

# **'CARING' SECURITY IN AFRICA**

## **Theoretical and Practical Considerations of New Security Thinking**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*Hussein Solomon*

This monograph has its origins in lectures presented to political science students at the University of Durban-Westville, as well as to officers on the Joint Staff Course at the Defence Force College in Pretoria. Students expressed their concern about the 'First World' and Eurocentric bias of much of the available literature on new security thinking. Officers, on the other hand, displayed scepticism as to the practical utility of new security thinking. What this publication attempts to do, then, is to critically analyse new security thinking through the lens of Southern Africa and Africa. In addition, it seeks to explore the interface between theory and practice, thereby hoping to lay to rest any scepticism on the practical utility of the new security

agenda.

In the first article, Hussein Solomon examines the historical development of new security thinking, assesses the criticism levelled against it and analyses its impact on policy. In his penetrating rejoinder, Anton du Plessis questions the 'newness' of new security thinking and stresses that a synthesis of exogenous and indigenous thinking must be developed in response to local security imperatives.

Heidi Hudson's superbly researched *A Feminist Reading of Security in Africa* not only offers an alternative vision of security in Africa through the lens of gender, but also presents an inclusive vision of global security representative of the rich tapestry of experiences of both men and women. In her response, Virginia Gamba emphasises the fact that feminist thought never existed in isolation from the mainstream of security thinking, and that women have made a fundamental impact on the changing character of security concerns world-wide. Gamba also notes that, in many societies, religion and culture often legitimise structures of male supremacy.

It is hoped that Maxi van Aardt's excellent *The Application of the New Security Agenda for Southern Africa* will stimulate the debate between academics and practitioners, especially since she raises some pertinent questions, such as the implications of the apparent 'retreat' of military security for creating and maintaining broad security. In her incisive rejoinder, Marie Muller notes how globalisation is impacting on political thinking and convincingly argues for an integrated approach to security and development.

## **FROM MARGINALISED TO DOMINANT DISCOURSE: REFLECTIONS ON THE EVOLUTION OF NEW SECURITY THINKING**

***Hussein Solomon***

### **INTRODUCTION**

As the twentieth century draws to a close, traditional threats to security have receded, while newer non-traditional threats ethnic conflict, religious fundamentalism, small arms proliferation, mass migration, environmental degradation, and narco-trafficking have surfaced. This has raised questions regarding the conceptual suitability of traditional military-centred paradigms to the new realities. This article examines the historical development of the new security agenda, assesses the criticism levelled against it and analyses its impact on policy.

### **FROM SUN TZU TO BARRY BUZAN**

Traditionally, security was almost exclusively focused on states and military concerns.<sup>1</sup> In this way, the concept came to refer to 'national security' and was synonymous with 'defence'. This Clausewitzian conceptualisation of security is clearly evident in the following definition by Ian Bellamy: "*Security itself is a relative freedom from war, coupled with a relatively high expectation that defeat will not be a consequence of any war that should occur.*"<sup>2</sup> Bellamy's rather narrow view is echoed by Giacomo Luciani who commented that, "[n]ational security may be defined as *the ability to withstand aggression from abroad.*"<sup>3</sup> As such, the study of security in the post-1945 period was dominated by concepts such as 'containment', 'deterrence', 'flexible response', 'massive retaliation', 'balance of power', 'mutually assured destruction' (MAD), and an overarching concern with nuclear strategy.<sup>4</sup>

This is not to say that there were no alternative voices to be heard that challenged this predominantly military-centred paradigm, one which, it could be argued, has dominated strategic discourse from the time of Sun Tzu, almost 2 500 years ago! As early as 1705, the German philosopher Leibniz expressed the need for the state to provide common security (*la sécurité commune*) to its citizens, and the French philosopher, Montesquieu noted that true political freedom could only occur when people are secure.<sup>5</sup> Both philosophers put the security of individuals ahead of the security of states.

In 1950, the political scientist Harold Lasswell passionately argued for a broader conceptualisation of security, "*... all measures which are proposed in the name of national security do not necessarily contribute to the avowed end ... Our greatest security lies in the best balance of all instruments of foreign policy, and hence in the co-ordinated handling of arms, diplomacy, information, and economics; and in the proper correlation of all measures of foreign and domestic policy.*"<sup>6</sup> Lasswell's views were reinforced by Robert McNamara, the former United States Secretary of State, who pleaded for less of a military-political focus on security in 1968. This was later echoed by Galtung's reference to "*... four highly credible, but also totally avoidable threats to our existence on earth war, hunger, repression and eco-disaster.*"<sup>7</sup>

Despite these dissident voices, the juggernaut of military-centred security studies continued to hold sway. One possible reason that could account for the effective marginalisation of voices appealing for a more holistic understanding of security could be that the fear of nuclear annihilation was so overwhelming that all else paled into insignificance. This is a view certainly subscribed to by former US President Dwight Eisenhower when he declared: "*... with both sections of this divided world in possession of unbelievably destructive weapons, mankind approaches a state where mutual annihilation becomes a possibility. No other fact of today's world equals this in importance it colours everything we say, plan and do.*"<sup>8</sup>

The dominance of this traditional paradigm was not to last, however. Changes in the strategic environment in the 1970s necessitated a reconsideration of conventional understandings of security. According to Carim,<sup>9</sup> five factors laid the foundations for a 'devaluation of the military's currency'. These were:

- the beginnings of *détente* between the superpowers in the early 1970s as exemplified by the signing of the **Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty** (SALT 1) in 1972;
- the American experience in Vietnam which exposed the limits of imposing military solutions on certain types of conflict;
- the financial costs of this campaign in conjunction with world economic recession which fuelled a deleterious inflationary spiral;
- America's economic decline relative to Japan and the European Economic Community (EEC) who were competing more successfully in international markets; and
- the quadrupling of oil prices by the Organisation of Oil Exporting Countries (OPEC) in the 1970s which sent shock waves throughout the global economy and exposed the West's external dependence on strategic resources. This was important for another reason as well: it underlined the reality of economic interdependence within the context of a globalising world.

These developments, together with the emergence of the information super-highway, made

ordinary people more aware of the serious threat that famine, economics, and the like, hold to individual and social well-being. In her book, **The Planned Miracle**,<sup>10</sup> June Goodfield notes how a combination of poverty, famine and disease makes the destruction of Hiroshima small by comparison: "*The atom bomb on Hiroshima killed 180,000 people; every three days a silent Hiroshima occurs in childhood deaths. Globally, children are dying at somewhere near the rate of 270,000 per week, 14 million a year; 217 million will not reach their fifth birthday; one death in every three in the world today is the death of a child.*"

These tectonic shifts in the global security landscape shook the very edifice of the dominant paradigm as Americans were forced to concede that threats to their national security also stemmed from a flagging economy. This new concern regarding the economic dimensions of security is perhaps best captured in the definition of security by William Blair, then Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs, who told the US Congress in 1972, "*Our national security today depends on things like balance of payments, economic affairs, foreign assistance ...*"<sup>11</sup> The mere acceptance of the economic dimensions of security by the establishment served to bolster those marginalised voices calling for a widening of the security agenda. Thus, the events of the 1970s effectively opened the sluice gates for further criticism of the dominant paradigm.

One of the first to take advantage of these changing circumstances was the so-called 'alternative security school'. The thrust of this approach crystallised in response to Ronald Reagan's 'Evil Empire' and the arms race which it engendered. According to this train of thought, more arms did not mean more security more specifically, more nuclear weapons did not result in a safer planet. In this, the school's work was inspired by the intellectual tradition of John Herz who, in the early 1950s, introduced the idea of the 'security dilemma', "*... a structural notion in which the self-help attempts of states to look after their security needs tend, regardless of intentions, to lead to rising insecurity for others as each interprets its own measures as defensive, and the measures of others as potentially threatening.*"<sup>12</sup>

Herz's theoretical insights found practical expression in the work of the alternative security school which introduced the radical notion of 'security interdependence' to the strategic discourse. According to this notion, "*Western security was intimately related to that of the Soviet Union and vice versa; modern weaponry had created an objective security interdependence. This meant that it was necessary for the West, for example, to recognise the fact that increases in Soviet weaponry did not necessarily improve Western security. The reverse was also true.*"<sup>13</sup> This rather abstract notion was given concrete expression in concepts such as arms control and non-offensive defence. The notion of security interdependence rapidly gained support under the banner of common security. For example, the 1982 Palme Commission provided political support to the idea of common security, arguing that "*... states can no longer obtain security at each other's expense, but only through co-operative efforts.*"<sup>14</sup>

The concept of security interdependence of the 1980s was developed further by scholars like Paul Kennedy, Pierre Lizée and Sorpong Peou in the 1990s. They argued that the emergence of transnational security threats, such as drought, narco-trafficking and pollution, necessitated transnational or collective responses.<sup>15</sup> Thus, Kennedy notes: "*In this larger and more integrated sense, 'national' security becomes increasingly inseparable from 'international' security.*"<sup>16</sup> The notions of common or collective security, of course, progressed from the earlier thinking of 'complex interdependence' scholars such as Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye.<sup>17</sup>

It would be wrong to assume, however, that these debates were only confined to the security discourse of the West. Ideas of common security had already entered the discourse of the

Politburo of the Soviet Union during the eighties.<sup>18</sup> It was motivated in large part by Mikhail Gorbachev's understanding that the Soviet economy could not sustain a new arms race and that the superpower stand-off needed to be addressed decisively. Carim<sup>19</sup> puts it this way: *"In conjunction with his domestic policies of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring) which aimed to revive the Soviet political and economic system, Gorbachev galvanised the process of détente by proceeding with unilateral Soviet disarmament and by urging a series of arms control agreements."*

Thus, the 1990s witnessed the rapid demilitarisation of superpower relations. One aspect of the demilitarisation was the knock-on effect it had on International Relations scholars such as Barry Buzan and Ken Booth. The result was the questioning of fundamentals: what is security, whose security, and security from which threats?<sup>20</sup>

