield additional prejudice (Hewstone and Browne, 1986; Pettigrew, 1998).This may be necessitated by the contact availing the groups with an opportunity to see their opponents at close range than if they were at some distance. Thus, in Shona, "*dzawira mutswanda hadzichanetsi kunongera* or *maisvokwadzo nyemba kutsva dzarungwa and mudzimu waro bonga kuwana huku dzichirwa muchirugwi chakavhurwa*" Due to this problem, several additional criteria to the contact hypothesis have been proposed. A "modified" contact hypothesis specifies a set of conditions which are necessary for intergroup contact to transform these negative attitudes; (1) equality in status, at least within the contact context, (2) a common goal, (3) cooperative interaction (4) support from authorities (Allport, 1954) and (5) a potential for developing friendship between the members of the antagonistic group (Pettigrew, 1998). These criteria thus, specify in what kind of situations contact can lead to reduced prejudice. If then political parties are wrestling one another at a national level, what opportunity does this give to on-lookers and particularly the youth to intervene, how, why and with what effect?

While scholars of peace education admit that meeting all of these criteria in the context of intractable conflicts is extremely difficult (Salomon, 2003), it need not be impossible. A series of encounters with equal numbers of youth from the conflicting groups (for instance Dynamos and CAPS United, or Highlanders, Zanu PF and MDC, Orthodox Christians and Vaapostora) supported by schools, NGO's etc, in which they are to work together in some form of sport or cultural assignment, resulting in for instance a football match, a concert, a play, a show etc, would at least in theory meet the above criteria. The idea will then be that in such encounters where the focus

merely is on meeting these situational conditions, changes in attitudes will occur. Who does this change in attitude benefit? Part of the contact hypothesis may take the following forms:

a)   Cultural Pathways and Traditional Knowledge

Contact can be in the form of cultural pathways and traditional knowledge. Working with Elders and cultural specialists, we will explore the meaning of earth-based culture and homeland and explore the positive cultural practices that promote safe and friendly gender relations. Through participation in diverse cultural experiences and life-ways, students will explore their own personal cultural roots, roles and assumptions; develop awareness needed to work respectfully within cross-cultural settings; and learn ways to support young people in creating positive connections with their own cultural heritage. Such a programme can also focus on examining key cultural concepts that underlie many pertinent youth development issues. These may focus especially upon Rites of Passage and Solos and Vision Questing, exploring the nature and scope of these time-honoured practices, and prepare students to lead solos and incorporate other rites of passage in their work. This includes the opportunity to participate in a solo.

Students will:

➲   Explore personal cultural roots, roles and assumptions

➲   Gain a deeper perspective on coastal indigenous cultures and communities

➲   Experience the teachings and knowledge of elders

➲   Examine the importance of children, community and culture within a sustainable eco-system

➲   Learn ways to support young people in creating positive connections with their own cultural heritage

➲   Participate in diverse cultural experiences and lifeways

➲   Refine the sensitivity and awareness needed to work respectfully within cross-cultural settings.

➲   Reflect on cross-cultural and international applications of child and youth development principles and strategies

b)   Youth and Community Development

The well being of a society is directly linked to the well being of its youth and children. The foundations of such well being include a healthy personal identity and positive "connectedness" with family, community, culture, and local environment. This part of the course explores key elements of youth well being and development and the need to facilitate children's positive relationship with the natural environment. It examines ways in which these connections can be supported by traditional indigenous teachings, and contemporary concepts of human rights (e.g. the Convention on the Rights of the Child), and sustainable development (e.g. National Action Plan for OVC).

Components include:

Putting The Convention in Practice: A critical examination of case studies of "good practice" drawn from the field. Youth and high school students will examine the lessons learned from many different communities in applying the universal principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and related human rights frameworks.

Program Development: This entails that students will explore youth development within a variety of cultural and community perspectives, and learn about the realities of developing a gender friendly,community-based program.

Zimbabwean and Global Perspectives on Child and Youth Development: This encompasses elders, cultural teachers and fieldworkers representing a broad spectrum of cultures and perspectives will come and speak with students on a regular basis.

Voices from the Field: This calls upon experienced practitioners from the fields of experiential and outdoor education and various types of youth work will make regular presentations, sharing their lives and experiences and engaging in dialogue with students.

Youth and Students will resultantly:

➲   Understand the complex dynamics of the community development process.

➲   Learn about the issues faced by children and youth in the community and beyond

➲   Foster the ability to work as an effective and responsible partner within a community.

⊃   Become proficient at facilitation, counseling and communication skills, and learn to guide individuals or groups through an inner developmental journey.

⊃   Acquire and practice the skills needed to develop a community-based initiative and raise funds.

By taking cognisance of the fact that the contact hypothesis has been a major topic for social psychological research since Allport's (1954) variant, but not so much in the specific context of intractable conflict and peace education in Zimbabwe, for this reason, it is important testing the contact hypothesis and its assumed effects on prejudice in peace education encounters in regions of intractable conflicts, particularly in tertiary institutions in Zimbabwe and Africa.

Dialogue

Although specifying under which conditions contact between conflicting groups will improve attitudes, the criteria added to the contact hypothesis do not say anything about *what kind* of interaction will be effective in reducing negative attitudes and transforming these to more positive. That is they do not specify what the *content* of the communicative process should be, and thus what qualitative factors are assumed to influence and eventually transform the attitudes held by the antagonistic groups. It is, however, important to acknowledge that Pettigrew (1998) when adding the 5th condition to the contact hypothesis, claimed that this a potential for developing friendship between the groups included four processes during the contact encounter: Learning about each other, changing behaviour, developing affective ties and reappraisal of the ingroup. These are important aspects in the following. However, if these processes necessarily occur whenever there is a potential for developing friendships, these processes may be more intense or even qualitatively different in encounters where a conflict-specific dialogue is central.

