

Dudziro Nhengu, 2019

Volume 5 Issue 2, pp. 170-192

Date of Publication: 06<sup>th</sup> August 2019

DOI-<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2019.52.170192>

This paper can be cited as: Nhengu, D., (2019). How Does Feminism Engender the Global Peace and Security Agenda? *PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(2), 170-192.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

## **HOW DOES FEMINISM ENGENDER THE GLOBAL PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA?**

**Dudziro Nhengu**

College of Business, Peace, Leadership and Governance, Africa University, Mutare,  
Zimbabwe

[nhengud@africau.edu](mailto:nhengud@africau.edu)

---

### **Abstract**

*This qualitative desk review study conceptualises the current global peace and security agenda from the standpoint of an extraordinary career path that has shifted between gender activism and political activism for peace. Women's activism has been subjected to astute gender analysis over-time, placing women's historiography at the centre of international relations. Modern scholarship should devote attention to pre-colonial history of women's participation in communal peace and security, developing creative methodologies for historical reconstructing, to focus on how women promulgate the peace and security agenda. Normatively, feminism has influenced a vibrant legal regime on gender equality and women's political participation. Practically, the activism of women in Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Liberia facilitated peaceful transitions from dictatorship governments. Arguments locate women's voices and experiences as catalysts for a past, present and future global feminist international relations discourse. The Hague Peace Conference (1915) and the Beijing Conference (1995) are cited as rallying points for women's collective action globally to influence an alternative negotiated peace settlement, tracing links between war, nationalism, masculinity, and violence. Study concludes that the women's movement birthed strategies to galvanize women's collective power for a peace feminist agenda in tandem with key reference points of the UN Charter.*

## Keywords

Africa, Feminism, Gender, Peace, Political, Security

---

## 1. Introduction

*“Gender oppression may discipline and pacify women, but radical gender analysis cannot be discipline-based, nor can it be pacified.”<sup>1</sup>*

In this paper feminism is described as activism or knowledge that emanates from and builds upon lives of women to make evident, oppose and subvert gendered power relations in society. It is a recognition and critique of male supremacy combined with efforts to change it (Mazur & McBride, 2006:1). Feminist activism is thus a form of political participation, where political participation is defined as an "action by ordinary citizens directed towards influencing some political outcomes" (Brady, 1999, p.737. In Goroshit, 2016).

Feminism as both an ideology and a movement has nexus to everyday gender politics. The gains feminism has brought to the arena of women peace and security (WPS) in particular and to the universal peace and security project in general both normatively and practically are many and well documented. As a theoretical and philosophical science model, feminism assumes a normative standpoint for women's involvement as both activists and theorists in all political processes; including governance, conflict and peace-building (Elshtain, 1987; Peterson, 1992, 2000; Sylvester, 2002; Tickner, 1992). Theoretically the legal regime for gender equality rallies development planners to the needs for gender equity in all processes while at the practical level women engage in advocacy and activist work to challenge everyday oppression and press for worlds of both equality and equity.

Feminism challenges peace and security issues in many ways. Firstly it proposes expanded definitions of peace that suggest continuity between different forms of violence. Secondly it highlights diverse roles women play in violent conflicts and in peace processes. When women claim spaces at peace tables, and engage in advocacy work to ground their presence in development and political processes they bring to the fore not only the issues that affect the female specie, but the capabilities of women to push the frontiers for peace and security too. The activism of Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Liberia women are cases in point. Participation of women combatants in dangerous and protracted liberation struggles in Africa and beyond is a further

---

<sup>1</sup> Mama, 2017

example. Although women sometimes join the war outside the feminist label, their actions only help to refute the misogynistic narrative that women are weak and incapable of doing what men can do on the development front. This woman-borne struggle accomplishes a highly political role of complicating people's understanding of peace and violence. Deepening the discourse of feminism helps in turn to position gender centrally as a social and symbolic construct involving relations of power (Pratt & Richter-Devroe, 2011).

National movements, invoke ideals stemming from the past to breed national consciousness (Popescu, 2016). Similarly, a number of themes continue to emerge from feminist engagement with peace and security issues of past and present. In violent conflict, different social groups often encounter distinct experiences of violation, suffering and pain. On the other hand their narrative of different levels of violation, suffering and pain also enables different opportunities which may be of benefit to society to emerge. For example war by nature affects women more because of their biological make up which exposes them to more risk for atrocities of war such as rape. Furthermore women's gender roles and expectations from society prevent them from running away from scenes of violence and danger because they have a societal obligation to care for children and the elderly. As a result, women in conflict areas by nature often focus on immediate and practical security needs for themselves and for their families, a perspective often considered to be personal and apolitical by mainstream analysis.

This projected 'women and conflict' narrative provokes a natural search for solutions around issues such as forgiveness, reconciliation, and transitional justice, and all these are important themes situated at the intersection of peace and war. Women's security viewpoint by nature operates from below and is quite distinct from a state security perspective which may seem hegemonic and top down. Feminism does not however seek to devalue the perspective of the state regarding security in order to replace it with the feminist perspective. It contends that both perspectives are important and entail different strategies to achieve the balance of security, hence the need for the women's perspective to be seriously incorporated in everyday planning for peace and security. This paper argues that when women participate actively in formulating and shaping the definition of security, their efforts can contribute towards building sustainable peace processes.

A good example to prove this claim is that adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on women, peace and security (WPS) which happened with women on the lead has positively oriented politics and international relations globally towards embracing the need for women's active involvement in peace processes universally. Likewise

adoption of a further seven UN security council resolutions on WPS<sup>2</sup> has similarly engendered a politics of peace globally, further rallying UN member states together across religious, geographical, cultural and political divides to commit towards a common gender sensitive agenda in confronting modern day threats to security such as religious fundamentalism, biologically packaged disease-warfare and terrorism, threats which militaries alone cannot effectively confront.