In determining whose security needs to be addressed, Booth noted that the problem with traditional security perspectives was that it equated security exclusively with state security.<sup>21</sup> The problem with this perspective, as Buzan<sup>22</sup> rightly argued, was that state security was often purchased at the expense of human security, specifically in the dictatorships of the developing world. In practice, it meant making people the primary referent of security as opposed to the state, and implied that the security of the people had to be focused on. Thus, new security thinking increasingly paid attention to what has been termed 'human security' as opposed to traditional state-centric approaches. According to the **Bonn Declaration** of 1991, human security is *"... the absence of threat to human life, lifestyle and culture through the fulfilment of basic needs."*<sup>23</sup> This definition, in turn, has also been informed by feminist contributions to new security thinking which strongly argue that there is a need for 'care' to be incorporated into any security discourse. This seeks to place the security concerns of the ordinary man and woman on the street at the very core of any security strategy.<sup>24</sup>

One of the practical consequences of talking about human security as opposed to state security, or making people the primary referent of security, is that it becomes possible to identify threats to human security at subnational, national and transnational levels.<sup>25</sup> The focus on human security reinforced the broadening of the security agenda to include non-military threats. According to Buzan,<sup>26</sup> the security of human collectivities are affected by threats emanating from five sectors: military, political, economic, social and environmental. These insights have resulted in a radical revision of traditional definitions of security. Today, most definitions are wider and tend to complement the definition of human security given above. For instance, Richard Ullman's definition of security is conceptually more suitable to contemporary reality than most traditional ones: *"... a threat to national security is an action or sequence of events that (1) threatens drastically and over a brief time span to degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state, or (2) threatens significantly to narrow the range of policy choices available to the government of a state or to private nongovernmental entities (persons, groups, corporations)."*<sup>27</sup>

## FROM MARGINALISED TO DOMINANT DISCOURSE

To be sure, the new security agenda did not go unchallenged by those who sought to retain security's traditionally narrow military and state-centric approach. These critics argued that the broader the concept of security, the fuller, and potentially unmanageable, the threat agenda will become. But Ken Booth levels several counter-arguments against this criticism and it is useful to quote his response in some length.

*"First, it must be conceded that broadening the concept does greatly widen the agenda. So what? This is what the political process is all about: making choices between competing*

*demands. Bureaucratically, the implementation of security does not have to be dealt with by the same ministry, just as 'defence' has a land, sea and air component and 'foreign policy' has diplomatic, strategic and commercial aspects. So, while the security agenda should be broadened, it need not become unmanageable. Second, to leave the agenda narrowly defined by military considerations will leave security advice narrowly dominated by military specialists. There will be times when this is justifiable, since there will be times when the military threat deserves special consideration and there is a particular urgency to military threats. Ever since the time of Thomas Hobbes but in reality earlier security has been the primary obligation of governments. To place an item on the security agenda is therefore to raise its profile. If we are serious about human rights, economic development, the lot of women ... then we must simply accept the problems of an expanded agenda and of the need to settle the question of priorities in the political process. To control the agenda, up to a point is to control policy. Yes, an expanded agenda is by definition potentially more unmanageable: but one needs to ask why somebody wants certain issues such as human rights off that agenda? And why do they want to privilege [military] threats?"<sup>28</sup>*

Despite these criticisms, the proponents of the new security agenda seem to have weathered the storm and have come to dominate the current security discourse. This is perhaps best illustrated by the way in which this new approach to security has revolutionised the discipline of Strategic Studies. Commenting on the relationship between security and Strategic Studies, Carim notes that the "*... the concept of security is central to Strategic Studies in much the same way that power is central to Politics and wealth is central to Economics; that is, they are inextricably linked, but conceptually distinct.*"<sup>29</sup>

Traditionally, Strategic Studies has been dominated by a military understanding of security. Evans and Newnham<sup>30</sup> define classical Strategic Studies as "*... the field of inquiry that is concerned to examine the ways in which actors use their military capabilities to achieve political goals, in particular, with the way in which the threat and use of force has served these ends. It is sometimes referred to as the Clausewitzian tradition after the nineteenth century Prussian strategist who did so much to advance the symbiosis between war and state policy ... Strategic Studies has been primarily concerned with military power as the key attribute which has to be converted into usable instruments.*"

Strategic Studies' lopsided emphasis on military prowess at the expense of non-military security threats has opened it to criticism from those who argued that its substance needs to be informed by the debates around the widening of the concept of security. John Chipman, the Director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) argued that, "*Strategic Studies has been dominated by perversion and has resulted in a blinkered perspective which is unable to foresee, explain or even understand sources of threat other than those emanating from military confrontation.*"<sup>31</sup>

The dominance of new security thinking is also illustrated by the fact that members of the IISS were called upon to change a key text of their Constitution at an Extraordinary General Meeting in 1992. They had to approve the following:

*"The object for which the Institute is established is to promote on a non-party basis the study and discussion of an exchange of information upon any major security issues including without limitation those of a political, strategic, economic, social or ecological nature."*

The original version read:

*"The object for which the Institute is established is to promote on a non-party basis the study and discussion of and the exchange of information upon the influence of modern and nuclear weapons of warfare upon the problems of strategy, defence disarmament and international relations."*<sup>32</sup>

In a similar vein, the Institute for Defence Policy changed its name to the Institute for Security Studies in January 1997, thereby reflecting its acceptance of the broader vision of security. Its mission statement also reflected this change by noting that it aims to *"enhance human security in Africa."*

This has resulted in a radical change in the substance of Strategic Studies to include small-arms proliferation, narco-trafficking and organised crime, mass migration, economic insecurity, ethnicity, religious fundamentalism, and regional power clientelism.<sup>33</sup>

But the impact of new security thinking has not been confined to the theoretical discourse: it has also had a tremendous influence on policy-makers. In addressing a conference in Tanzania, the Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Salim Ahmed Salim, noted the changes in Southern Africa from the 1980s to the present as it related to the Frontline States: *"In security terms, the objective was to defend against colonial aggression and apartheid destabilisation. Now that circumstances have so radically changed, the first task must be to rethink security, to redefine the security needs and to elaborate a new defence doctrine. While in the past, the views and efforts of the Frontline States found common ground in the task of liberation, we should now find a new basis for common security moving from confrontation to co-operation in Southern Africa. This common security must be one in which all find relevance and which is holistic in scope, embracing the non-traditional areas such as social and economic domains."*<sup>34</sup>

The ideas of common security and a widening security agenda have also found practical expression in the five main subregional organisations in Africa. These are the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the east; the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the west; the Maghreb Union (UMA) in the north; the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in the south; and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) representing the Central African region.<sup>35</sup> Each of the subregional groupings began with a focus on development issues, but slowly took on security functions. This underscores the reality of the intimate relationship between security and development. After all, in cases where there is civil unrest, it is difficult to attract foreign investor capital. This, in turn, has negative implications for development. Some examples of these subregional organisations engaging in a security role which come to mind, is that of ECOWAS troops attempting to keep the peace in Liberia, or IGAD pursuing a peaceful settlement to the ongoing Somali crisis. This complements the role of other subregional, largely development-oriented organisations in the developing world obliged to undertake a security function. Both Latin America and Asia bear this out. In Latin America, MERCOSUR (the Southern Market) was compelled to intervene in the border war between Ecuador and Peru in February 1995. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was also forced to engage in a peacekeeping function during the Cambodian civil war.

The new security agenda has also found its way into the Southern African security discourse. For example, at a meeting of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security in Gaborone in January 1996, the respective ministers noted that one of the main objectives of the Organ is *"... to promote the political, economic, social and environmental dimensions of security."*<sup>36</sup>

An holistic approach to security has also informed the policies of the South African government. In an address to the United Nations, President Nelson Mandela said: *"It is ... true that hundreds of millions of politically empowered masses are caught in the deathly trap of poverty, unable to live life in its fullness. Out of this are born social conflicts which produce insecurity and instability, civil and other wars that claim many lives and millions of desperate refugees ... Out of this cauldron are also born tyrants, dictators and demagogues ..."*<sup>37</sup>

In the same vein, the South African Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad criticised narrow military-centred perceptions of security and argued that the following issues should also be included:

- the promotion of human rights, democracy and good governance;
- sustainable economic development for the sake of the political, economic and social well-being of all the people of Southern Africa;
- constructive and mutually beneficial interaction between SADC and the rest of Africa;
- the protection of the environment, the prohibition of arms proliferation, the control of arms, arms smuggling, drug trafficking, refugees and displaced soldiers, mass migration, drought and other natural disasters;
- ethnic conflicts; and
- territorial claims.<sup>38</sup>

New security thinking has also emerged in the South African Department of Defence's **White Paper on Defence** which explicitly states: *"In the new South Africa national security is no longer viewed as a predominantly military and police problem. It has been broadened to incorporate political, economic, social and environmental matters. At the heart of this new approach is a paramount concern with the security of people."*<sup>39</sup>

The widening of the security agenda has also had a positive impact on the role of the armed forces in the changing global security landscape. Consider, in this regard, the various tasks the military has performed more recently. In Austria, the army is used for the construction of anti-avalanche 'breaks', the stabilising of ski ropes and the development of alternative energy sources (solar and water). In Bulgaria and Cuba, soldiers are used to plant trees and to create national parks and nature reserves in their military localities. A similar situation exists in Finland where commanders of each military district are responsible for the environmental welfare in their areas. In South Africa, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) is used to support police operations against crime and to curb the influx of illegal immigrants into the country. In France, the Navy is used to minimise pollution at sea. In Italy, the army has set up the Geographical Military Institute for the study of seismic cartography of the soil, tectonic (rock) modifications, movement of the earth's crust and subsidence. In Jordan, the army is used to combat locust invasions.<sup>40</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The above serves as a brief overview of the historical evolution of the concept of security from a narrow, military-centred focus to a wider, more holistic approach. This overview has not presented 'new security thinking' in all its complexity and subtle nuances. This does not mean

that 'new security thinking' is monolithic or homogenous. Rather, it is a rich and varied tradition with its proponents differing just as heatedly from each other as they differ from supporters of the more traditional paradigm. Their opposing views include, among others, the viability of the nation-state in an era of globalisation and the utility of force in a period where the greatest security threats relate to non-military sources of insecurity, such as famine and disease. Despite these differences, however, all proponents of the 'new security thinking' are united in their criticism of traditional military-centred paradigms as being inappropriate for the challenges we face as we approach the dawn of a new millennium.