Moving beyond the contact hypothesis and its modifications then, an interesting approach to peace education research is focusing on the dialogue and the *quality* of this in encounters with antagonistic groups. An important question in this respect is how a dialogue focusing on conflict issues between the antagonistic groups can improve intergroup attitudes. If West intervenes in any disputes, they first of all assess their preparedness. This preparedness to loot, kill, colonise, celebrate exploitation through such institutions as globalisation and multi national corporations. To help them do that the West become neologistic and devise and define new language. With this new language they conquer small and poor nations. In terms of the quality of dialogue, then lopsided conclusions and decisions are made. This preparedness is an important psychological attribute which many Africans lack or are not so attune to exploit. How then can African psychologist prepare a team of African negotiating for

a business deal with whites? I have seen people discussion business deals over lunch or a cup of coffee. This is incredible criminal. According to Maslow's hierarchy of physiological needs, this is an excellent thing to do. Thus, in Shona "*ukama igasva hunozadziswa nokudya*" (lit. Relationships are half filled and are only made full through eating". But, I believe that one's mind focuses on the food better than on the price for the services. Ideally, the individual offering the services risks charging lowly in this environment than if they had discussed in his/her own environment where s/she would have territorial advantage. *Padare panouyiswa sadza here? Kwete!* Is food served during a court session? NO!! When individuals from the West plan to sell anything to African countries they pay a key individual or minister or permanent secretary a facilitation fee. This facilitation fee may be equal to 5% the selling price of say a Boeing 707. Is this not institutionalized corruption? How very susceptible to or safe from such type of manipulation are the youth in a polarised environment?

The societies and the media in contexts of protracted conflicts tend to reinforce and maintain the negative images and stereotypes toward the conflicting outgroup (Maoz 2000). This is evident in local and international media circulating in any country. The grand question is what role do psychologist play in all these? Additionally the international community and sympathizers of the conflicting groups can also fuel these stereotypes and erode any gains in establishing unprecedented levels of tranquility. Further, ingroup members will have a tendency to seek biased information about pertaining to the outgroup, interpret this in a biased way and elaborate their beliefs in a biased way (Rouhana and Bar-Tal, 1998). It is therefore essential that the groups get a more realistic perception of the antagonistic group and it is assumed that to learn about the outgroup not via ideas presented to one "top-down", but rather through "bottom-up" psychological processes, is crucial. The point here is that the dialogue between the groups offers a setting for listening to the other part's thoughts about the conflict, reflecting on what is said, and in this way *learn* about the outgroup instead of seeking out information and via cognitive mechanisms adjust this information to already existing stereotypes.

For this bottom-up process to occur, self-expression, telling of stories and listening to the outgroup are of importance (Gergen et al. 2001; Maoz and Bar-On, 2002). Gergen et al. (2001) have proposed the idea of "transformative dialogue" in changing attitudes and eventually transforming the relationship of groups (male and female students) that initially are committed to separate and antagonistic realities, to one in which they can construct a common reality. One important feature of transformative dialogue is affirming the other, and in this respect, the telling of personal stories regarding the conflict is important. These stories are then assumed to move the members of the outgroup, eventually leading to feelings of empathy (Maoz, 2002).

Research has shown that many social psychological scholars have emphasized the role of empathy and consequential reduction of intergroup tensions in contexts of intergroup conflict (Kelman, 1999; Maoz, 2002; Maoz and Bar-On, 2002). Empathy is defined as a "capacity to understand and enter into another person's feelings and emotions or to experience something from the other person's point of view" (A Dictionary of Psychology). By definition, once you feel empathy with someone, you will understand this person and the way this person thinks and feels. It is no surprise, then, that intuitively we think that empathy will have a major impact on attitudes toward the conflicting out-group. The point here is that it becomes difficult and almost impossible to delegitimize and at least dehumanize people with whom you understand and with whose perspective you are able to take. For this to happen male models of students who were abusive and have since unlearnt the toxic and hegemony masculinities may be the valuable asserts in instituting behavioral change of this nature. Further, the stereotypes of the outgroup, the beliefs about the "other", will be distorted in the way that they will be more complex, less monolithic and thus more realistic. Understanding the out-group becomes easier. Regrettably, has understanding the out-group helped Africans or has it lead to their detriment?

Elsewhere, during an encounter between Palestinian and Jewish youth living in Israel, Maoz (2002) investigated the actual dialogical process between a Palestinian male student and a Jewish male student. The aim was to track changes in the dialogue, in which the Palestinian Jewish Israeli conflict was the topic, and specify what factors contributed to these changes. Stressing the importance of empathy, what seemed to generate this was a combination of confrontation and friendship. Further, the confrontation seemed to contribute to a breakdown of the beliefs they held about themselves and the other, that is, a more complex identity conception both about "the other" and about "the self".

According to this perspective, then, for prejudice to be reduced through peace education encounters, the important factor is a dialogue based on the conflict. Important here, is that the contact hypothesis and its modifying criteria must already have been met and that any potential effects of the "conflict-dialogue" will be additional.

Great caution should be taken in that while dialogue and self-disclosure can generate powerful emotions and personal change, increasing interaction and even friendship, unfortunately, this happy outcome is not inevitable. Greater understanding can create more knowledgeable and effective warriors. And while empathy may make it harder to kill, it does not reliably enough motivate a commitment to end institutional injustices linked to favoured values (Fox, 2008). Key conflict-resolution assumptions, thus, are not appropriate when the opposing parties have unequal access to power, or when reasonable external standards such as universal principles of justice or

generally accepted law overwhelmingly support the weaker side. One of my own biases, therefore, is suspicion of a rigid determination to remain in the middle, to pretend that all perceptions are not only equally relevant but equally valid, to compromise down the middle just to reach the end. By rendering victim and victimizer equally responsible, neutral mediation de-legitimizes crucial concerns, rewards the more powerful side's stubbornness, and institutionalizes existing power imbalances.

Comparing groups in contact

Drawing upon what has so far been said, peace education to a high degree builds upon social psychological theories of negative attitudes and stereotyping of the out-group (Salomon, 2003; Maoz, 2000). Further, social psychological research in general has shown that mere contact between groups under certain situational conditions can reduce prejudice and improve negative attitudes (Hewstone and Brown, 1986; Pettigrew, 1998).

With the aim of specifying actual effective communicative processes in antagonistic group relationships, some theory and research have focused on how a dialogue concerning the conflict can improve attitudes, that is, why such dialogue is effective and what factors seem to be crucial (Gergen et al., 2001; Maoz, 2002). It is assumed that a bottom-up psychological process in which one learn about the out-group through listening to stories and experiences regarding the conflict is essential in this sense (Rouhana and Bar-Tal 1998). Further, dialogue generating empathy, and a reconstruction of "the self" through confrontation are important factors (Kelman, 1999; Maoz, 2002).