Practically the eight resolutions on WPS have strengthened the UN and member states' commitment to peace processes by enabling and informing gender sensitive peace institutions, discourses, frameworks, policies and legislations. There have also been noted shifts in political will and commitment to support gender inclusive responses to conflict intervention, human rights law and gender sensitive humanitarian action. These achievements position the feminist project as a relevant and valid political project for engendering the global peace and security agenda. The rise of feminism at each stage is linked to historical developments, especially issues of conflict and war on the continent. This further validates the argument that feminism is a political project aimed at rewarding a conflict torn world with alternatives for peace. Within this rubric, the goal of feminism ties up with that of human security because it strives for egalitarianism and peaceful co-existence across all divides.

Ironically, despite these achievements, the feminist project as both an ideology and a movement continues to be misunderstood, and to face much resistance from some quotas of women and men globally. Questions relating to origins and role of feminism cause contestations in global peace discourses. In addition to the verbal and emotional backlash, a huge roll-back of rights and the shrinking political space for women and girls on every front is witnessed for example in the global reversal of reproductive rights; control on women's freedoms under *Shari'ah* law in Islamic and non-Islamic states alike; increases in contestation over the lesbians, gays, bi-sexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) agenda globally; the rise in extremism, terrorism and the related gender differentiated effects; the shrinking political, social and economic space for women, to participate effectively and equally in politics, governance, peace and security issues and the opportunity cost on the women's health agenda as governments prioritise hyper-militarized security agendas as opposed to addressing human security threats.

In feminist terms, rise of war and terror acts in Africa is accompanied by a glaring and deliberate lack of a clearly articulated anti-militarism agenda that links theory to practice at both

the African Union (AU) and UN levels. The agenda of the gender unit at the Africa Union Gender Commission though a huge development in the area of gender peace and security in Africa, is often perceived as a women's agenda and as such it is not given much serious consideration especially in terms of committing financial resources for gender sensitive peace interventions on the war torn continent. This culture of silence on issues pertaining to the women's agenda in peace and security issues debilitates on citizens' peace and security, and worse on women when considering the gender differentiated impacts of war.

Despite global efforts to support gender mainstreaming at different levels of development, there still exist huge gender disparities in the developing world. Women are 70% of populations living in poverty especially in Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa 57% of the HIV infected population are women (UN-AIDS, 2016). The majority of people championing the public sphere in Africa is also male, while women comprise the bulk of those with low levels of education and low socio-economic status (Ibid). Complexity of this phenomenon requires serious academic analysis and interrogation, hence the already stated purpose of this paper.

## **2. Objectives**

The first and main objective of this study is to track the evolvement of the feminist movement from evolution to date, noting how its development has engendered the global peace and security agenda. The second objective is to highlight the contestation between African feminisms and western feminism in modern day discourse.

The study achieves these objectives through a qualitative analysis of the various waves of feminism in phases, linking them to their specific historical epochs in relation to when they started and the issues that they sought to address. Each wave of feminism is thus understood within its proper historical context and in relation to the specific issues it intended to address over time. Many people both in Africa and beyond refute existence of an African feminist philosophy, arguing rather that feminism is a foreign import with no use in everyday lives of Africans. African feminists on the other hand argue for existence of an African feminist philosophy since antiquity, further contending that a western wave of thinking around feminism was a colonial import which however does not prove that African women before colonialism were not feminist oriented. The paper will track both debates for purposes of proving that both Western and African women have been highly sensitized, active and political since antiquity. The paper also argues that regardless of which wave was first or which wave informed the other, Western and African feminist thoughts

are strong forces which put together have galvanized modern politics towards embracing the existence of a rich feminist international relations that the mainstream world of politics can exploit and benefit from towards building egalitarian societies, inclusive political processes and sustainable governance.

### **3. Rationale for the Study**

This paper accomplishes a highly political act of linking feminist epistemology to fields often regarded as malestream, and these are intellectual relations, politics, peace and security. The study both complicates feminism and radicalises the gender and women's studies by supporting development of a feminist intellectual knowledge community of practice grounded in critical engagements with global politics, security and development. The field of peace and security in Africa and globally has for long been heavily dominated by "*... narrow neo-liberal discourses that uncritically privilege the role of the market in driving development*" (Mama, 2011). This in turn has socialized the male scholars and practitioners who in turn dominate the development and academic institutions to remain decidedly disinterested and opposed to feminist epistemology. Practically the figures of female practitioners in substantive positions in militaries, presidium and peacekeeping missions either remain stagnant or plummet over time globally. Linking feminist theory and practice to this 'considered-to-be-hard' field is thus a feminist political act seeking to position female African academics strategically in global intellectual discourse for sustainable peace and security and good governance. Finally the study proves African feminist intellectual wisdom, while making the boundaries between research, international relations and feminist theory and practice porous and epistemologically lucid

Global peace and security in this paper refers to subjects like human rights, gender and women's rights, militarism, conflict, the environment, conflict resolution, security, peace-building, economic development, ethics, conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and global governance, among others. While sex is biological, gender is a societal paradigm. Gender relations are ordered in terms of existing patterns of power and supremacy that structure life chances of men and women (Confortini, 2006: 341). Society enforces diverse social roles based on pre-conceived power norms and premised on sex differences, and by nature these relations often take the form of male control and female subservience. This situation legitimizes the relegation of women from leadership and decision-making processes and frameworks. Male supremacy is in the end not only a sexual and social problem, but a political strategy for perpetually subordinating women. These unequal power

relations manifest themselves through women's failure to access basic resources that enable their full and equal participation in politics.