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## RESPONSE

### **Professor Anton du Plessis**

The notion of paradigmatic change, in the words of Brown, "... *has become one of the great clichés of contemporary academe, certainly among social scientists* ..." <sup>1</sup> Within the ambit of Political Science this observation is applicable to security in particular, in as much as it is generally contended that so-called 'new security thinking' represents a definitive paradigm shift. Irrespective of the prevailing consensus, this is by no means an uncomplicated viewpoint that can be left unchallenged. Firstly, considering the large volume of seminal scholarly contributions on new strategic thinking on the one hand, and post-Cold War and post-apartheid security imperatives and subsequent policy responses of most countries including South Africa on the other as empirical referents, the notion of a paradigm shift is inadvertently (and perhaps

erroneously) accepted as self-evident and an objective truth. Arguably, it is a case of stating what is presently salient and obvious, thereby ignoring the fact that what is purported to be 'new' thinking in principle and often in reality since time immemorial has been a generic feature of security. What has changed is not so much the typical substance of security, but the context within which it becomes immanent and the level of salience of certain modalities. Even if the latter viewpoint is rejected, contemplate the fact that, although consensus on new security thinking applies in most cases, it is not universally accepted as a self-evident and applicable truth.

Secondly, considering the proliferation and abundance of contemporary writings on new security thinking, inclusive of the broadening and deepening of the concept and the setting of a new security agenda, the notion has become a virtual truism and has been repeated so often in academic and professional circles that it hardly bears repeating. Conceding to the fact that a paradigmatic shift has indeed occurred, new security thinking has constituted the cognitive framework for 'normal' science (and policy-making) in most cases during the last decade, at least. Hence 'new' thinking has in fact become a 'traditional' or 'old' way of thinking; the 'new' paradigm has become the 'traditional' paradigm. As such, the need for repeating an exercise juxtaposing 'former/old' and 'recent/new' thinking, can rightly be questioned. Perhaps a prospective approach would be more appropriate; one that specifically considers the direction of current trends and transition that challenge, modify and transcend the present paradigms. In this respect, 'recent or new thinking' ought to become 'recent or new directions', more specifically focusing on the need for and the development of (preferably indigenous and autonomous) security thinking of the South.

Thirdly, security has always been an ambiguous and highly contested concept. No universally accepted definition exists and it would be an exercise in futility to even consider the possibility of attempting to produce one. Although lexical and stipulative definitions of a divergent nature abound, real definitions pertaining to the essence of security can neither escape the confines of normative preferences and prescriptions as determined by ideology and, in the case of academics and researchers, by preferred scientific paradigms, nor the empirical constraints of the particular time framework, situational context and dominant actor (unit of analysis) involved. The exclusivity of the 'old' concept of security, or for that matter its present inclusivity, has mostly been the product of exogenous factors rather than its intrinsic nature. Hence, recent changes in conceptualising security mirror changes in the strategic milieu to a far greater extent than they actually reflect changes in respect of the concept's intrinsic nature and real meaning.

The above by no means implies that the consideration of recent changes in thinking about security is without merit. Although not specifically framed as such, the overview at hand addresses three fundamental questions on thinking about security, namely 'what', 'why' and 'how'. Without repeating what has been stated, the following is worth mentioning. In respect of the question, What is security?, it is quite rightly pointed out that what is purportedly 'new', has in principle never been excluded from the notion of security. What does this point to? In a sense it is a case of 'old wine in new bottles' but without, on the one hand, conceptualising recent changes in the dichotomous zero sum or 'either/or' dynamics (either military or non-military), but rather viewing it in the context of positive sum or 'more/less of' dynamics (more of the one, less of the other modality); and without, on the other hand, raising the conceptualisation to such a high level of abstraction that it becomes delinked from the reality or generalising it to such an extent that it becomes trite.

In respect of the question, Why the recent changes?, the interrelatedness of environmental change (operational and psychological) and security is emphasised. What is evident, is that this

has less to do with the evolution of the security concept as such, and more with changes in the strategic milieu, more specifically changes in the post-Cold War, post-apartheid security environment. An extensive analysis of historical parallels provide ample proof that, in fact, very few 'new' security issues can be correlated with 'new thinking', perhaps even none at all. It is rather a case of a resurgence or a rise in the salience of 'old' issues; moot cases in point being ethnicity (ethnic nationalism), religious fundamentalism, resource scarcity, etc. Also implied is the assumption that the recent changes in security thinking do not represent breakpoint or sea change as such, but rather incremental, evolutionary adaptation to parametric change in key systemic variables such as individual skills, orientations and expectations, authority relations, and the structural features of the international system.

In respect of the question, How are the recent changes operationalised?, the problem of bureaucratic politics and the importance of comprehensive, collective, multidimensional approaches to, and the institutionalised, non-coercive use of military means and other pacific instruments for the management of threats and insecurity, are emphasised. What this points to is the fact that recent changes in security thinking are not only cognitive responses to a turbulent and variable strategic milieu, but that they also represent assertive attempts to put ideas and ideals into practice. Hence, the interrelatedness of and the reciprocal interaction between theory and practice, ideals and policy, and the academic analyst and the professional, receive adequate recognition. What is in effect implied, is that the actual significance lies in the challenge levelled by these changes predominantly at the level of the policy-maker and the policy-making process.

Although the approach to and the substance of this overview are not really to be faulted, these have to be taken further in future discourses. This advance pertains to two levels of thinking. Firstly, it relates to the level of abstraction and generalisation: what is held to be universally true in respect of security thinking, ought to find expression in a more specific and particular context that relates to the South and to South Africa. If the particular eventually runs contrary to the universal, and justifiably so, the inverse applies and new directions in the universal ought to be reconsidered. Secondly, it relates to the operationalisation of what is conceptualised as new security thinking. Although this has been pointed out in the overview, the policy dimensions ought to be reconsidered with the purposive inclusion of lateral and innovative ideas. Hence, it is argued that the policy dimensions and expressions of new security thinking in Africa, Southern Africa and South Africa, represent an exportation and transplantation of Western-centric notions. Although the Western concept of security is regarded as useful in explaining the security problems faced by the developing world,<sup>2</sup> an assertive attempt at providing it with an indigenous content and even its 'Africanisation', could be considered.

How should new directions in alternative security thinking be approached? In other words, what should recent changes in South African security thinking reflect? It is by no means propagated that an antithesis is required to what is traditionally regarded as new security thinking, but rather that a synthesis of exogenous and indigenous thinking must be developed in response to local security imperatives. Admittedly, present security policies at a continental, regional, subregional and local level represent an attempt at this (as has been indicated in the overview), but the question as to whether this process can be advanced, remains unanswered. What is proposed, focusing on the fact that South Africa is an African state and a member of the South in the first instance, is a search for key variables. Based on ideas propounded by Ayoob,<sup>3</sup> and using South Africa in its Southern African and African context as a point of reference, a different set of questions is proposed (although some of these aspects, admittedly, have been included in the overview). With reference to security, these questions relate to 'whose', 'from whom', 'what' and 'why'.

In respect of the question, Whose security?, the unit(s) of security should firstly be adequately identified, since this has a distinct bearing on different conceptual interpretations. The units include the individual, subgroups (ethnic, interest or marginalised), the nation, the state (including or excluding the government), the region and the world as a whole. Although this poses no real problem, the major problem lies in determining the primacy of a particular unit or units. Considering the imperative of state-making and nation-building facing most of the countries of the South, including South Africa, the primacy of the state prevails. This, of course, enhances the prevalence of everything that is traditionally associated with 'old' security thinking. The imperatives of justice and development force the primacy issue in the opposite direction. Furthermore, the focus of security modalities and commonalties should first and foremost be directed at South Africa, Southern Africa and Africa as the immediate security environment, without excluding interdependence with the non-regional environment, albeit as a more geostrategic system.

In respect of the question, Security from whom (or what?), the approach that is firstly required is to shift the emphasis from the idealistic, positive notion of security to the pragmatic, negative concept of insecurity, since the latter explicitly addresses sources of and threats to security, as well as the insecurity dilemma facing the unit(s) of security. As an ideal condition or situation, security represents a normative end-goal; as a pragmatic imperative, insecurity represents an empirical challenge. In several works on developing world security, the emphasis has already shifted to insecurity.<sup>4</sup> This approach does not shed so much light on the 'newness' or the 'originality' of the sources of and threats to insecurity, as on its situational context and on the particular characteristics of the security of the South.<sup>5</sup> Emanating from the latter, the range of issues and dimensions of insecurity can be identified and categorised according to their internal, regional and extra-regional nature and scope, as well as to their functional (political, military, social, etc.) nature and scope. The variable (non-hierarchical, non-fixed) nature of the agenda, the cross-cutting nature of issues and their multidimensional impact, however, should not be ignored.

Apart from the issues and dimensions of security normally associated with new strategic thinking, more consideration can be given

- at an internal level to the problems emanating from state-making and nation-building such as legitimacy, capacity to govern, social compacts between different groups in society, democratic necessity, and the problem of political succession;
- at a regional level, to the problems emanating from concurrent state-making and nation-building by contiguous and proximate states, such as overlapping territorial and demographic claims, disjuncture and fundamental contradictions between (competing) state ideologies, the favourable balance of power in the region, the role of pivotal power(s) in the region, security regime-building and scenarios relating to regional restabilisation, break-up or peripheralisation; and
- at an extra-regional level, to the problems generated by the policies of major powers, by the overlap and reciprocal interaction of the different levels, in as much as they constitute a 'boundary' problem, by increasing globalisation, by intervention, by marginalisation, and by the impact of continuous parametric change in the international system.

The significance of these issues and dimensions is that they emphasise the continued relevance and primacy of the state in world politics and of enduring modalities normally associated with

so-called 'old' security thinking.