Social psychological theories of contact and communication in intergroup relations are thus important as a basis for different peace education encounters. What lacks in the field, however, is research comparing different forms of peace education encounters in context of intractable conflicts in Zimbabwe.

Using a comparative method to investigate groups in such encounters that build on the two theoretical perspectives respectively, would allow us to measure whether the conflict-specific dialogue has any additional effects on reducing prejudice and improve attitudes.

Further, research on peace education has traditionally focused on the short-term effects on attitudes on the micro-level. Applying the comparative method of groups in contact described above in a long-term study would also be interesting, allowing us to measure: 1) If the two types of encounters have any effects on intergroup attitudes

and relationship in a long-term perspective (e.g. after 1, 2 and 5 years) and 2) whether there will be any variation in the long-term effects on attitudes between the two conditions.

A study aiming to test these hypothesizes would consist of two different group encounters building on the two different conditions. Ideally, these would be held in the same period, under as similar conditions as possible, except for the actual encounter-conditions. Although focusing on the dialogue concerning the conflict, the dialogue-condition should include other types of social interaction as well. Further, the members of the two conditions should be matched regarding sex, age, socio-economic status and political affiliation. The method for tracking any improvements in attitudes, would be a quantitative method measuring attitudes toward the out-group before the encounters (pre-attitudes) and after the encounter (post-attitudes). Results from studies sketched above are important in that they can influence the construction of peace education encounters regarding the situational conditions and the specific encounter-interaction, as well as shed light on the effectiveness of such encounters in a long-term perspective in Africa.

Building Sustainable Masculinities

This can be achieved through multiple initiatives among which include

The Educational program for Building Sustainable Masculinity should include:

- ⮑ how masculinities are constructed

- ⮑ how they are sustained and by whom

- ⮑ who is impacted and how they are impacted

- ⮑ local and global violence statistics, gender violence

- ⮑ understanding the partnership concept, including paths to non-violence, positive communication skills, emotional competence, mediation and peace studies

Skills for Building Sustainable Masculinity

A crucial part of any educational program requires learning skills which enable partnerships to be established and maintained. Shifting from the dominator style and

establishing partnership requires strong intention backed by practical methods such as:

➲   collaboration skills

➲   mediation and non-violent methods of conflict resolution

➲   transforming anger

➲   building emotional confidence (intelligence)

➲   gender awareness including an understanding of gender based privilege

➲   relationship skills including positive communication, partnership and parenting skills ability to ensure that intimate relationships are consenting peer choices, how to say no

These skills can not only help to reduce men's violence but give men tools to have better personal and working relationships. Research has established that deficiency in these skills is associated with violence. Teaching men such skills may decrease the likelihood of future violence when the acquisition and maintenance of these skills is encouraged in a supportive environment (Low, Monarch, Hartman, & Markman, 2002).

Men who are likely to commit violence are men who over-identify with traditional masculine values and roles and who are especially sensitive to what other men think. Traditional masculine values are promoted in certain contact sports, in the media and many sub cultures within the broader society. (Berkowitz)

Bystander Methods

The focus of bystander intervention programs is to provide the majority of men who are uncomfortable with certain men's behavior with the permission and skills to confront them. (Berkowitz, 2003) Bystander interventions move beyond empathy and individual change to make men responsible for changing the larger environment of how men relate to each other and to women. (Berkowitz, 2003) Bystander pro-activity is one of the most powerful actions all men and boys can take to can change the peer culture that fosters and tolerates men's violence. (Berkowitz, 2003) The interventions can range from confronting sexist language and sexist jokes which demean women, to reminding a partying friend that the 'intoxicated' girl he is chatting up must be a consciously consenting partner to any sexual activity.

Emotional Work

Emotional work is inner work. Because boys, youth and men have been socialized to repress their emotions (excepting anger) inner work is needed to help them develop emotional confidence (intelligence).

However the mere idea of emotional work brings up fear for many men. They feel inadequate and powerless in this realm and believe that women have better emotional understanding and agility (quickness). This powerlessness born of emotional confusion is one source of the rage that has men lash out at their partners and needs to be addressed in batterer programs.

Women have grown enormously from the women's social equity movement and are seeking partners in men who have similar emotional maturity but unfortunately many men are lacking this competence. Men's socialization has resulted in an arrested emotional age and this spells disaster for men's relationships with their partners and children.

Many scholars have reiterated that male socialization traumatizes boys by crushing their emotional capacitiesteaching us not to feel, not to acknowledge vulnerability or "weakness," teaching us that it's shameful to crysetting up vicious cycles of aggressive behavior driven by internal powerlessness among boys and men."

During their childhood boys who expressed fear, doubts, anxieties, depression or even excessive joy were soon teased, isolated, threatened or beaten into stoic conformity. The impact of this repression is vast, and is, I believe, a foundational cause for the violence that men perpetrate at all levels.

Emotional or inner work helps men become authentic, happier in their own skin, calmer, nicer, safer to be around, and is a necessary step towards our personal and collective evolution

Since the old attitudes are deeply "embedded", I have found that the most effective workshops are those which engage the heart and evoke the emotions. In this form the new realizations are truly "embodied"; they are felt in the body and are more likely to make a lasting impression.

It is the feeling function that gives man his sense of purpose or meaning in life and when that is impaired as it is in most there is much despair and suffering. To heal the feeling function man must drop the walls he has built around his heart and become capable of feeling again.

As we engage the heart we need to learn language skills which are heart based.

Communication Skills

Words are powerful; they can foster partnership or sustain dominance. Students of positive and ethical communication skills learn to identify and neutralize these thoughts before they become words or actions. Words are powerful; they can soothe or inflame, create peace or start wars, save lives and create happiness or the opposite. Words create the concepts which may form the basis of our behavior.

All humans especially our leaders, can benefit from a study of communication skills and much violence is eliminated; wars are conflicts not resolved by peaceful means. The foundation for much of my work revolves around positive communication skills. Even wonderful organizations that work for peace have found themselves, at times, embroiled in horrendous conflicts. They, like the rest of us, tend to fall back into the old paradigm forms of adversarial thinking and speaking when the emotions are running hot. Mediation and particularly conferencing are useful tools to help resolve the conflicts especially when combined with the positive communication skills that build partnerships.