#### **4. Methodology**

The study relied on qualitative research methods. A thorough desk review of official documents such as UN and AU reports, scholarly books and report, internet documents and newspapers was undertaken. To avoid collecting unnecessary information, a three stage data analysis plan was developed at the inception of the research process (Andrews, L., Higgins, A., Andrews, M. W. & Lalo, J. G., 2012). The preliminary stage entailed collecting only the relevant data and recording it, while irrelevant data was discarded. This was followed by coding and classifying the data into analytic units, categories and themes, and again, there were three stages to it, namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding. Open coding entailed segmenting or dividing the data into similar groupings (Ibid). Coding and classifying data was followed by axial coding, where identified categories were grouped together (Ibid). To take note of emerging themes, note cards were used to sort the data into themes, and note cards that belonged together were grouped and recorded. The next stage was selective coding, (Ibid) where themes were organized and integrated to articulate a coherent understanding of the feminism, peace and security. This was finally followed by breaking down the data through reading, analysing and theorizing it to derive meaning, formulate relevant arguments, appreciate already derived theories from foregoing scholars while refuting imposed theories and formulating new arguments for relevant knowledge production using grounded theory. Grounded theory emerged as an empirical approach for developing theory, and this was in response to the objectivism of the times where much of research theory development was done before collecting and analyzing data (Glazer & Strauss, 1967). By centering analysis on reality on the ground, and on evolving rather than pre-conceived theories, GT informs theory of change, because it brings marginalised populations and processes to the centre for knowledge production.

#### **5. Literature Review – The Feminist Philosophy Debate**

There is a contestation between Eurocentric and Afro centric views on the rise of feminism, especially on how to name and frame the intellectual and activist traditions of Black women as feminists. The major question is the practicality of treating women as homogenous, and

especially of posthumously, indiscriminately and randomly labeling historically significant ancient black women as feminist (Watkins, 2016).

Oyewumi (2003) argues that imposing a feminist label on ancient women post-humously is tantamount to “*discursive domination*,” which is a mode of appropriation and codification of knowledge. This discursive domination may result in unfounded assertions or a form of knowledge hegemony that risks a copyrighted claim over and one that objectifies historically significant Subjectivities (Ibid). On the other hand, assuming that these women did not name themselves as feminists simply because the word did not exist then raises further valid arguments for the need to name ancient women of feminist historical worth as feminists. A sustaining and gainful argument is that where these women’s contributions are of historical and cultural value, construction of a legitimate past and usable label for them, albeit, naming them as feminists, provides currency not only to African feminist philosophy but to African philosophy as a whole, which is of benefit both politically and academically. Secondly, giving value to efforts and contributions of African women by placing them alongside western women history makers and male history makers enriches global history.

Academically, the argument contributes to generation of useful knowledge on the theme of African feminism as politics for global peace. There is need for unity in diversity of global feminist political views, regardless of the differences that the contextual positioning of various feminists may spell. Group unity for feminism can be ensured without necessarily ignoring the tremendous differences that separate Western from African women. It is also important to highlight that African women who do not embrace the feminist label are making a significant statement about their identity, their politics, and their exercise of self-determination, which however does not block their achievements from being measured as gains alongside the achievements of African women who identify as feminists, and also alongside the achievements of Western feminists (Hill-Collins, 1996). This being said, absence of a feminist label on any woman does not make their advocacy and activism any less political. Women can indeed differ over methods and strategies of pushing the agenda of ending sexism, but their goal remains the same.

The term feminism is indeed less significant to the value that scholarship can accord to the contributions of all women whether traditional and modern to issues of development and peace. In short therefore, an understanding of feminism as a political project is more important to its understanding as a label because what women do to contribute to history either inside or outside



the label is still of significant value to politics and historical process. When women work to push a women's rights agenda, they exhibit a pro-woman position that reflects their political self-interest which fits well into the definitions of what the feminist agenda seeks to achieve.

Women's oppression if indeed universal, but the variables of oppression will differ per context. How women suffer from religious, class, race, ethnic and other forms of oppression will differ from context to context regardless of whether a woman is Western or African. The manner in which patriarchy 'hands out' oppression of women along religious, ethnic and class lines may differ even according to regions or provinces in a specific country context and this explains the heterogeneity of women's situations. This paper thus notes that there are different types of feminisms, only common in their understanding of what constitutes discrimination against women and how to overcome it.

The notion of womanism is a prominent feminist alternative that accommodates African women's reality, identity and the dynamics of empowerment (Oyeronke, 1997). The concept emphasizes cultural contextualization, importance of the family and of women's cooperation with men (Ibid). Through their emphasis on contextualized universalism, African feminisms have helped to clarify the link between strategic gender needs that are feminist in nature and practical or tactical women's needs grounded in women's everyday experiences (Ibid). Key point is that women's interests need not always coincide with gender interests (Ibid). Hudson-Weems (2003) argues for a distinction between western feminism and African feminism through what she terms 'African (a) womanist' and 'mainstream feminist' views. In her postulations, the African womanist is different from the malestream feminist. The difference lies in the former's perspective and approach to issues wrought by the different historical realities and positioning in society for western and African women. African feminism is portrayed as a distinct philosophy, neither an outgrowth nor an addendum to feminism, but a separate ideology created and designed for all women of African descent, grounded on African culture and focusing on practical experiences, struggles, needs, and desires of African women (Oyeronke, 1997).