In respect of the question, What strategies and measures must be followed to ensure the security of what one is trying to secure?, the major approaches and means have been indicated in the overview. What can be considered is the indigenisation of transferred security thinking, as well as the enhancement of the present salience of multilateral peace-oriented responses to insecurity, that is matched responses to the problems created by threats to and breaches of security in the form of peacebuilding, peace maintenance, peace restoration and peace enforcement strategies. These strategies and their corresponding instruments do not stand apart from, but form part of the new directions in security thinking.

In respect of the question, Why the need for a discourse on security?, the answer lies in both the normative and the empirical domains. Whereas the latter is usually emphasised as a matter of course with reference to the use of the concept of security as a political tool in respect of the well-known features, processes and outcomes of security policy-making as such (which require no repeating) the former is often ignored or underemphasised. More debate should occur on and more attention should be paid to the normative modalities of new directions in security thinking, with the inclusion of aspects such as ethical concerns, nascent norms, and the normative assessment of policy prescriptions and outcomes. The impression often exists that these matters stand apart from security thinking. Hence, their inclusion ought to be reiterated with particular reference to competing perspectives of order, justice and change.

In as much as the above questions relate to practice in particular, it suffices to conclude with the following general comments on the theoretical utility, thus on the practical use of the concept of security. Firstly, in rethinking security and in generating a (re)vision of the security of the South, the descriptive, explanatory and predictive value of the concept should be carefully considered for its applicability to theory-building, and hypothesis formulation and testing. Secondly, the problem of competing perspectives or paradigms (e.g. realism, pluralism, globalism or structuralism, feminism etc.) should preferably be bridged or accommodated. This in itself presents a value choice denoting particular ideological or political preferences. Hence, the dominant security discourse not only pertains to the policy predicaments as exemplified by recent changes in security thinking, but also to several academic challenges levelled at scholars, researchers and analysts alike. Where the academic fraternity is involved, the demands of science and the search for scientific knowledge will constitute an inseparable part of the security debate. In this respect, academic pursuits should not only reflect practice, but should also direct, guide and even transform and change it.

It would be short-sighted to reflect only upon the state of recent changes in security thinking. To quote Klare and Thomas, "... *we must change how we think about the nature and the pursuit of security* ..." <sup>6</sup> Perhaps, this is where the eventual value of the overview resides. Similar to collectivities, individuals do matter in world politics. It is thus imperative to give cognisance to the way in which individuals think about security. In conclusion, in the context of the South and South Africa in particular, new directions in thinking about security should also include the notion of meaningful development if it is to contribute to order and justice in a society amidst change.

## ENDNOTES

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5. For a discussion of these aspects, see among others: Thomas, op. cit., pp. 94 - 96.
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## A FEMINIST READING OF SECURITY AGENDA FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

*Dr Heidi Hudson*

*"Stories afterwards, however, said that Nnu Ego was a wicked woman even in death because, however many people appealed to her to make women fertile, she never did. Poor Nnu Ego, even in death she had no peace! Still many agreed that she had given all to her children. The joy of being a mother was the joy of giving all to your children, they said.*

*And her reward? Did she not have the greatest funeral Ibuza had ever seen? It took Oshia three years to pay off the money he had borrowed to show the world what a good son he was. ... for what else could a woman want but to have sons who would give her a decent burial?*

*Nnu Ego had it all ..."*

*The Joys of Motherhood*, Buchi Emecheta <sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

She had it all, but was she secure? The irony of this poignant tale about the life of one African woman epitomises the deadlock with which many women in the contemporary developing world are confronted. But so what? The answer to this question lies embedded in the changing nature of how we view human security.

The demise of the Cold War has forced analysts to redraw the boundaries of the security discourse by allowing variables, other than the military, to enter the intellectual fray. In addition

to the struggle to translate these theoretical insights into practice, a thorough understanding of the challenges of a new world order is hampered by the legacy of male-dominated security thinking, which seldom, if ever, reflects on the implications of a gendered perspective.

The purpose of this article is not only to offer an alternative vision of security through the lens of gender, but also to present a view of global security as being representative of a whole range of experiences, including those of women who constitute more than half of the world's population. The inclusion of gender in the analysis further aims to highlight the saliency of security issues in the South. Nowhere more than in Africa is the security of all people linked to the security of the women of the continent.

It will be argued, firstly, that the current security framework with its acceptance of multi-level and multi-dimensional principles of security errs in the sense that it holds up a false holism. An increased sensitivity to the so-called 'marginalised' without openly acknowledging women's specific gendered security needs defeats all claims to total inclusivity. Women's security must first be examined in terms of their gender roles before comprehensive human security demands can be met. Ideally, an holistic approach to security should reflect a synthesis or reconstruction of the different levels and dimensions of human security, and it is precisely here that a feminist conceptualisation of security in the 1990s can make a contribution. The feminist perspective is highly critical of the masculinist underpinnings of a state-centric approach and offers theoretical insights as well as practical mechanisms on how a fusion of masculine and feminine values may serve the goals of human security over and above those of the state.

Decentralised, more interdependent ways of solving conflict coupled with a gender sensitivity could go a long way towards creating a security community based on a common understanding of peace and security. In order to facilitate such a process, feminist notions of security must be integrated into the mainstream discourse and not merely tacked on. Secondly, it is argued that an holistic feminist definition of security is particularly appropriate to the security concerns of the developing world. In Africa, for instance, where the linkages between physical security and political, socio-economic, cultural and environmental threats are part of everyday life, a feminist perspective can elicit serious debate on how meeting women's security needs may work towards 'curing' many of the ailing continent's 'aches and pains'. The parallels in terms of the inequality between the position of women and the position of the developing world in the global system, plus the dire need for some kind of transformation are too obvious to ignore any longer.

From a methodological point of view, a feminist epistemology has the potential to raise consciousness, and through the use of 'gender' as a social organising principle,<sup>2</sup> women's disadvantages are placed in context. A connection is made between the all-pervasiveness of gender and the ubiquitous nature of human insecurity. The reader is reminded that an holistic or broadly integrative approach to security, though ideal, also runs the risk of presenting a closure. Holism as an intellectual framework may be counterproductive if unity or harmony is elevated at the expense of difference. The presentation of security in this article along the lines of four 'types of security' or diagnostic categories, must therefore be seen as part of a "*fractious holism*"<sup>3</sup> wherein interdependence does not necessarily imply equality and stability. On the contrary, the tolerance of identity in difference should be that which shapes the identity of a truly secure community.

The case for a feminist reading of contemporary security starts with brief surveys of the changes to the security concept and an outline of feminism as a multidisciplinary project. The contribution of feminism as an intellectual enterprise is analysed and evaluated in terms of four conventional dimensions of security, namely political, socio-economic, military, and environmental. This is

followed by a feminist examination of the state of women's security in Africa. The same analytical categories are employed. In doing so, the prospects for a secure continent are also highlighted.

## NEW SECURITY CONCEPT

International relations theorists, Strategic Studies scholars and peace researchers alike have had to come to terms with a global paradigm shift in how security, peace, conflict, war and politics are viewed in the post-Cold War era. Realists and neo-realists have been criticised for their fragmented and narrow preoccupation with the sovereign state, state power and national security as the primary referents of security; and idealists, though claiming to have taken a far more holistic view of the subject, have yet to come up with a widely acceptable alternative to the state-centric international system.

From the seventies onwards, the effects of the so-called 'security dilemma' have been increasingly questioned. Unilateral military action was no longer adequate to protect a state and its people. Global interdependencies in the technological age and common problems which transcend national borders made the notion of 'common security' imperative. The principle of common security also proved to be the catalyst for the convergence of idealist and realist agendas, the synergy between Strategic and Peace Studies and the subsequent broadening of their scope in the 1980s.<sup>4</sup>

The conceptualisation of security in military terms thus proved to be inadequate for the following reasons. Firstly, it not only exacerbated military insecurity through the security dilemma, but also completely ignored non-military sources of insecurity. Secondly, a military definition of security confined the debate to the realms of the developed (Western) world and negated the consequences for the majority of the world's population: those living in the developing world.<sup>5</sup> A rejuvenated, reconceptualised understanding of security therefore necessitated a more holistic and comprehensive approach, by means of which the security needs of all human beings could be met.

Leading International Relations scholars such as Barry Buzan<sup>6</sup> and Ken Booth,<sup>7</sup> provide useful theoretical frameworks for the analysis of a multidimensional and multilevel security agenda. Ken Booth recommends a redefinition of security in terms of a broadening of the concept both horizontally and vertically. On the horizontal axis, security is seen as dependent on:

- political democracy and a culture of human rights;
- social and economic development;
- environmental sustainability, as well as
- military stability.<sup>8</sup>

In this regard, Buzan identifies five 'sectors' or typologies of security, namely political, social, economic, environmental and military, which serve as analytical tools or "*ordering priorities ... woven together in a strong web of linkages*."<sup>9</sup> Buzan's vertical hierarchy of analytical levels, namely the individual, the state, the regional subsystem and the international system<sup>10</sup> enables us to see how the objects of security have evolved to include non-state actors, from the individual to the global level, where people should be the primary referent of security. In this context, state or national security is then redefined to encompass human security.

Notwithstanding the dramatic global changes, in practice the state still remains the dominant referent in international politics, as is also evident from the emphasis in Buzan's neorealist

definition of security where individual security is considered to be an important level of analysis, but subordinate to state and international security.<sup>11</sup> Sørensen argues that the principal problem in International Relations is not an exaggerated focus on the state, but rather a lack of analysis of the state and its development. General analyses of the international system and global civil society cannot do justice to the state as a complex and problematic entity. The state should therefore be recognised for what it is: "*the primary nexus when it comes to security for individuals and groups.*"<sup>12</sup> Such recognition, however, is marred by the fact that, particularly in the developing world, the state has often been (and still is) the root cause of insecurity among its people. Consequently, there is a real danger that the security of a regime or a social *élite*<sup>13</sup> could remain the focal point of the dominant discourse. It is therefore imperative that the broadening of the security concept should challenge the *status quo*.<sup>14</sup>

In this context, the nature of threats has undergone dramatic changes. External military threats to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state have been replaced by largely non-military threats such as:

- poverty;
- global inequality in the distribution of wealth between North and South;
- social injustice, human rights abuses;
- oppression; and
- ecological degradation.