Much of the language we use is inherited from dominator times (for example, *zvakadhakwa, haulume, chidhenja, chapwati, chadhuuka* etc) is adversarial and creates distance between individuals and groups. It fosters exclusion rather than inclusion; it accentuates differences more than similarities. It appears in our homes and communities; it is rampant in newspapers and the media. Everybody including politicians, business leaders, sports identities, media and film celebrities, lawyers and criminals, is guilty of using this language style at times.What is overlooked is that we use this language in our thinking; in our self talk. We often frame our world through a lens created by adversarial thoughts and has caused the majority of humans to be disconnected to and exploitive of the natural environment. This contrasts to the many primal societies who were respectful of, and in partnership with nature. They saw a web of natural systems in harmony with each other and they understood the need for partnership between humans and the natural systems. The adversarial thinking has pushed our global eco-systems to what many scientists believe to be perilously close to the point of no return. When you listen to males expressing their thoughts you are struck by the adversarial quality of their language use and the subsequent concepts, which arise. Swings between excessive arrogance and low self-esteem, followed by doubt, fear, negativity, feelings of exclusion and unhappiness are a result.

In contrast the language of partnership is non-adversarial; it attempts to maintain dialogue under all circumstances, it takes responsibility for one's own needs and

feelings, it does not blame or shame, it is solutions based, reconciliatory in nature. It is the language of the heart; it comes from our own heart and reaches out to the hearts of others. For most of us it is not natural since we have been significantly socialized in adversarial language forms.

Conclusion

Education programs to help men adopt the partnership model must be built around communication skills and language forms that promote healthy self concepts leading to equity, understanding, collaboration and inclusion. To counter these barriers, we proposed psychopolitical literacy and validity. By merging the positive and negative psychological and political dynamics affecting wellness and justice we hope to focus attention on the interface between individual and societal variables. Through psychopolitical literacy we hope to undermine either/or scholarship and the acquired ignorance that derives from examining parts rather than wholes. Through psychopolitical validity it is possible to generate studies and interventions that consider the reciprocal relationship between intrapsychic and societal variables. Psychopolitically literate socialization agents can teach that, just as personal, relational, and collective wellness are inseparable, so too are psychological wellness and a just society. They understand that neglecting power leads to misdirected social policy and delays effective interventions and systemic challenges. The sooner youth realize that they can be agents of change, and that culture is not tantamount to destiny, the sooner they will join with others who oppose the blind endorsement of the status quo.

Needless to say, neither psychopolitical literacy nor psychopolitical validity is a panacea for suffering and injustice. Vested interests are deeply entrenched, supported by powerful ideology as well as by more tangible means of power. Living up to transformational validity might mean giving up personal resources and privileges or renouncing strongly held beliefs. It is possible to be aware of negative and positive psychological and political forces and still blame victims for their misfortune. Ultimately, the decision to pursue wellness and justice, not just for us but for others as well, is not only cognitive but moral.

Pointing out that psychologists routinely help individuals eliminate erroneous, unhealthy beliefs, Jost (1995:417) concluded "There is no a priori reason why psychology should aim to be any less useful to social and political life than to other areas of human existence". Most people may be agreeable. In the messages psychologists deliver directly as therapists, educators, consultants, and the like, we can emphasize power and clarify the destructive impact of inaccurate assumptions about human nature and human society. We can explain to teachers that traditional misconceptions should give way to more accurate information conducive to teaching

for social justice. We can alert journalists when political debate incorporates unsupportable assumptions. Perhaps most important, we can assist social movement participants struggling to transform unjust institutions. Youth need not wait till they reach mature age to join social movements. Psychopolitical literacy can help them change their own lives and improve our collective future.

RECONCILING THE YOUTH: GENDER AND PEACEBUILDING IN A POLARISED ENVIRONMENT

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YOUTH AND GENDER: CREATING COMMON GROUND IN DIVIDED SOCIETIES

Ending violence via peace agreements or military victory does not mean the achievement of peace (Francis 2000). Rather it should provide 'a new set of opportunities' for nurturing a fragile peacebuilding process (Lambourne 2004). The sad paradox is that instead of being the first frontier of opportunity for peace, the youth and women are the victims and causatives of violence. The youth are the "angry young men" mobilized to participate in often very brutal wars. Narratives and examples from conflicts such as Chechnya, Sri Lanka, and even Bosnia reveal that women have often played an active role as fighters, militants, or suicide bombers. Conflicts perpetuate by feeding on the energies of the youth and the conflict sensitive aspects of gender stereotypes. The youth form the fighting edge of the belligerents. Gender narratives often demean certain classes in society leading to violent outcomes. Yet in peace agreements the youth and gender concerns are often ignored. More so the UN Resolution 1325 (2000) acknowledges the contribution of women as peace makers and agents of change for peace beyond their status of victims of armed conflicts and enables women's organizations to gain leverage on getting access to official peace negotiations. Yet again women are not systematically involved in peace processes and that obstacles to their participation are numerous, ranging from lack of time, status, resources, political experience and exposure, to the burden of traditions, etc (Puechguirbal 2005). I argue in this paper that addressing the gender and youth problems can create convergence in society necessary for peacebuilding. Dealing with the 'fault-lines of the human condition such as gender' (Llamazares 2005) will go a long way in mending social fabric destroyed by violent conflicts.

Introduction

The agreement between ZANU (PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change formations is conspicuous for its inherent deficit-its lack of regard among other things, the youth and women. Women have complained about it and the youths have not or chose not to. Yet the country has gone through a tortuous political period emerging with a 'thick net of destruction encompassing social institutions, economic enterprises and human beings' (UNESCO, 2002). The largest contingent of the injured or violated is the youth and the women. However, in peace agreements the youth and gender concerns are often ignored. More so the UN Resolution 1325 (2000) acknowledges the contribution of women as peace makers and agents of change for peace beyond their status of victims of armed conflicts and enables women's organizations to gain leverage on getting access to official peace negotiations. Yet again women are not systematically involved in peace processes and that obstacles to their participation are numerous, ranging from lack of time, status, resources, political experience and exposure, to the burden of traditions, etc (Puechguirbal 2005).