African philosophy is incomplete until it incorporates African feminist philosophy which has for long been neglected by both African and Western philosophy (Oduk, 2002). African feminist philosophy is a new area of study, which can be undertaken by both males and females, and can be modeled on 'Black feminist philosophy' (Ibid). Over and above Oduk's postulation, this paper argues for an 'African feminist philosophy' as opposed to a 'Black feminist philosophy' because besides just provoking racial sentiments, the term falls into both a reductionist and

ecological fallacy of assuming that everything African is black, and also that philosophy for African women can only be produced by black people. The thought negates the impact of globalisation on the constant evolvement of education on the continent and beyond. The difference between African feminist philosophy and Western feminist philosophy is that the former is theoretically based on assumptions rather than reality of African women. Western feminist philosophy according to Oduk creates the same victim narrative for women that western education created for Africans by focusing “*on the situation of women, the majority of which are illiterate, poor, isolated, passive, submissive, afraid and lonely, and are to be found in rural areas*” (Ibid: 166). African feminist philosophy is not only committed to a pragmatic programme. Its vision is to ensure that women are placed at the centre of events and thinking of the world. Rightly so, African Feminist Philosophy is committed to *thought* and *practice*. The evident limitation in Oduk’s argument is the stereotypical assumption that all African rural women are poor, marginalised, and passive.

The rich narrative of African women who are also agents of history starts in the rural areas, where they benefited society both as teachers of the communal curricula. African women functioned as producers and custodians of a befitting and accepted social capital that they bequeathed to the children they raised. The African communal curriculum in pre-colonial Africa provoked a system of learning from each other, especially from the elders, and women were also part of this community in every generation. African women, from Egyptian Kemet to date were champions of the Agricultural sector, specialising in specific crops and animal husbandry to feed their families and grow wealth for their communities. To date, 95% of agricultural work is done by women. Women are also responsible for production of 75% of subsistence food on the continent.

Ogutu (2002: 5) like Oduk, equates capabilities of African women to that of African men, and contends that a philosophy for African social sciences would be incomplete without incorporating a gender lens and telling the narrative of African women. He calls for “African thinkers and intellectuals – men and women of genius to “... *search the histories of antiquity for precedents that will guide them as they propel the African people to the truth.*”

Ogutu (Ibid) positions both African men and women as repositories and custodians of a gender balanced African philosophy. When an elderly person dies, the wealth of knowledge she or he had, dies with them. So the wise elders must impart their knowledge before they die. Reference to ‘burnt down libraries’ also points to the library of ancient Alexandria that was burnt

down. There is archaeological evidence that shows the ingenuity of Africa and contributions of both African men and women in the remains of the burnt down Alexandria library.

Recorded African feminist history likewise projects African women as having provided inspiration for feminist peace actions. There is evidence of female Africans who contributed to what constitutes an academic feminist African philosophy since pre-colonial times to date. These ‘Philosopher Queens’ had their various epistemological and philosophical contours, and they also contributed to the current state of the African mindset towards the value of redefining a gender balanced African identity (Takyi-Amoako, E. J. and Assié-Lumumba, 2018). While colonial scholarship has indeed worked hard to bury these heroines over the years, it is our duty as African feminist scholars to resurrect their legacy through research and documentation, for present and posterity. More deeply for women in the global South, women’s liberation could not be divorced from freedom from colonial and neocolonial subjugation, and women organized for racial equality and to put an end to colonialism (Ibid). To mention a few, Yaa Asantewa, Queen of the Ashanti Kingdom in Ghana led an army against colonialists who had sent the Ashanti King into exile (Ibid). Likewise Queen Nzinga, the reformist who fought for women to be assigned important government positions in Angola was the first woman to command a strong guerilla army to emancipate her people from colonialism (Ibid).

In Zimbabwe, Nehanda Charwe Nyakasikana led resistance against colonial occupation in the First Chimurenga (Mazama, 2019). The Makola women from Ghana and the Nana Benz from Togo championed economic empowerment in their countries against a ‘monopsonistic’ Western tendency that ascribed minor status and economic dependence to African women (Takyi-Amoako, E. J. and Assié-Lumumba, 2018). In Cote d’ Ivore women took over the Grand-Bassam prison following imprisonment of anti-colonial leaders, while the 1929 Aba Riots in Eastern Nigeria witnessed thousands of women activists protesting against colonial taxation (Rain Queens of Africa, 2012). In Zambia African women stripped naked to protest against genetically modified food post-colonialism (Kamba, 2017) while in the Orange Free State, African women non-violently mobilized against the pass laws as early as 1898 in 1913 (Talbot, 1980; Wells, 1983).

In South Africa the Federation of South African women led by the African National Congress Women’s League organized against apartheid (Ibid) also working across racial lines in collaboration with Black Sash, a predominantly white women’s organization (Ibid). This point proves that women’s peace agenda is more embracing and more inclusive rising above racial agendas for capital accumulation towards a human security agenda. While the nationalist struggles

in Africa mostly manifested political struggles of black men against white settlers the women in various countries on the continent united above the racial demarcations to unite their efforts to confront their double oppression of racial colonialism and misogyny. This highly political realization that simply overthrowing colonialism would not liberate them from the negative masculinist tendencies of a rising black elite that was nostalgic for patriarchal modes of government was the mark of a feminist agenda that separated women's activism from mainstream activism during the epoch globally (Campbell, 2000; Mama, 2000). The Black Sash movement has outlived the apartheid regime and continues to embrace the agenda of bettering black people's lives by focusing on socioeconomic rights in South Africa ([www.blacksash.org.za](http://www.blacksash.org.za), accessed 20 March 2019). Movement-building is a political project of worth demanding mobilisation of a sum total of multiple energies to demystify resist and overcome common gender-based discriminations and oppressions (Mama, 2011).

Post colonialism, African women have also advanced a liberating form of scholarship that claims a meaningful place for African, one disconnected from the oppressive and reductionist colonial way of learning that reduced women to second class minors. Taking the nationalist liberation struggles in Africa as target for analysis, African feminists have reinforced the understanding of these revolutions that brought independence to the African continent as all-encompassing struggles that mobilised all genders to end colonial rule (Isaacman & Isaacman, 1984; Gaidzanwa, 2004; Mama, 2000; Mkandawire, 1995). They however argue for a mismatch between the manner in which all liberation movements in Africa included women during armed combat and the manner in which women were later neglected to the domestic peripheries as men championed and dominated governance spaces. The Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), the liberation movement party in Mozambique explicitly used a picture of an African woman with a weapon and a child on her back as a symbol of the completeness of the struggle. In general and by default women are central actors and 'rights holders' in peace, security, human rights and sustainable development issues.