In Africa, in particular, such threats manifest themselves as a myriad of interconnected relationships between political liberalisation and democratisation and a rise in crime, corruption, drugs and small arms trafficking; between failed attempts at democratisation and instilling a culture of human rights protection and the unwillingness of military *élites* to accept the primacy of civilian rule; between economic decline, debt and structural adjustment on the one hand, and poverty, scarcity of resources, population growth and migration on the other hand; as well as between migration, displacement of people, the rise of ethno-nationalism, disease and violence, to name but a few.

The transnational character of these threats not only has implications for the continued existence of the state as an actor in the global system, but also necessitates a fundamental re-examination of intrastate relations, i.e. society-state relationships. Questions arise as to whether the state should remain the sole provider of security to its people in a region where common threats necessitate common solutions. With this in mind, the objectives of security policy should be to pursue peace, democracy, development, social justice and environmental protection. The key to the achievement of such noble ideals is a people-centred approach which addresses the root causes of human insecurity rather than its consequences.<sup>15</sup> Alternatives to state-centric solutions and security policies should therefore focus on sustainable human development with the emphasis on providing rather than maintaining security.

Human security defined as the absence of harm or threat to human life becomes a prerequisite for a condition of 'positive' peace, which is not only the absence of war (the so-called 'negative' peace), but also the existence of social justice. Such definitions, however, are far from unproblematic. Roberts<sup>16</sup> cautions against simplistic distinctions. He reminds us that no situation of positive peace can be absolutely just and he also reminds us that reality does not fit neatly into normative frameworks. Classifying violence as, for instance, structural violence (violence built into the system) may also provide an easy justification for the use of counter-violence in pursuing the goals of national liberation. Even Michael Howard's more traditional definition of peace as "*creating or maintaining a just order in society ... which is accepted as just by, if*

possible, all its members, and certainly by an overwhelming majority; a society in which conflicts can be resolved without violence or intimidation, by processes of law or reconciliation within a framework which is generally accepted by everybody..."<sup>17</sup> grapples with the implicit dilemma of reconciling order and justice. In the absence of majority acceptance, the rule of law and a strategy of non-violence cannot guarantee social order. At the same time, the maintenance of order, which is legitimised by majority consent, is not necessarily built upon democratic principles of justice.

Though recognising the difficulties inherent in the notion of 'positive' peace, women in the peace movement, as well as feminists have linked this concept with their understanding of peace and have insisted that security can no longer be measured in terms of the absence of war. In this respect, the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (1985) stated that "[p]eace includes not only the absence of war, violence and hostilities at the national and international levels but also the enjoyment of economic and social justice, equality and the entire range of human rights and fundamental freedoms within society."<sup>18</sup> This definition highlights key areas, such as structural violence and the linkage of violence at the personal and international level; economic and gender inequality; the denial of basic rights and freedoms; and the deliberate exploitation of large sectors of the population.<sup>19</sup> Despite the growing acceptance of a more ambitious security agenda, the formal and consistent inclusion of gender relations on the agenda remains as elusive as ever. More often than not gender is mentioned only as a by-product of the inclusion of economic and development issues, e.g. when referring to the plight of African women in agriculture. In the light of such *ad hoc* references to women's 'place' in the global order, the need for a truly inclusive re-examination of security becomes imperative. Klein suggests in this regard that "[i]t may well be that the most revitalizing intellectual force at work upon IR is coming from the many schools of thought that generally fall under the heading of 'Feminist Studies'. Particularly influential here are debates about the phallogentric quality of strategic discourse, the engendered nature of the development of the paradigm, and the patriarchal basis of the modern state."<sup>20</sup>

In conclusion then, it can be argued that the security concept has undergone substantial changes, but that these developments have not incorporated a feminist epistemology.

## FEMINISM REVISITED

In order to contextualise feminist theory and praxis on security issues, a brief survey of feminist scholarship in general is necessary.

In an ideological and disciplinary sense, feminist scholarship is far from monolithic, so much so that Maynard<sup>21</sup> suggests that we should rather speak of the existence of many feminisms. Their trans- or multidisciplinary character represents both the strength and the weakness of the feminist contribution a strength because feminist critiques draw on the diverse inputs of sociology, anthropology, psychology, political studies and language to name but a few; and a weakness because such diversity complicates the analysis of the feminist contribution to the security discourse. Yet, despite this state of affairs, it is still possible to identify certain common commitments. In the first instance, feminism puts women and the experiences of women at the centre of its theoretical and practical investigations.<sup>22</sup> Secondly, feminism is a critical project analysing or deconstructing the gender-biased *status quo*, concerning knowledge, claims and practices and then challenging these by means of a process of reconstruction: incorporating women's experiences and insights into a newly synthesised gender-sensitive theory of knowledge and power.<sup>23</sup> Peterson further adds that feminism is also critical in the sense that it engages in self-reflection on the meaning of feminism, woman and "the dangers of

*universalizing assumptions.*"<sup>24</sup> Thus, because of its rather explicit agenda for change, a feminist epistemology is normative, value laden, politicised, and essentially post-positivist.

George Ritzer's typology<sup>25</sup> of contemporary feminist theory assists us in making sense of the diverse feminist perspectives. He categorises the theories in terms of difference, inequality and oppression.

Theories of gender difference revolve, among others, around the fact that women's psychic life, values and interests, modes of value judgement, sense of identity, their relation to their biological offspring<sup>26</sup> and styles of play differ from those of men. These differences are explained on the basis of biological factors (e.g. hormones and women's naturally caring and nurturing instincts); institutional factors where a woman's distinct role as mother, wife and homemaker paves the way for the division in other spheres; and socio-psychological factors such as the effect of socialisation on accepting and internalising gender roles.<sup>27</sup>

Theories of gender inequality emphasise the fact that men and women are not only different, but also unequal in terms of the allocation of resources such as power, and the way in which society is organised. Consequently, women have fewer opportunities than men to satisfy their needs. This body of theory, however, does not ascribe any of these inequalities and/or differences to biology. Liberal feminism (a minority position among intellectuals, but vastly popular within mainstream American political beliefs because of its emphasis on careers for women and the elimination of discriminatory laws as the solution to the changing of sexist attitudes<sup>28</sup>) and Marxist feminism (which sees gender inequality as firmly rooted in the economic inequality of the capitalist class system<sup>29</sup>) form the two most prominent strands of the theory on gender inequality.

Power is the lens through which theories of gender oppression view society. According to this perspective, lack of access to power is not merely an accidental consequence of difference and inequality but rather premeditated and deliberate. Such a power relationship between men and women is maintained through 'patriarchy' which represents an ideology or basic structure of male supremacy in society.<sup>30</sup> Psychoanalytic feminism uses reworked Freudian theories to explain patriarchy and examines the question of why men deliberately sustain dominance and why women collaborate (either directly or indirectly) in their own subordination, i.e. why women are universally oppressed.<sup>31</sup> For feminist psychoanalysts, the answer to this question is buried in the subconscious psyche and emotional world where oppression originates.<sup>32</sup> Patriarchy is also the focal point of wrath for radical feminists, but they extend the analysis by linking patriarchy to the social practice of violence, i.e. violence against women.<sup>33</sup> Another theme which flows from the radical viewpoint is the politicisation of all social practices and relationships, even the private hence the slogan, "*the personal is political*."<sup>34</sup> Radical feminists seek fundamental social transformation rather than equity. Socialist feminism attempts to blend Marxist and radical critiques of women's inequality and oppression in order to produce a comprehensive explanation of female oppression as, emanating, for instance, from the patriarchal capitalist system.<sup>35</sup> This is also where the notion of standpoint feminism comes in. These feminists argue that the oppressed (women) are better equipped to understand the origins of their oppression than their oppressors (men).<sup>36</sup> The so-called 'Third Wave' feminists challenge the universalistic and monolithic concept of 'woman' and the myth of a common sisterhood. Black feminists, Third World feminists and lesbian feminists would argue that Western feminist developments have marginalised the black or 'other' experiences and elevated the white, middle-class heterosexual woman as the universal object of male oppression. Race, therefore, forms the basis of most of their analyses.<sup>37</sup> Barrett and Phillips<sup>38</sup> are of the opinion that this critique of Western feminism by black feminists has had a major impact on revitalising feminist discourse in the 1990s. In a

similar vein, post-modern feminists contend that to ignore the multiplicity of women's experiences across race, class and cultural lines, feminism runs the risk of essentialising the meaning of woman, thus reproducing similar modernist, hierarchical and totalising discourses such as patriarchy.<sup>39</sup> After all, as Stanley and Wise remark, "*the experience of 'women' is ontologically fractured and complex because we do not all share one single and unseamed material reality.*"<sup>40</sup>

The analysis of security presented in this article is influenced by the views of the radical non-western feminist school of thought. This perspective provides a useful analytical framework for understanding the causes of militarism in society and its link with violence against women, as it offers a fairly comprehensive explanation of women's oppression. A concomitant of this is the fact that radical feminists have done significant research to support the connection between patriarchy and violence against women.<sup>41</sup> However, radical feminism errs in the first place by focusing exclusively on patriarchy. Such grand narratives become problematic in the post-modernist era where universalised a-historical constructs have made room for a multiplicity of truths and plurality of oppressions, threats and/or insecurities. Women, like men, fulfil multiple roles in society, resulting in their social identities not being fixed, but context-bound. Secondly, some radical feminists display a tendency to follow a separatist approach to change by withdrawing into women's-only organisations and activities<sup>42</sup> in an attempt to challenge the patriarchal system. This, it could be argued, defeats the object of comprehensive security for all.

In its analysis of the security situation, feminist epistemology turned its attention to the discipline which traditionally claimed the inter- and intrastate security discourse of war, war prevention and dispute resolution as part of its intellectual make-up, namely International Relations (IR).