The divided societies are reminiscent of all post conflict societies. There is no society emerging out of a conflict that can claim to have common issues, but the potential is often not identified as belligerents often want to high light their grievances or aspirations more than of others. Leaders want to be seen quickly addressing the 'grievances' that motivated the insurgency in the first place. This road to recovery is long, difficult and expensive requiring the assistance of multilateral, bilateral and NGOs. The same road is contested around the methodology, which does what, who benefit what and who bears the costs. This when not delicately handled can cause a lot of discontent that can lead to another round of violence. Two important areas that need to be addressed during the post conflict peacebuilding are the concerns of this paper. I am aware that peacebuilding is not a simple process that can be met by the rule of the thumb. So the youth and gender often missed out by peace negotiators in their quest to secure cease-fires or peace agreement will be central to my thesis.

Conceptual Framework

Peacebuilding

The UN's supplement to An Agenda for Peace defines peacebuilding as the 'comprehensive efforts to identify and support structures which will tend to consolidate and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people' (Butros-Ghali, UN 1995). Evans (1993) says peacebuilding is the 'idea of meeting

needs: for security and order, for reasonable standards of living and for recognition of identity and worth'. It is 'the process that calls for new attitudes and practices: ones that are flexible, consultative and collaborative, and operate from the contectiual understanding of the root causes of the conflict' (Spence 2001). Llamazares (2005) conceives that peacebuilding as more than an intervention that promotes positive peace. It describes a varied set of activities encompassing efforts taken at various levels of intervention. Academic definitions of peacebuilding often draw from a variety of fields inclusive of economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and peace and conflict research. This shows that post conflict peacebuilding is a multi-disciplinary practice.

Successful peacebuilding must essentially be peacebuilding from below to chart more sustainable and locally owned paths to peace and justice Llamazares (2005) Its not a prescriptive solution for all, but rather a balanced process undertaken that will allow societies to heal. Positive peacebuilding must facilitate socio-economic and political rehabilitation, but also promote social justice and reconciliation.

Peacebuilding needs to address what post conflict deficits closely linked to the root causes of that conflict. Maynard (1999 in Croker et al, 2001) points to the need to address insecurity as key to successful peacebuilding. This takes into account that freedom of movement is addressed, personal or group threats eliminated and safe access to resources is guaranteed for all. It entails keeping the peace spoilers in check Llamazares (2005), a process of releasing the doves and boxing the hawks. Demobilization and reintegration of soldiers to civilian life and transformation of armies into political parties is important.

Peacebuilding entails removal of incentives for civil war which where a key source of protractedness. Collier (2000) suggests that economic agendas of war as key source of conflict in his 'greed and grievance' thesis and posits that good peacebuilding must reduce the incentive for those benefiting from war. Cousens and Kumar (2001) blame the fragility or collapse of political institutions and main causes of unrest and argues that post conflict elections would restore legitimacy of political institutions and processes. Addressing of psychosocial dimensions of the conflict and their impact are also viewed as key to the 'internalization of peacebuilding process by the afflicted populations (Rothstein 1999). The approach highlights the need to engage mechanisms to restore inter-personal and inter-communal relations to complement existing processes of reconstruction.

Success of peacebuilding will depend on the participation of all. The multilevel approach suggested by Lederach (1997) ensures inter-connectedness between levels of intervention and cooperation between actors involved, because peacebuilding is a 'process of building bridges between the ordinary people' (Lambourne 2004).

Gender

It is often assumed that return to peace is invariably the return to status quo, irrespective of the nontraditional roles assumed by women during the conflict. We often question whether women would want to return to the pre-war environment defined according to masculine references and a strict division of labour that excluded them from public visibility and responsibilities. We know that war is a gendered process. But war changes gender relations by allowing women to get out of traditional roles and take over responsibilities in the absence of men. Sadly, women are pressured to get back to their pre-war circumstances reinstated soon the war is over by forces often disguised under the cloak of human rights.

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men. [It]... includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes and likely behaviours of both women and men (femininity and masculinity). These roles and expectations are learned, changeable over time, and variable within and between cultures (CIDA 2001).

It is important to ensure that gender equality issues are taken into consideration in peacebuilding initiatives because: Gender is a relevant dimension in peacebuilding. Conflict is a gendered activity. There is a strong gender division of labour; women and men have differential access to resources (including power and decision-making) during conflicts, and men and women experience conflict differently. This was recognized by the international community and highlighted in the final document of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) the Platform for Action (PFA): while entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society as well as their sex (para 135). Therefore understanding the gender dimensions of a situation is an important dimension of understanding the overall situation. Women (as well as men) have a fundamental stake in building peaceful communities. Their contributions to peacebuilding should be encouraged and supported (given women's economic and political marginalisation, they are not always well-placed to play an effective role).

Youth

The UN defines youth as 1524 year olds. Individuals 1518 are also included in the legal definition of children, according to international treaties. Many conflicts create a generation of "lost youth", so a more conceptual definition of youth as the transition time from child to adult is more appropriate in these settings. In Sierra Leone, the official definition of youth refers to the age group 1535 in order to encompass the lost youth who are currently 2535. A context-specific definition is important for post-conflict targeting and policy formulation.

Fischer (2004) elaborately describes the youth as young people.

'Young people offer potential for social innovation and are a promising target group for reconciliation work, especially in war-torn societies. Compared with the victim/perpetrator generations, younger age groups are generally more open to dialogue and more willing to set aside their stereotyped ways of thinking. At the same time, however, young people have a highly destructive potential that can spark off by society's neglect of this group. Young people who have no education or employment opportunities may resort to crime. Experience in many post-war societies has shown that if no social integration initiatives are available, male youths in particular form a willing pool of recruits for political leaders with a vested interest in perpetuating violent conflict. A further outcome is the migration of qualified young people to countries which they believe will offer them better opportunities; this results in a brain-drain and the loss of the most vital resources for social development'.