African feminist analysis further explores how the mystic of liberation struggles tainted itself with gender violence on the front, which was to be replicated in the form of a politics of exclusion at the dawn of independence as women got side-lined and relegated to the domestic sphere while men occupied strategic positions of governance (Campbell, 2003). Feminists thus implicate patriarchy as the central driver of this politics of exclusion, while deepening the understanding of the gender relations of the pre-colonial community, in the same vein showing

how colonialism worsened gender relations on the continent. The gender specific effects of war and violence demand for an increase in women's participation in politics and in formal peacemaking processes be increased, hence the need to increase participation of women in mediation and other formal peace making processes.

African feminist scholars also offer a gendered analysis of the liberation struggles to explore not only the contradictions between the colonialists and the colonised, but also the gendered roles and values set in motion or accentuated by colonialism, what Campbell (2003) tags 'the patriarchal model of liberation.' Gender relations in Africa have historically been largely predisposed against women, and the major thesis lies in differentiating the levels of women's marginalisation before colonialism and after (Gaidzanwa, 2004). In traditional African society women had different roles and concerns from those of women in post colonial Africa. Land then was collectively owned, and women had land for subsistence allocated to them in their own right. This demonstrates that they contributed to the formation of a steady unit of production and decision-making (Ibid). Women also played a crucial political role. Some were chiefs, arbitrators in courts, village elders, leaders in wars and spirit mediums (Amadiume, 1987). In all these respects, the character of women's involvement in public life was clearly political (Ibid; Gaidzanwa, 2004).

## **6. Discussions**

The narrative of the origins of the modern feminist project is as complicated and contested as the subject itself. Eurocentric research locates origins of feminism in the 19th century, while Afro-centric philosophy locates it back to Egyptian Kemet, and the founding of the African 'Bantu' states. Kemet signifies an ancient African system of government that is deeply embedded in a centralised political system, as replicated by the significance of the sun god called Ra during ancient Egypt. Formation of all African states took place through movements from Egyptian Kemet across Africa, also known as 'Bantu migrations'.

Pursuant to this contestation over the rise of feminism, and for purposes of framing my arguments, the analysis takes note of both the Euro-centric and Afro-centric views, as long as their claims maintain a justifiable historical fit. I will first track the rise of feminism in the West as recorded in history, and then proceed to track the rise of feminism in Africa as also documented historically, drawing anecdotal evidence from oral tradition and other sources on each side. Tracking the rise of feminism in the west and in Africa differently helps achieve two objectives

which are both important for sustaining arguments in this paper. Firstly tracking the rise of feminism per context helps prove that there are different types of feminisms, and that feminism as a whole is indeed rooted in historical developments, hence its importance to the global peace and security agenda. Tracking the rise of feminism differently also helps to highlight those historical moments at which women's efforts in the west and in Africa intersect, at the same time proving the significance of those intersections, and further proving that women's politics is basically the same, being Western and African is only an accident of birth.

Western recorded history attributes peace study narrative of "structural violence," "positive peace," and "negative peace" to Johan Galtung. In reality however, broad understandings of peace and violence had permeated the work of feminist activists from both Africa and the West as already demonstrated in ensuing sections for decades before Galtung, and the absence of women's voices in recorded peace study history can only be a result of patriarchy which overlooked women's contributions at all levels of development discourse. Women in the Western world have participated in peace and security work and related movements since antiquity. The feminist 'peace-lore' records tales of Athens' women who withheld sex from their husbands and seized the Akropolis in order to end the Peloponnesian War. It also records the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) women who gathered in Seneca County in New York to demand an end to the war between Nations in the late 1500s (Krasniewicz, 1992).

The origins of the first wave of feminism in the West has been noted above as having been associated with suffrage, women's legal and civil rights, including their right to education which women wanted to be recognized and valued as inseparable from mainstream politics; freedom and justice and right to choice for all people (Alonso, 1993). Women writers in this epoch highlighted the nexus between militarism and oppression along racial, class, and gender lines in US domestic and international policy (Jane Addams, 1906). Major critics of this first wave were those women who felt excluded by the going feminist narratives that tended to fit women into one model as a homogenous entity (Lorde, 1984; Hooks, 1984). Major critics were Afro American feminists, who added a historical component to their argument, to include their complex historical experiences as second class descendants of slaves.

Practically women are on record for mobilising against the harmful effects of war at the outbreak of World War 1 (WW1). Over a thousand women from many of the countries at war and from neutral countries gathered in The Hague for the International Congress of Women (1915). The gathering fostered founding of the International Committee of Women for Permanent Peace,

whose main concern was to highlight the harmful effects of war to women. Women at the Hague meeting rejected the notion that women could be safe during war, and called on the warring parties to quickly negotiate a “peace based on principles of justice” and one including political equality for women and men. This meeting resolution was the first to outline a series of “principles for permanent peace” which later influenced Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points ([www.wilpf.int.ch/resolutions/1915.htm](http://www.wilpf.int.ch/resolutions/1915.htm), accessed March 2019). The idea of negotiation and mediation for conflict resolution was first mooted here when the women put in place two delegations of women to plead for a negotiated settlement among nations in dispute.