## **THE FEMINIST CRITIQUE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, STRATEGIC STUDIES AND PEACE STUDIES**

In the early 1990s, in the wake of the global political changes and the fragmentation of the familiar bipolar world order, a new generation of scholars has focused on feminist perspectives on war, peace and global security. A growing recognition that, in the words of Cynthia Enloe, "*an entire dimension of international politics*"<sup>43</sup> had been missing, prompted scholars such as Tickner, Peterson, Grant, Newland, Enloe, Runyan and Sylvester, among others, to question the masculinist underpinnings of the academic discipline of International Relations. This also meant that the subdisciplines of Strategic and Peace Studies came under fire. Strategic Studies for being blatantly militaristic and androcentric, and Peace Studies for creating a mere semblance of gender neutrality.

The discourse on IR, according to the feminist perspective, is a product of Western modernist and positivist thinking and is consequently subsumed under the binary logic of asymmetrical dichotomies. This socially constructed dualism manifests itself in 'paired opposites' such as public/private; rationality/irrationality; objectivity/subjectivity; fact/value; empirical/normative; culture/nature; autonomy/relatedness; self/other; mind/body; order/anarchy; theory/practice; and abstract/concrete, where one term is at once differentiated from another, preferred to the other; arranged hierarchically and where the subordinate term is displaced "*beyond the boundary of what is significant and desirable.*"<sup>44</sup> Feminists argue that such binary constructions are derived from the masculine/feminine dichotomy and, in fact, are based on false premises. Traits such as reason, intellect, objectivity and order are equated with 'maleness' and are taken as the human norm, whereas traits like emotion, subjectivity and disorder are ascribed to females. The implications of this for women are that they, as well as 'others', are "*stigmatized as feminine*"<sup>45</sup> and considered to be not 'fully human', thus justifying all other forms of gender inequality and

domination.

The exclusive focus on the public sphere as the only domain where politics and power are acknowledged, renders women and women's experiences in politics, science, and history invisible.<sup>46</sup> And, as mentioned earlier, until the beginning of the 1990s, there were few feminist contributions to the literature on security studies, particularly in the field of strategy<sup>47</sup> where the phallogentric quality of its discourse became one of its trademarks. Women do not have a say in how the international political and global security system operates, because at the first level i.e. the identification of actors and how they behave women are excluded, and at the second level, any theory which is used to explain conflictual or co-operative behaviour is gender-biased.<sup>48</sup> A United Nations report noted that from 1985 to 1988 less than eight per cent of members of the Committee of the General Assembly dealing with disarmament and international security were women.<sup>49</sup>

Martin Gruberg of the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh has been monitoring the participation of women in the annual American Political Science Association Meetings for more than twenty years and has noted the ascent of women in the field of Political Studies. In his comparison of papers read at the 1993 annual meeting, he observed that women were least represented in the subdisciplines of (International) Political Economy, Politics of Developing Areas, International Security and Arms Control, Foreign Policy Analysis and Conflict Processes.<sup>50</sup> Noteworthy is the fact that these disciplines currently form part of the core of what constitutes the study of human security. In the South African context, studies conducted by Taylor (1990), Gouws (1993),<sup>51</sup> Du Pisani (1987) and Van der Westhuizen and Sattlegger (1994)<sup>52</sup> have all attempted to provide a view of the composition of political scientists in South Africa. Until 1994, the female component has not exceeded 25 per cent and should be a cause for concern. Women are also chronically underrepresented in positions of power, such as in the departments of Defence and Foreign Affairs. If the statistics of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD)<sup>53</sup> are anything to go by, then the future looks bleak for the Southern African region. At the five peacekeeping training projects hosted by ACCORD in Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Mauritius in 1996, the ratio of male participants (85 per cent) clearly outweighed that of female participants (fifteen per cent). All the participants from the Ministry of Defence or the Police were male, while only four representatives from the Department of Foreign Affairs were female, the rest being from non-government organisations. This shows that the subject of peacekeeping and security is still largely male-dominated.

Feminist IR theorists have not only attempted to expose dualist thinking and androcentric discourse as essentially gendered but have also "*raised new questions about how power, knowledge, politics and gender are related.*"<sup>54</sup> In IR and in the security debate, theorists and practitioners are urged to shed mutually exclusive or opposing conceptualisations in favour of relational and inclusive thinking patterns and strategies. The answer does not lie in putting women on the (male) agenda, i.e. adding or assimilating women's issues into existing masculinist paradigms, but rather to fundamentally rethink the paradigm<sup>55</sup> and integrate these perspectives. Grant and Newland<sup>56</sup> describe the challenge of feminism to IR as the development of a feminist epistemology which uses 'gender' as the logical starting point. The gender bias in IR theory and security discourse delegitimises its epistemological basis. But, at the same time, gender can be used as a tool for transforming the foundations of what constitutes knowledge in the realm of security.

## **Gender Silences in the Realist/Strategic Discourse: A Feminist Critique of the Mono-gendered State**

Feminists have joined the idealist and globalist schools of thought in their critique of the inadequacy of the strategic/realist preoccupation with the maintenance of military power as a means of promoting national security and peace. Feminists have furthermore joined the ranks of post-modernists, post-structuralists and economic globalists who argue against a one-sided focus on the sovereign and autonomous state as the primary unit of analysis in IR, security studies and international political economics. While all these theorists share the general concern that the realist perspective produces a biased view of the world confined to states and power relations between states, feminists in particular, concentrate on the gender bias inherent in the state as a masculinist construction.

Ann Tickner<sup>57</sup> illustrates the presence of 'masculinist hegemony' by means of a three-tiered level of analysis, based on the individual, the state and the international system. Individuals in the realist state are all male: the male warrior being the embodiment of the 'first-class citizen'. The modern state was born through war and consolidated its power through the coercive conquest of resources and territory. It is therefore no wonder that the Western state and its colonies that subsequently gained independence developed a deeply entrenched national identity.<sup>58</sup> The international system is characterised by male state *versus* female state. The security needs of groups and communities other than the above-mentioned are completely negated. In gendered terms, the state acts as protector of the nation which is represented as a woman.<sup>59</sup> Yet ironically, more often than not women end up being victims of the state or national security as is witnessed in the detrimental effects of increased military spending on the welfare of poor and powerless women. This apparent contradiction is the consequence of the fact that citizenship is equated with being male, thus rendering women invisible.

There exists a peculiar relationship between feminism and nationalism. The relationship, as Tessler and Warriner<sup>60</sup> point out, is highly contextual, because, on the one hand, feminist and nationalist goals can be mutually reinforcing i.e. men and women accept that improving women's position in society forms part of the nationalist drive towards reform. On the other hand, the nationalist project is authoritarian and seeks to maintain the patriarchal *status quo*, thus relegating women to the margins of citizenship<sup>61</sup> through effectively obscuring the class, race, gender, regional, ethnic and other differences within a state. Deniz Kandiyoti describes women's complex paradoxical role in post-colonial societies as follows: "*On the one hand, nationalist movements invite women to participate more fully in collective life by interpellating them as 'national' actors: mothers, educators, workers and even fighters. On the other hand, they reaffirm the boundaries of culturally acceptable feminine conduct and exert pressure on women to articulate their gender interests within the terms of reference set by nationalist discourse.*"<sup>62</sup> This rings true for women in South Africa and other African countries such as Zimbabwe and Mozambique, where the national liberation struggle has not brought an automatic liberation from gender oppression.<sup>63</sup> Democracy for women has to be a struggle in its own right. In the Middle East, Palestinian women also have to grapple with the contradictions between unity and democracy. On the one hand, unity is important to achieve national self-determination, while on the other hand, democracy opens up space "*for all marginal social and political forces to express themselves in the ongoing struggle over hegemony within Palestinian society ...*"<sup>64</sup> The case of Palestine also serves to illustrate the extent to which feminist issues are masked by a nationalistic sentiment strongly influenced by religious fundamentalism.

## **The feminist Critique of Peace Studies**

Even the theories that are more critical of the *status quo*, such as critical theory with its Marxist underpinnings and the idealist approach to IR which is paradigmatically closer to the domain of Peace Studies, have been criticised by feminists for their apparent gender-neutral analysis of

the state. Gender neutrality refers to the perception that gender issues are irrelevant to the theoretical assumptions of the discipline. Even scholars of structural violence have paid scant attention to women's security.<sup>65</sup>

The multidisciplinary character of Peace Studies is no guarantee that feminist viewpoints will be considered. After all, how can a discipline which cuts across several male-dominated disciplines be anything but gender-biased? Betty Reardon asserts that "*the peace research establishment has been as heavily populated by men as has the discipline of national security studies.*"<sup>66</sup> Moreover, gender neutrality in Peace Studies has taken the form of a relative silence about women's leadership roles and achievements in peace movements.<sup>67</sup> Women are therefore not only underrepresented as peace researchers, but also in terms of accounts of women's experiences of war and peace. Several reasons for the male ownership of mainstream peace research can be cited. Firstly, according to Robin Burns,<sup>68</sup> the transnational nature of peace research (i.e. where international and regional conferences are a regular occurrence) is an important, practical reason for the low visibility of female peace researchers. This state of affairs may be partly ascribed to the fact that many women have commitments as mothers and care-takers, hence limiting their professional networking skills. Secondly, the nature of feminist peace research goes against the standard research practice and paradigm. Their attempt to find new research priorities is met by the all too familiar criticisms regarding the lack of systematic analysis, an inadequate provision of supporting empirical evidence, excessive holism and reductionist thinking due to an overemphasis on patriarchy. Such attacks on the 'scientific quality' of peace research is likely to discourage peace researchers from departing from so-called notions of 'academic respectability'. Finally, feminists in general are also wary of promoting a simplistic dichotomy of men as innately aggressive and women as peaceful. Such dualisms run the risk of perpetuating gender stereotypes and may nullify the feminist contribution to the peace and security debate.<sup>69</sup>

## **A FEMINIST CONCEPTUALISATION OF SECURITY**

In this section, the main tenets of the feminist vision for global peace will be considered. During the course of the analysis the similarities between a feminist understanding of security and the redefined security concept (as discussed earlier) will be highlighted, but more importantly, an attempt will be made to show how the feminist concept of security can work towards the creation of a truly comprehensive security.