Children and youth are used (both as perpetrators and victims) as 'political currency' in conflicts and are not adequately protected by international law. This lack of protection is manifest in most peace processes where issues of the role of children and youth is manipulated during negotiations in order to give legitimacy to belligerent parties (eg. the Revolutionary United Front gained some legitimacy through the release of child soldiers) only to have the same groups relegated to an apolitical humanitarian sphere during demilitarisation, demobilisation and reintegration processes (DDR) and subsequently throughout the peace-building phase. Some of this depoliticisation of children and youth (who were not so long ago been at the centre of a political conflict and consequently influenced political change in the society) happens during the voting process (Macintyre and Thusi 2003).

Toward the common ground

Few attempts have been made to mainstream youth and gender in post-conflict reconstruction. Women, youth and children are used in political way only to be marginalized later, and relegated to apolitical sphere especially during and after the peace process (Macintyre and Thusi 2003). Interventions tend to be small-scale and are rarely scaled up. Women and Youth ministries or agencies tend to be marginalized, often mixing a range of concerns (e.g., youth, gender, culture, sports), or they are offshoot agencies with miniscule budgets. Donors, in turn, often bypass these agencies in favor of discussing reconstruction with traditionally more powerful ministries such as public works, education, health and agriculture. Beyond paying lip service to the importance of women and youth ("youth are the future") and noting the risks to peace and stability posed by large numbers of idle and disaffected youth, there is little effective, multi-sectoral, sustained and adequately funded programming in most post-conflict settings (Youth Development Notes 2005).

Addressing the unique needs of this section of society should be given priority if any country is to avoid that group being marginalized and potential resorting to violent forms of political articulation of their demands. Dealing with the issue of youth rehabilitation and reintegration in post-conflict situations in the context of peace-building poses distinct challenges. In the case of Sierra Leone, the urgent need to rehabilitate infrastructure was more appealing to donors and was given priority by government at the expense of a focus on youth rehabilitation. The concept of 'youth rehabilitation' as a category might not seem appealing to donors but failure to deal with the healing of the youth and reorientate them as different and responsible citizens obeying the laws that govern the country will have serious future consequences for the country.

The international law is equally faulty in terms of the youth. Unlike the children who are well defined in the international law, the youth occupy the gray area that the vulnerability of the youth becomes a vicious circle in times of conflict and peace. Post conflict youth need to be given life skills in addition to livelihood skills. Life skills means giving the youth multi-purpose capabilities that will ensure that they become complete citizens with psychological, intellectual and social skills that allows them to survive in society. This will involve political will and a commitment to provide resources for all those concerned (ibid.). there is need to fully look at the international law to account for the concerns of the youth.

Fischer (2006) argues for the encouragement of the youth to articulate their ideas and needs. As an urgent necessity, they should be offered employment opportunities in an environment that combines classical development cooperation and peacebuilding. It is the combination of initiatives that provide training, empowerment, peace education, vocational training and income generation in a integrated approach is essential for the following reasons: if the youth earn their own income this improves their families lives, and also boosts self esteem so they can secure their place in the community and respect.

United Nations Resolution 1325 is invaluable. It is an easy reference for those who intend to fight for gender justice and persuade those in power to ensure that women's voices are heard and incorporated in peacebuilding and their security protected (Gonsalves 2003). But as long as women continue to be confined to their biological fate their contribution will never be heard. To transform the situation of the women in peacebuilding few things need to be done. First, there is need to change the language of peacebuilding. In all peace missions women are always defined as victims, or as women and children, thus limiting their capcities to be seen as actors and independent individuals in the peace process (Puechguirbal 2005). Women need not be viewed entirely as keepers of moral values of the society, bearers of children, family honour and culture. Instead women should be part of the definition of their protection and a solution in the reinforcement of that protection. By putting women in the same groups as the elderly, the handicapped and the children, one assumes that women constitute a minority sociological category in the same way as categories that are based on age, color, religion, handicap, ethnic group. This very definition

undermines the potential of women as independent actors with rights.

Women need to be liberated from their biological fate (ibid.). Women are indeed defined according to what they are, not what they do, according to what French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir used to call "anatomy as destiny". Women are constructed as passive elements subordinated to a male power always apprehended within a more active dynamics. As a result, women are very often associated with maternal capacity only, thus keeping them secluded from outside political activities and official peace negotiations. However, it seems that some observers see the "biological fate" of women as a major asset for peace building and conflict resolution.

Conclusion

Recognition of youth and women as crucial contributors to peace is important. Young people offer potential for social innovation and are a promising target group for reconciliation work, especially in war-torn societies. Compared with the victim/perpetrator generations, younger age groups are generally more open to dialogue and more willing to set aside their stereotyped ways of thinking. Women have more than biology to their side. They are not only victims of rape and other violations; they are fighters, leaders and negotiators. They have more than maternal capacity. Priscilla Misihairambwi could have not have been better. Women can act as bridges in divided societies. Capturing the potential in youth and women is the establishment of common ground often missed by male dominated and patriarchal leadership.

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RECONCILING THE YOUTH: GENDER AND PEACEBUILDING IN A POLARISED ENVIRONMENT

MAFIOS MUSHARU

RECONCILING THE YOUTH: GENDER AND PEACEBUILDING IN A POLARISED ENVIRONMENT

This presentation based on the theme Reconciling the youth, gender and peace building in a polarized environment is articulated from a vantage point of family therapy. It is envisaged that exposure to this presentation engenders a healing or therapeutic process to victims/survivors of toxic masculinities and gender relations in tertiary institutions. It is steeped in post-modernism, a school of thought that posits that human life is circumstantial and that there is no absolute truth about human existence. Post human existence is about subjective realities.

The buzz statement is that toxic mascullities and gender relations in tertiary institution, within an environment of strongly opinionated violence and resultant polarization of communities.

Some evidence based dilemmas that are traceable to toxic masculinities and gender based relations at tertiary institutions somewhere in Zimbabwe will and weight to my presentation. *Please note that names of clients/indexed persons have been charged for ethical reasons.

Rudo Shonga aged twenty three (23) is a Mining Engineering degree student at a university in one of the cities. She is one of the four female students in the programme. She presents with a problem of stress in counseling (therapy). Her major stressor is the learning environment. Several of her male colleages have made sexual advances. She cannot afford to join lecturers late because male students make cat-calls, whistle or pass sex comments. The problem was further compounded by one of the tutors who hinted to her that he only knew of one female student in the dim past who measured to the demands of the programme. The rest had to use their subtle ways. What did he mean by subtle ways?