The Second World War (WWII) again rallied many women to participate for peace through various avenues which included joining military resistance movements, confronting dictatorship governments using nonviolent means and doing community activism for peace. The WILPF as a feminist organisation worked alongside other peace organizations to counter nuclear proliferation, to advocate for universal disarmament, as well as participating in the civil rights struggle in the US (Bussey, 1980). WILPF supported creation of the United Nations, advocating for women’s equal representation in the international body (Ibid). There is a linkage between the WILPF agenda for peace and the peace component of the UN Charter adopted later in 1945.

The UN *Charter* makes forty-five references to the word “peace”, where peace is coupled with security rather than with development or human rights issues (for example, articles 1(1), 2(3), 11(1), 11(2), 11(3), and 12(2)) (UN Charter, 1945). These references provide a starting point for re-imagining peace outside the “frames of war” (Butler, 2010), and create possibility for non-violence rather than militarism. In the preamble, *the “peoples” of the UN commit to “living together in peace with one another”* (UN Charter, 1945: Paragraph 5).

Second-wave feminism began in the United States in the early 1960s and spread across the Western world. It sought to increase equality for women beyond enfranchisement (Ibid). Marxist and post-colonial feminists joined African American feminists in theorizing feminism more inclusively, leading to the theory of inter-sectionality (Lorde, 1984; Hook, 1984). Likewise, the problem of identity politics plagued this discourse, mostly functioning to showcase that feminism was in reality embedded in the politics of the times, since historical and race issues of Black African -American women always provoked the slavery narrative (Ibid). The shift in the nature of conflict post-cold war necessitated a new feminist discourse that not only sought to confront patriarchy, but one that embraced the human security agenda.

The continuing feminist peace mobilisations against the nuclear arms race of the Cold War post 1960s against the war in Vietnam, the continuing plague of colonialism, apartheid and racial discrimination cannot be over emphasized. The shift in the feminist movement agenda of the 1960s to a maternal rhetoric similar to the one employed by feminists of the 1800s and early 1900s is also noted, again emphasizing the more peaceful and nurturing human security face of feminist peace activism. Meetings across the continents rallied together African women, US women, Japanese women, Soviet women and Vietnamese women to push for nuclear disarmament, an end to the arms race in Africa and Vietnam, and a complete overthrow of imperialism (Alonso, 1993; Swerdlow, 1993). Rise of the women's peace encampments likewise protested deployment of Euro-missiles at the Greenham Common Air Force base likewise challenged patriarchal military power (Roseneil, 1995).

In Africa feminism has often been dismissed as a Western project and foreign import, even among some high profile academic circles. Realistically, mainstream arguments for an African political philosophy standpoint devoid of feminist thought render African philosophy incomplete. Same arguments create opportunity for propelling feminism not as an isolated agenda of women for women by women, but as a complementary part of our African history and political economy.

Arguing for the case of African feminism and going back to Egyptian Kemet, I argue that the fight for women's rights began long before first wave feminism in the West. Egypt has a long history of gender politics. However, conceptually, women in the Egyptian Kemet era and the pre-patrimonial traditional era in Africa might not have named their libetory acts as 'feminist acts', and might have conceptualized oppression differently from women from the West. This however does not take away their value of women as Subjectivities in transforming their societies. Historically, the contact of colonialism with Africa transmitted colonial views of feminism to the continent. In Egypt first wave feminism imposed a foreign understanding of gender and feminism onto Egyptian society, a society which had already built its own distinct African feminist movement (Karenga, 1993). Most tenets of first wave feminism were propagated by Egyptian reformers like Mohamed Abdou and Qasim Amin, who encouraged Egyptians to adopt Western values especially with regards to gender (Ibid). As such Western feminism, like all colonial impositions either became the dominant form of feminism or became deeply intertwined with local variations.



European based First wave feminism in Africa facilitated political engagements between women, their states and development agencies to inform an agenda for women in development. The 'welfarist' approach of this wave of feminism was critiqued by donors and society as exclusionary in that it facilitated projects for women in the domestic sphere, and as non-actors in the public sphere, taking away their agency in matters political. The shift to women in development (WID) was still criticized for adding women and stirring them into the development agenda without interrogating their historical and subjective needs. Gains for women remained stagnant, forcing development agencies such as CIDA to pull out their funding on the argument that the development model was increasing hostility between women and men. The error of this time also laid in the manner the women's movement pronounced and emphasized their women's rights; women were contending for a western approach of worlds without men.

In 1975, at a Conference held in Mexico by the UN and the women's movement, the women and development (WAD) approach was adopted, and the decade for women was also declared to mark the negative condition of women globally. WAD approached women's issues from a neo-Marxist and dependency theory perspective (Margolis, 1993). What sets WAD apart from WID is its specific focus on the relation between patriarchy and capitalism. WAD locates women in both the private and public sphere, acknowledging their contribution towards economic development in both spaces (Ibid).

Western Feminists like Betty Reardon, Elise Boulding, and Hilikka Pietilä were active in bringing about the UN Decade and supporting organising of the women's conferences, and in promoting the increased participation of women from the global South in the work of the UN (Confortini, 2017). Involving the UN more in the agenda for women's activism in peace processes also presented better opportunities for participation of African women post independence, given that many African states were now members of the UN. The UN Decade for Women (1975–85) was the result of women's activism and infused new energy into the women's peace movement. A series of UN Women's Conferences and the parallel NGO forums, gathered women from all over the world to discuss issues of concern to women.