Feminist thinking on security is in line with current security perspectives. Feminists agree wholeheartedly with the shift from a simplistic and reductionist dichotomy between war and peace towards a global conceptualisation of collective security by means of international peacekeeping, forms of world government, regional alternatives and the transformation of existing institutions such as the United Nations. Therefore, there seems to be a high degree of consensus on the inclusion of economic, social, ecological and political conditions of a just peace. Holism and interconnectedness within multiple dimensions of security, women's multiple roles and experiences of security, feminism as a multi-disciplinary project, and Peace Studies as a multi-disciplinary enterprise, all testify to the fact that a shared commitment to an interdisciplinary methodology, to co-operative solutions to security concerns, as well as to similar normative orientations towards conflict resolution and socio-economic justice, is beginning to emerge. The feminist position also concurs with the redefined security perspective with respect to the limitations of the state as the primary referent of security. The question 'whose security?' can rightly be posed if the dismal track record of African states, in particular, is considered. Dalby points out that the feminist critique "*reveals security as a condition of order that renders some secure, but many (and not just women) unsafe in terms of vulnerability to*

violence and injustice."<sup>70</sup>

On the other hand, the feminist contribution is different from the conventional security concept, due to the fact that it focuses intensely on the sources of insecurity. It extends the general arguments about the nature of society to the realm of security and reminds us that comprehensive security can only be achieved if the relations of domination and submission in all walks of life are eliminated. Social justice in the form of economic development, human rights protection, military peace and ecological sustainability all depend upon the achievement of gender justice. Posing the question "*what security can mean in the context of interlocking systems of hierarchy and domination and how gendered identities and ideologies (re)produce these structural insecurities*"<sup>71</sup> leads one to an alternative understanding, namely that the so-called 'security dilemma' has its origin in the dualistic nature of political society. Ann Tickner explains it as follows: "*[G]endered depictions of political man, the state, and the international system generate a national security discourse that privileges conflict and war and silences other ways of thinking about security ...*"<sup>72</sup> A comprehensive definition of security must therefore include an analysis of patriarchy, as well as the linkage of war and military culture to violence against women.

A second difference between the feminist notion of security and the mainstream thinking relates to their giving new meaning to the term 'collective security'. A feminist redefinition of this concept starts with a re-evaluation of the notion of power. Drawing on women's experiences while simultaneously extending them to the male experience as well, feminists argue that power in the words of Hannah Arendt should rather be defined as "*the ability to act in concert*"<sup>73</sup> instead of the ability to make someone do something s/he would not otherwise do. Interdependence, mutual enablement, and empathy are given preference over autonomy, self-help, individualism and competition. A redefinition of power would change the nature of politics globally and regionally to reflect the nature of local politics and this, from the point of view of security, would manifest itself in a relational, collaborative, non-oppositional approach to the topic where the survival of one depends on the well-being of the other. It is argued that this kind of approach would not only enhance women's security, but also that of men, who are similarly threatened by the conventional gendered approach to security. But infusing the term 'collective security' with so-called feminine characteristics is contentious as these are socially rather than biologically constructed. Women, it is argued, think more subtly about matters like peace they are less hampered by rigid Manichæan dichotomies or 'ready-made ideas' and more tuned in to process and change, thus being able to think more freely and holistically.<sup>74</sup> In this way, the feminist understanding of security provides a framework for enriching or deepening the principle of collective security in practice: from collaboration motivated by national interest to a deep-rooted recognition of interdependency.

A third reason why the feminist contribution to security thinking is worth exploring, is that this contribution is the result of a dialectical relationship between theory and practice. According to Adrienne Harris and Ynestra King, the feminist perspective on security "*emerged from the intersection of women's practice in peace movements and the analysis of gender in recent feminist studies.*"<sup>75</sup> The contribution of women in the peace movement to the debate has a long history. As far back as the First World War, Jane Addams addressed the International Congress of Women at The Hague arguing in favour of a "*new internationalism to replace the self-destructive nationalism.*"<sup>76</sup> Women have organised many demonstrations and have held numerous peace camps to protest the arms race and have also promoted peace research. In 1985, at the Women's International Peace Conference in Halifax, Canada, as well as in the final document of the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the UN Decade for Women in Nairobi (1985), a multidimensional definition of security was proposed.<sup>77</sup>

A fourth difference relates to the complex interconnectedness of the condition of peace, (perceived) security and threats and expectations. Though not exclusively used by feminist peace researchers, the distinction between positive and negative peace, and positive and negative security does seem to be in harmony with their conceptualisation. However, the conventional view of security as the prerequisite for peace is turned on its head. Peace is no longer viewed as the end, but rather as the means. This notion may be summarised in the words of Gandhi: "*There is no way to peace. Peace is the way.*"<sup>78</sup> What flows from this, is the fundamental feminist conviction that, just as the personal cannot be separated from the political, so can means and ends not be separated. In fact, more often than not, processes and methods take precedence over goals. Posing the question of 'how' rather than 'why' opens up room for a multitude of explanations.

In the conventional discourse, 'negative security' as the inhibition of destruction, i.e. countering a threat with an equally or more severe threat, paves the way for 'negative peace', a condition in which severe structural violence, repression and gross inequality are not addressed. The feminist discourse, however, conceptualises 'positive peace' as the condition of social justice, economic equity and economic balance. In other words, a situation wherein basic human and ecological needs are met, should create room for fulfilling the reasonable expectation of well-being related to the political, social, economic, ecological and military dimensions of life. 'Positive security' is therefore the end result of a constructive process whereby a threat is eliminated by addressing its cause. This does not mean, however, that peace is made and security shaped in an orderly and stable situation where conflict is absent. Instead, it refers to a situation in which violence (direct or indirect) is less likely to take place and where the system is actively, but non-violently challenged.<sup>79</sup>

In an attempt to clarify the broad principles of feminist thinking on security, the discussion will follow Buzan's typology of the five sectors of security, namely political, social, economic, ecological and military. The social and economic dimensions will be combined, as most socio-cultural aspects of life, such as health, education and population growth, have a profound impact upon the economic well-being of the individual and/or group and *vice versa*. The use of these mainstream labels is deliberate they serve the analytical purpose of simultaneously establishing the continuity between feminist and mainstream perspectives, as well as highlighting the specific feminist contribution.

### **Political Security: Women's Rights as Human Rights**

Barry Buzan defines political security as "*the organizational stability of states, systems of government and the ideologies that give them legitimacy.*"<sup>80</sup> It is against the backdrop of the norms and values of the dominant ideology that the struggle for human rights as a prerequisite of social justice and human security gains importance. The recognition of women's rights as human rights is central to the feminist understanding of security. Philip Windsor maintains that "*one can hardly discuss human rights without discussing what it is to be human. And if humanity (presumably) includes women, the nature of human rights has to be much more broadly addressed. Specific violations of human rights in a political context are ... recognisably evil. But if moral categories exist at all ... then the relegation of more than half the human race to a condition of pure contingency ... becomes monstrous.*"<sup>81</sup>

In part, women's rights have been limited (particularly in the socio-economic field), because they have not been fully considered in the general discourse on human rights. But some scholars would even go so far as to argue that putting women on the official international human

rights agenda has done little to challenge the patriarchal underpinnings of the state. In this regard, Dorothy McBride Stetson<sup>82</sup> argues that investing energy in adopting policies against gender discrimination (e.g. the ratification and monitoring of the **Convention for Elimination of Discrimination Against Women** (CEDAW)) becomes meaningless in the face of unchanged conventional policies regarding human rights. A separatist charter for women defeats the goal of inculcating feminist values into main or should one say 'male' stream thinking. Fostering a more inclusive concept of human rights is further hampered by a too ambitious international focus which is difficult to achieve comprehensively. A more localised strategy, on the other hand, may make the evolution of human rights to include those of women more feasible. This is illustrated by the case of El Salvador's mothers of the disappeared (CO-MADRES) (founded in 1977). The movement's initial focus on human rights abuses was not directly linked to the oppression of women: i.e. the aim was not to transform from a 'motherist' into a feminist organisation. It was rather a nuanced process in which women's detention, rape, torture, domestic conflict and their contact with other human rights organisations and with feminists have combined into a much wider definition of human rights one that incorporates women's rights.<sup>83</sup>

Feminist human rights advocates insist that human rights must be seen in holistic terms. Human rights for women extend beyond the granting of the right to vote and to govern, to the private domain where marital rape, domestic violence, and even unfair employment practices are often the cause of grave insecurity. 'Needs fulfilment' must therefore be seen as an intrinsic human right that is essential to the achievement of security. But while the granting of political rights does not necessarily lead to the recognition of socio-economic rights the obverse is also true: women's economic and social rights are impeded because their political rights are denied. Failure of attempts at development can partly be attributed to the omission of women's participation in policy-making and the lack of a perspective on human needs.

### **Socio-economic Security: Securing Development by Meeting Basic Needs**

One of the revised objectives of the expanded security agenda is to promote sustainable economic development and strive towards the achievement of social and economic justice. Economic security that includes "*access to the resources, finance and markets necessary to sustain acceptable levels of welfare and state power*"<sup>84</sup> underpins the other dimensions of security and paves the way for realising goals set in terms of the evolution of sustainable patterns of language, culture, religion, national identity and custom (social security); the maintenance of environmental balance (ecological security); the capacity of the state to govern (political security); and the capacity of the state to protect itself (military security).

Development is not a new phenomenon. As early as 1948, the UN confirmed the right to develop in Article 28 of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**. In spite of two *Decades of Development* (the 1960s and 1970s), the 1980s were marked by high interest rates and heavy debt burdens, and by 1990 most developing countries were in fact worse off than at the end of the 1980s.<sup>85</sup> In real terms, it means abject poverty and deprivation for millions of people. Basic services such as clean water, a decent education and food security, are rare in many parts of the world. The failure of development strategies to meet basic needs led to a closer examination by peace and development researchers and feminists of the role played by the global capitalist economy and the state in the economic (in)security of its citizens.