Farisai Munetsi aged twenty four (24) was pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree at a private university outside one of the cities. She was a devout Christian who swore never to partake in sex before marriage. As would have it, there was power failure when she was praying alone in one of the lecture rooms. She was raped by an unidentified students. Indeed it was shattering experience in her life. She experienced unexpected alertness and increased phobias of male colleagues. Flashbacks of the horrific occurrence caused lack of sleep. Her worst fear was the possibility of having contracted the HIV-Virus. She presented with parasuicide for counseling.

The priceless question is "Are the tertiary institution in Zimbabwe outposts of toxic masculinities and gender relations?" The other silent question is why focus on female students only? It is largely because they are vulnerable group.

When polarization continues to rear its ugly face in tertiaty institutions be it polytechinics, teacer training, agriculture colleges and universities, few people can predict how the vice will evolve, and fewer still can describe with certainty the best way of combating it. It is indisputable that polarization emanating from toxic masculities and gender relations can tear apart generations of Zimbabwe's future investment in tertiary education, widen the gulf between male and female students and push already traumatized gender groups closer to margins of society.

It is saddeniung tonote that toxic masculities and gender relations in tertiary institutions have created fertile grounds for despondency, reulsion, mistrust, pessimism, anarchy, slander of this presentation contends that institutions of higher leaning have largely evolved to be a horizontal stressor to the students.

Therapeutic approaches to reconciling the youth. Gender and peace building in a polarized environment.

(i) Deconstructing patriarchal stereotypes: Burnham J.B. (1986:74) cities Minuchin (1984) asserting that men are socialized to have executive authority in the nuclear family. Such social construction is transmitted from one generation to another. The issue of power dynamics tilted in favour of males has manifested itself in tertiary institutions straining gender relationships further. It is of paramount importance to roll out programmes in different curricula that exposure gender equality. This will h e l p d e c o n s t r u c t pathological views that males have tomake their presence felt on females making them vulnerable to gender based violence (GBV)

Burnham J.B. (1986:15) further cities Minuchin (1974) remarking that human relationships whatever systems are either enmeshed or disengaged. It seems in tertiary institutions between male and female students due to the disengagement that has resulted in under involvement of the females students in matters affecting their learning. Efforts should be made to the learning environment boundaries clear and favourable to both sexes.

(ii) Strategic invention
It is extremely important because it is diagnostic where policy makers, students and tertiary institutions staff define in profession terms and adverse of polarization on welfare of students. It defines the psychological and behavioral conditions of students as regards the toxic masculinities and gender relationships.

(a)   Circular interaction in student relation. It must be borne in mind that human interaction is not linear. This can be typified by this example. If a female student experiences sexual harassment at the hands of male colleagues, she might choose to withdraw from tutorials and the perpetrator draws satisfaction from that feedback. The perpetrator might be tempered to repeat that. This is a scenario where one behaviour influences another. An interventionist approach would look for a point of entry in this circular interaction. Probably, there would be need to enact and enforce legislation that bars perpetrators of sexual harassment.

(b)   Use of reframes; This is a strategic question tool/technique which can be used to empower victims/survivors of polarization to view their problems in tertiary institutions in a different lights.

When a female student chronicles her problem saturated life, some words trigger flash backs further traumatizing her. Reframes allow the survivors/victims to own up to their problems. The strategic intervention views the confidant as an expert who would recommend to tertiary authorities to look for support systems to networkwith. Such agencies would be the legal system, Zimbabwe National Students Union and gender activitists based organizations. The strategic approach is a referral procedure that helps to develop positive living in survivors/victims of polarization.

(iii)   Milan approach: in engaging students population over toxic masculinities and gender relation in tertiary institutions, college authorities should cultivate neutrality which would permit greater freedom in exploring how those issues affecting them. The Milan approach challenges all stakeholders to become non-blaming and non-judgmental when they explore issue brought to their attention. How does it feel to blame and judge female who has been called names for wearing mini-skirt. It would be wrong to take linear thinking that she would have called for it
.
(iv)   Solution focused approach.

From a therapeutic perspective, female students in tertiary institution are sometimes so overwhelmed by polarization issues to the extent that they forget support systems or significant other surrounding them. They also tend to minimize their inner strength.

George E. etal (1990:3) writes that sometimes human beings views problems or obstacles as rules to their interpersonal relationships. In a therapeutic session, a female student from a tertiary institution once remarked that she

always depressed. Asked, then, how she knew that she was always depressed (because if she was always depressed then that would be normal at her), she said that there were times when she felt less depressed. From my therapeutic point of view, these were, for her, the exceptions that proved the rule, of always being depressed. The therapeutic dialogue focused on what the female student was doing when she was feeling less depressed.

George E. atal (1990:3) concur that problems and behaviors associated with them are often seen by people as static situations in which the same problem keeps happening. The dilemma of a female student who was a survivor of rape given earlier on in the presentation is a telling and living example of how toxic masculities and gender relations can make a person stuck, paralyzed and immobilized in her life journey. She kept on re-enacting flashbacks of rape. George E etal (1990:3) concur that the same damn thing appears to take on the quality of life.

The tax-free question would be "Are toxic masculities and strained gender relations in Zimbabwe's institutions of higher learning the absolute rules of life?" Stakeholders are challenged to unpack new roles in female students in these difficult circumstances.

What happens in survivors of polarization's lives when the problem is not there (when, for example, they feel less depressed). That can therefore be called not the exception that proves the rule but the exception to the rule. Therefore it is prudent for different stakeholders in tertiary institution to enact interventions where expectations to polarization can be used to construct solution behaviours among survivors of toxic masculities and gender relations. Expectations themselves form the basis of the solution so that female students may only need to do more of what they are already doing in order to solve the problem of polarization. From a systemic family therapy perspective, the problems are like locks, the students need master keys to unlock them.