The Gender and development (GAD) approach originated in the 1980s under the rubric of social feminism, and was adopted at the Nairobi Conference in 1985, providing a turning point in the way feminists understood development. Main agenda by the women at this conference was the debt crisis and the structural adjustment programs implemented by the IMF and the World Bank, assessing how the concept of neo-liberalism marginalized and discriminated against women

more in the developing countries. Focus was also on how unequal relationships between sexes promote discrimination and hinder development. Unique about the Nairobi Conference is that it was in the main initiated by African women on the continent, however with financial support from the UN and other Western sources. Identity politics, especially the issue of naming White women on the African continent as African feminists and letting them speak on behalf of the common African woman topped the agenda of the conference. African women in the space also highlighted the problems of backlash that they faced in their communities on the basis of naming their politics struggles as feminist struggles in the face of a resistant crop of a rising black elite male governors. African feminists and development workers thus saw the need to shift the feminist agenda towards a more inclusive gender agenda framework to give more meaning and nuance to their struggles. This gender and development frame was later emphasised years later at the Beijing conference.

Gender mainstreaming was a result of GAD. Gender mainstreaming ensures that gender issues are integrated in all levels social, economic, environmental and political development. At the 4th UN conference on women in Beijing in 1995, 189 state representatives agreed that inclusion of both women and men in development projects was the only way to progress any nation's economic growth and development (Margolis, 1993). A number of international development agencies who had cut their funding owing to the negative interpretation of the WID/WAD approaches as too feminist and promoting hostility from men renewed their interest post Beijing. CIDA for example, increased funding towards education, health care and employment of both sexes (Mehra & Gupta, 2006).

The women's movement focuses its pronouncements more on gender than on feminism, due to the negative connotations that were accorded to feminism. This shift enabled a further development in strengthening the peace discourse \as all-embracing of sexes, citizens and states alike. According to Ticker, (2002a) gender identity is malleable over time and space, allowing for the possibility of female emancipation. Gender analysis in turn strengthens the discourse on human security serving as a dynamic analytical and political tool by which gender as a unit of analysis and women and men as identity groups are in tandem (but not interchangeably) (Ibid). Claims about femininity are automatically rendered claims about masculinity, while by the same token a challenge to society's understanding of women's security necessarily transforms its understanding of men's security (Ibid). A feminist redefinition of power in relational terms, where the survival of one depends on the well-being of the other, automatically also enhances the security of both

women and men, who are correspondingly susceptible to the conventional gendered approach to security (Peterson & Runyan, 1993).

The boom of women's peace organizations post-Cold War enabled novel trajectories for feminism and peace and security. The Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Conference both identified "women in armed conflicts" as priority area for addressing the impact of war on women. Within this agenda, WILPF took the lead in persuading the UNSC to adopt UNSCR 1325. Since then UNSC 1325 has been at the center of women's peace organizing, with the goal of securing its implementation while self-reflectively thinking about the relationship between women, feminism, and peace (Cohn et al., 2005; El-Bushra, 2007). UNSCR1235 also provided opportunities for recognizing the inordinate impact of war on women and the important roles women play in peace processes (El-Bushra, 2007). It served as the foundation for changes in national legislations and policies which enabled women to make peaceful 'demands' for a place in peace and security decision-making processes, and achievements by African women in countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone and Kosovo (Ibid).

Based on the above arguments, the Hague Congress and ensuing women's conferences supported by the global women's movement are highly political historical processes which provide the ambit within which to visualize and critique the Security Council's selective engagement with feminism through its work on WPS. Involvement of the African women's movement in taking key initiatives to organize the Mexico Conference, the Nairobi Conference and the Beijing Conference are also historicized.

## **7. Conclusion**

This paper successfully demonstrated how the rise of feminism influenced the peace agenda at the UN level down to state and grassroots levels, especially how the various stages of feminist development link up with corresponding political issues, such as the development of UNSCR1920 to respond to the issue of terrorism and the 29/11 event in the United States. Evidence in the study also proved how feminist theories link up with peace theories. Further, the analysis demonstrated that the feminist agenda like the human security agenda highlights marginalisation of women as a human right issue of global political concern. The differences between Eurocentric and Afro-centric feminism, from origins to goals was demonstrated, noting that despite existing contestations between the two, feminism still succeeds in articulating a common agenda of engendering global peace and security. Finally, the paper established that achievements of the

women's movement in pushing for a feminist global peace and security agenda have placed women at a distinctive role as transformational leaders. Transformational leaders have the ability to transform and shift followers' motives from the level of self-interest to the level of common interest (Demir, 2008. In Genc, Lyigun & Yalcintas, 2015). Likewise the feminist movement has moved from a mere women's project to an international human rights project. Recommended area of further research is the role of feminism in furthering a common human security agenda globally. This common security approach proposes a shift from state-centric notions of security towards the role that feminists and women's movements can play in countering structural violence, which is the insecurity of individuals, social groups and the environment (Tickner, 1995).

## References

- Addams, J., Carroll, B.A., & Fink, C.F. (2007). *Newer Ideals of Peace*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Alonso, H. H. (1995). Why Women's Peace History? *Peace and Change* 20 (1), 48–52.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0130.1995.tb00618.x>
- Amadiume, I. (1987). *Male Daughters Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. London: Zed.
- Andrews, L., Higgins, L., Andrews, M.W., & Lalo, J.G. (2012). Classic Grounded Theory to Analyze Secondary Data: Reality and Reflections. *Grounded Theory Review: An International Volume*, 11 (1).
- Blackwell, J. (2004). *No Peace without Freedom: Race and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 1915–1975*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Bussey, G., & WILPF British Section (1980). *Pioneers for Peace: Women's International League for Peace and Freedom 1915–1965*. London: WILPF British Section.
- Butler, J. (2010). *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* London: Verso.
- Brady, H.E., 1999. Political participation. In: J.P. Robinson, P.R. Shaver, and L. Wrightsman, eds. 1999. *Measures of Political Attitudes*. San Diego: Academic Press. pp.737-801.
- In Goroshit, M. (2016). Political Participation: A Latent Variable Approach Testing Measurement Equivalence of Political Participation Using ESS Data<sup>†</sup>. *Eurasian Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(1), 26-38. <https://doi.org/10.15604/ejss.2016.04.01.003>
- Campbell, H. (2003.) *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of the [Patriarchal Model of Liberation]*. Trenton: Africa World Press.

- Cohn, C., Kinsella, H., & Gibbings, S. (2004). Women, Peace and Security. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 6 (1), 130–40.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1461674032000165969>
- Confortini, C. C. (2017) Feminist Contributions and Challenges to Peace Studies.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.47>
- Demir, K., 2008. Transformational leadership and collective efficacy: The moderating roles of collaborative culture and teachers' self-efficacy. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 33, pp.93-112.
- In Genc, N., Lyigun, N. O. and Yalcintas, M. 2015. Mehmed the Conqueror as a Case Study on Transformational Leadership. *Eurasian Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(1), 25-29.  
<https://doi.org/10.15604/ejss.2015.03.01.004>
- Ekiyor, T. & Wanyeki. L. M. (n/d). *National Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) in Africa: Needs Assessment and Plan for Action Needs Assessment Report*. New York: OSAGI, DESA and ECA.
- El-Bushra, J. (2007). Feminism, Gender, and Women's Peace Activism. *Development and Change* 38 (1), 131–47. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-7660.2007.00406.x>
- Elshtain, J. (1987). *Women and War*. Brighton: Harvester.
- Gaidzanwa, R.B (2004) Women, Gender and Electoral Politics in Zimbabwe. Electoral Institute of Southern Africa Research Report No. 8.
- Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory. Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Chicago: Aldine. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00006199-196807000-00014>
- Hill-Collins, P. (1996) What's in a Name? Womanism, Black Feminism, and Beyond. *Black Scholar* 26 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/00064246.1996.11430765>
- Hooks, B. (1984). *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. Boston: South End Press.
- Hudson-Weems, C. (1997). "Africana Womanism and The critical Need for Africana Theory and Thought." *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 21, (2), 79-84
- Kamba, K. (2017, May 26). UPND leadership should apologise for parading poor naked old women and drunk youths-Kamba. *Lusaka Times* . Lusaka, Zambia.
- Karenga, M. (1984). *Introduction to Black Studies*. (2nd Edition). California: University of Sankore.

- Krasniewicz, L. (1992). *Nuclear Summer: The Clash of Communities at the Seneca Women's Peace Encampment*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Lorde, A. (2016). *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Freedom, CA: The Crossings Press
- Mama, A. (1996). "Women's Studies and Studies of Women in Africa during the 1990s", *CODESRIA Working Paper Series 5/96*. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Mama, A. (2000). The Power of Feminist Pan-African Intellect Amina Mama. *Feminist Africa Special Editorial* (22).
- Mama, A. (2009). Demythologising Gender in Development: Feminist Studies in African Contexts. *Feminist Review* , 35 (4), 121-124. IDS. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2004.tb00165.x>
- Mama, A. (2011). What does it mean to Do Feminist Research in African Contexts? *Sage Journals*, 98 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1057/fr.2011.22>
- Mama, A. (2017). The Power of Feminist Pan-African Intellect. (A. Mama, Ed.) *Feminist Africa: Feminist Organising - Strategy, Voice, Power* (22).
- Margolis, D. R. (1993). Women's Movements around the World: Cross-Cultural Comparisons. *Gender and Society*, 7 (3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124393007003004>
- Mehra, R. & Gupta, G. R. *Gender Mainstreaming: Making it Happen*. New York: ICRW
- Mkandawire, T. (1995). Three Generations of African Academics: A Note. *Transformation African E-Journals*, 98 (1).
- Mazama, A. (2019). Charwe Shona Spiritual Leader. <https://www.britannica.com/biography> [Accessed 12 May 2019).
- Oduk, H. (2002). *Feminist Philosophy: An African Perspective*. In Presby, G.O.M., Smith, D., Ogotu, G.E.M. (2002). *African Renaissance: A Third Millennium Challenge to the Thought and Practice of African Philosophy*. In Presby, G.O.M., Smith, D., Abuya, P.A., Nyarwath, O. (2002). *Thought and Practice in African Philosophy*. Kenya: KAS.
- Oyeronke, O. (2003). (Ed.). *African Women and Feminism: Reflecting on the Politics of Sisterhood*.
- Peterson, V. S. (1992). Security and Sovereign States: What Is at Stake in Taking Feminism Seriously? In Peterson, V. S. (Ed.). *Gendered States: Feminist (Re) Visions of International Relations Theory*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Peterson, V. S. & Runyan, A.S. (1993). *Global Gender Issues*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

- Popescu, D. (2016). Nation, Communitarianism, Peace and Globalisation: A Vulnerable Relationship. *Eurasian Journal of Social Sciences*, 4(4), 2016, 61-69.  
<https://doi.org/10.15604/ejss.2016.04.04.005>
- Mazur, A. G. & McBride, D. E. (2006). State Feminism. RINGS  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292351115\\_State\\_feminism](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292351115_State_feminism)
- Roseneil, S. (1995). *Disarming Patriarchy: feminism and political action at Greenham*. Open University Press.
- Swordlow, A. (1993). *Women Strike for Peace: Traditional Motherhood and Radical Politics in the 1960s*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sylvester, C. (2002). *Feminist International Relations: An Unfinished Journey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511491719>
- Pratt, N. & Richter-Devroe, S. (2011). Critically Examining UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13(4):489-503,  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2011.611658>
- Takyi-Amoako, E. J. & Assié-Lumumba, N. T. (Eds.) (2018). *Re-Visioning Education in Africa: Ubuntu-Inspired Education for Humanity*. New York: Palgrave: Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70043-4>
- Tickner, J. A. (1992). *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Watkins, V. (2016). Contested Memories: A Critical Analysis of the Black Feminist Revisionist History Project *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 9 (4).