(v)   Narrative Approach: The female students at tertiary institutions are loaded with testimonies of problem saturated stories largely attributed to toxic masculities and gender relations. Sexual harassment and discrimination, marginalization on grounds of being, name calling, vulnerability to femicide, hate language, exposure to HIV/AIDS, battering and many other dehumanizing experiences make the baggage they thin description of these sordid experiences and they need empowerment to come up with thick description of their experiences. This achieved through re-authority of their life stories. The female students' problem saturated stories have dwarfed sparkling events or unique outcomes which are inherent in

them. An excerpt from a tertiary student's disclosures.

Up to this day I still remember the haranguing experience. John (not real name), I had treated as friend since enrolling at college pinned me down in my hostel. He gagged my mouth and tore my underwear. I felt lifeless. I summoned up my courage and broke free and reported the case to the police and John is doing his time at a prison in Marondera (false name) I feel very hurt.

In this disclosure, the unique outcomes are that the female student was able to overpower by taking the initiative to report the case. However, these unique outcomes were going un-noticed as the narrator focused on the problem saturated story. Authorities at tertiary institutions need to foster a therapeutic environment when such sensitive disclosure by survivors of gender based violence are made. Healing therapy would begin by their listening and believing in such stories.

(vi)   Eclectic Intervention Strategies: Authorities at tertiary institution need to engender an operational framework where each case related to toxic masculities and realtions is treated as unique. They need to create platforms where interventions are borrowed from different approaches in empowering female students overcome obstacles to their knowledge acquisition efforts.

Conclusion

This presentation has noted the debilitating effects of toxic masculinities and gender relations in tertiary institutions, within an environment of strongly opinionated of communities. Its thrust was to portray another paradigm shift to how issues related to gender based violence among the special population of female tertiary students can be tackled. It unraveled therapeutic and practical issues from a family therapy perspective. Thre is need for self reflexity amongst ourselves. What does the man or woman in you say to these issues.

Reference

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Redressing the gender Inequalities and Disparities In Student Leadership In Tertiary Institutions.

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Redressing the gender Inequalities and Disparities In Student Leadership In Tertiary Institutions.

Tertiary institutions as it were should be harbingers of social justice, democracy, freedom and equality. However it is sad to note that there is still an observable gap of inequality between the male and female sexes, which remains a cause for concern in this day and age.Gwirai (2002) notes that" the under presentation of women in leadership positions is symptomatic of every known society, which is a cause for concern especially when considered in the context of the equal opportunities discourse"

Even in the new millennium leadership remains a gendered social phenomenon in virtually every known society. In Zimbabwe the participation and contribution of female students in student leadership positions is still statistically undervalued and ignored. The discrimination and exclusion of female students is a setback to the realization of a gender just society and impedes the achievement of millennium development goal no 3,whidch seeks to promote and empower women.

Female students are rated second-class citizens hence they are forced to play second fiddle when it comes to participation in student leadership, according to Shizha (2000) regardless of one's gender, any primary school pupil can become a leader as long as the pupil has qualities acceptable to the class and the teacher and gender was not a determinant factor. However Shizha's (2000) findings are at variance with those of Gordon (1995) who found that boys in Zimbabwean secondary schools tended to dominate their female counterparts. Perhaps such a discrepancy can be attributed to the fact that by the time boys reach secondary level of education they will have acquired their "masculine mystique" This exclusion fulfills the stereotyped view that females are inferior to the male sex thus increasing gender based violence and creating a polarized environment.

The recurrent problem of gender inequality and poor participation of females is because matters of governance and leadership are generally seen as prerogative of males in Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole, this is a paradox because women constitute about 51% of the Zimbabwean population. It should be borne to mind that the gross under presentation of female students in tertiary institutions has an amplified effect in impeding the creation of oppression free and gender just communities in institutions of higher learning. The ripple effect of this under presentation of females is observed in the reduced number of women making it to national level politics.

Factors limiting participation of female students in leadership roles can be attributed to the existing gender composition in the Student Representative Assemblies and Student Representative Councils, which is male, biased and leaves little space for female students. This has scared away female aspirants from taking to the podium and voice out their concerns in fear of being victimized.

It is disappointing and paradoxical to note that females as a constituency tend to give support to male candidates though this may be partly contributed to intimidation by male opponents and the violent nature of student politics in Africa. My observation is that female students are also letting themselves down by being apathetic and developing cold feet when they are challenged to take the podium.

Liberal feminists argue that unequal opportunities between males and females is a result of socialization which forces females to be subservient to male counterparts. In the African culture and context gender role socialization begins early in the family and is perpetuated and reinforced by other socialization agents that include peer group, media and particularly in education also plays a role in the reduced participation of female students in leadership positions. According to French Novelist and social critic Simone De Beavoir "because of their role as mothers and carers women are primarily absorbed into domestic activities and become the second sex as they are excluded from more public activities which males are free to engage".

Male patriarchal nature has also led to male students being intimidated when female students take more prominent leadership roles in representative committees. By and large men are perceived as stronger, more aggressive,autonomous,adventurous and with good leadership qualities, while women are seen as being weaker, submissive, non-aggressive and more concerned with affiliation, nurturance and difference(ministry of education and Unicef 2000).It can also be a hindrance to women's motivation to strive and succeed because achievement is aggressive and therefore masculine(Dorsey,1989). Moreover there is a tendency of male students taking advantage of the lack of an enabling environment for females and the apathy of female students
.

Suggested Solutions/Recommendations

Gender courses should be included in the curriculum across the board in tertiary institutions so that that there is demystification of misconceptions about the female sex and a neutralization of socialized toxic masculinities. Kaziboni's (2002) findings in a study at the University of Zimbabwe found out that access to gender education tremendously transformed the status of Zimbabwean women. There is to scale up sensitization and conscientisation workshops, forums and symposiums in tertiary institutions.

Gender based instruments, laws, policies and conventions e.g. CEDAW should be familiarized in tertiary institutions through increased I.E.C material.

There should be a commitment to make constitutional reforms which make a preservation for female positions in leadership positions.

Male students should also move from the infamous era of violent politics into a new era mildness, nonviolent and inclusiveness thus accommodating females and promoting their participation in student leadership.

Where possible the authorities should give both female and male candidates opportunities to address fellow students. This can be done during assemblies or lectures. Educational institutions should also continue to put in place programmes that promote gender neutrality.

Lastly inequality will continue as long as the fight remains words on paper and not deeds on the streets hence implementation of gender policies should be effected.