Ann Tickner, in her analysis of the liberal, nationalist and Marxist approaches to international political economy, criticises them for being seemingly gender neutral, for creating the impression that "*the interaction between states and markets ... can be understood without reference to gender distinctions*."<sup>86</sup> The "*rational economic man*"<sup>87</sup> of the liberal economic model is a western

invention, totally unrepresentative of the experiences of women and non-western societies. The nationalist economic model is premised on the overtly gendered state as the primary unit of analysis. This emphasis on the state's economic welfare privileges men at the expense of women. On the surface, the Marxist economic model shares the fact that it speaks for the marginalised with feminism, but in this model women's interests are completely subsumed under class as the basic unit of analysis. Furthermore, traditional Marxists do not question the gendered division of labour women's role as mothers and caretakers is taken as natural.<sup>88</sup>

The concept 'structural violence' serves as a useful yardstick to determine the extent of socio-economic justice and well-being. The term does not refer to a situation where security is measured by the absence or presence of direct or physical violence: "*Structural violence exists when economic and social conditions are such that people die or suffer as a consequence of the unequal distribution of resources ...*"<sup>89</sup> Johan Galtung defines it as "*harm resulting from the structure of the world's economic, political and social systems and those of its individual units.*"<sup>90</sup> Structural violence links underdevelopment, social and economic security and women's inequality particularly in the developing world. It helps us to see how historically and culturally imposed divisions in terms of, for example, labour and production have contributed to women's insecurity and what feminists currently term the 'feminisation of poverty'. According to the **Human Development Report** (1995) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) women constitute seventy per cent of the world's poor and two-thirds of its illiterate. Evidence cited by Tickner, Brock-Utne and Ekins further illustrates this point: women constitute one-third of the world's paid labour force, yet women do two-thirds of the work in the world (most work is being performed outside the wage sector); women earn one-tenth of the world's income, but own less than one per cent of world property.<sup>91</sup>

Industrialisation has had a profound effect on women both in the developed and in developing countries. In some developed countries, industrial change has encouraged the employment of women in some areas while reducing it in others. In the newly industrialised countries, women have been recruited on a large scale into high technology industries. In other developing countries, mechanisation of agriculture for increased food production and export crops, accompanied by male migration, has increased women's workload. They have become the sole food producers for the family. eiop<sup>92</sup>

In the developed world, two job markets exist simultaneously one full-time and well paid, the other part-time with no benefits. This serves as one example of how women's work has been consistently undervalued. Women's work is often characterised as 'servicing' work if not for the family, then caring for the ill and elderly or supplying food, water and wood. In order for women's work to be taken into reckoning, the public/private divide must first be demolished. Domestic work, reproduction, and volunteer work must gain recognition as legitimate economic practice and be included in the calculation of the gross national product (GNP). After all, out of US \$16 trillion which goes unrecorded in the global economy each year, US \$11 trillion constitute the contribution of women.<sup>93</sup> The field of development studies is currently the only discipline that pays sufficient attention to the economic security of those on the periphery of the world economy.

Poverty and food insecurity go hand in hand. The African food crisis bears testimony to this. Women are particularly hard hit by famine, considering the fact that in the developing world they are responsible for forty to sixty per cent of all agricultural production. Food shortages are also linked to the quality of health and life many women suffer from malnutrition and nutritional anaemia<sup>94</sup> which, in turn, also have implications for women's reproductive health and that of their families. The state of women's health is also intimately linked to the level of political

freedom that they enjoy. Since the capture of Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, by the Islamic Taliban movement in September 1996, local women's health conditions are much more precarious. Women have been banned from the 32 public bath-houses in Kabul, the only places where many of them could wash in hot water. It is feared that gynaecological infections, scabies, uterine infections after childbirth and respiratory diseases in children who would normally have accompanied their mothers to the bath-houses, could increase as a result of the banning.<sup>95</sup>

Health, education and employment form part of socio-economic well-being in the sense that the former represent the conditions for the latter. According to the **Expert Group Meeting on Women and AIDS** in Vienna in 1990, women's vulnerability to HIV infection is heightened by their social and economic dependency on men. In a situation of inferiority, it becomes increasingly difficult to control 'health risks', i.e. to insist upon the practice of safe sex.<sup>96</sup> Sixty per cent of the billion adult illiterates in the world are women.<sup>97</sup> Lack of education as evident in the statistics which show a literacy gap between men and women (in the mid-1980s) of 28 per cent, and an education enrolment gap of 33 per cent in the developing world bears a direct link to employment security and health security. Education of the mother in simple matters such as hygiene, nutrition and safety has an immediate bearing on the health of her children.<sup>98</sup> The Women's Health Project explains the complex interaction between economic, political, socio-cultural, physical and psychological factors as determinants of health as follows: "*Women have gender roles and responsibilities which directly affect their levels of access to and control of resources necessary to protect their health, including external resources such as the economy, politics, information and education, a safe environment free of violence, and time, as well as internal resources such as self-esteem and initiative. Women are diverse in their age, class, race or ethnicity, religion, functional capacity, sexual orientation and social circumstances. These factors may lead to inequities that adversely affect their health ...*"<sup>99</sup>

Famine is exacerbated in part by environmental abuse in a struggle to survive, as well as by war. The cases of the Sudan and Somalia show how food can be used as a weapon of politics. War and strife do not only lead to ecological degradation, but can also be the inevitable consequence of a struggle over scarce resources. Consider the example of India and Bangladesh and their dispute over the water of the Ganges river. Since 1975, India has been diverting most of the dry-season flow of the river to one of its internal rivers. This has had devastating effects on down-stream Bangladeshi communities, who have had no alternative but to migrate to India. This, in turn, has led to highly politicised (ethnic) clashes between the local population and foreigners.<sup>100</sup>

Feminists also highlight the connection between women's poverty and military security. While the connection between direct military violence (e.g. war) and women's economic and physical insecurity may be conceptually obvious, the correlation between female economic insecurity and military spending as a form of structural violence is less well-known. Ann Tickner<sup>101</sup> explains that capital-intensive military ventures divert funds from labour-intensive activities, thus leading to a general rise in unemployment, but particularly for women who are employed in light manufacturing services and local government where cuts are made first. Women and children suffer the most when social programmes are cut in favour of military spending. Ruth Sivard identifies military expenditure as one of the main contributing factors to structural violence in the developing world between 1975 and 1985, for instance, their arms imports amounting to forty per cent of the increase in foreign debt. The World Bank has estimated that one-third of the debt paid each year by developing countries is the direct result of the purchase of military equipment.<sup>102</sup>

It is thus clear that a complex cyclical relationship of interdependence exists between political,

socio-economic, ecological and military security.

## **Military Security: Undermining a Culture of Militarism by Creating an Awareness of Personal Security**

The analysis of the feminist discourse on military security is dealt with on two interrelated levels. In a stricter sense, the nature and the extent of women's integration into the military is examined in the light of the increased female recruitment for peacetime armies in recent years spurred by the Gulf War where more than 27 000 women served in the US armed forces.<sup>103</sup> On a broader level, the world's dependence on the military for its security is in itself seen as a major threat to human security and the security of women in particular. The effects of war on women are particularly devastating. Armed conflicts in Africa, for instance, result in a large number of civilian casualties, an increasing proportion of whom are women. The majority of the world's displaced people (eighty per cent) are widowed or abandoned women and their dependent children. They are doomed to a life within overcrowded refugee camps. Feminists contend that all forms of gender violence are fundamentally a manifestation of the connection between war, militarism and the discrimination against women. Consequently, military security is redefined to include all forms of physical security and protection against bodily harm.

Feminist viewpoints on the place of the military institution in society epitomise the dilemma with which the feminist movement has grappled since its inception. In the words of Elshtain in her seminal contribution, *Women and War*, *"feminism has not quite known whether to fight men or to join them; whether to lament sex differences and deny their importance or to acknowledge and even valorize such differences; whether to condemn all wars outright or to extol women's contributions to war efforts."*<sup>104</sup> On the one hand, liberal feminists could plead for gender equity in the military, while some anti-militarist feminists would support women's inclusion in the military, because they believe women's feminine characteristics might contribute both towards altering the nature of defence forces and war, and to give women a stake in the formulation of security policy. On the other hand, radical, socialist and other pacifist feminists would vehemently oppose such 'collaboration' with the minions of patriarchy; while others would argue that women's peacemaking and nurturing 'nature' makes them unsuited for warfare.<sup>105</sup> So in effect, an analysis of the feminist contribution to the creation of military security in its narrow, conventional meaning is impeded by feminists themselves due to their scant regard for consistency, as well as the fact that they *"are not only at war with war but with one another, as well as being locked in combat with women not self-identified as feminist."*<sup>106</sup>

## **Combat is for 'Real Men' Only**

In the United States, women's inclusion in the military has made some inroads into traditional gender roles, while in Mali, Guinea and Israel women are conscripted. But nowhere are women routinely utilised in combat roles, even though countries like Canada, Denmark, Norway, Luxembourg, Portugal and South Africa (the latter since 1994) have no combat exclusion policies.<sup>107</sup> The former Soviet Union, Germany, and Israel permitted women to participate in combat during times of grave national insecurity, but afterwards excluded them from the armed forces. In similar vein, women are usually given their rightful place in guerrilla movements, only to be dropped once the revolutionary organisation comes to power.<sup>108</sup>

The term 'combat' also evades precise definition.<sup>109</sup> Modern warfare is much more impersonal due to its use of sophisticated technology. This may affect the roles of women in combat, thus weakening the arguments against women's inclusion. Furthermore, combat is an essential component of the patriarchal military system and serves as the ultimate test of masculinity. To

overemphasise women's inclusion in the military, and to argue that women's first-class citizenship depends on equality in the military is dangerous. In an era where armed forces across the globe are beginning to refocus their mission away from the purely military, such emphasis runs the risk of elevating the military to its former Cold War glory. (This argument, however, does not preclude a more positive outcome emanating from interaction between women who enjoy equality within the military and an institution with a redefined mission.)

(Military) men have argued against women's inclusion on the basis of factors such as combat readiness hampered by biological limitations in terms of upper body and leg strength and endurance, and cohesion of the combat unit. While some of the biological evidence may be hard to dispute, psychological comparisons are less waterproof. Accounts of women who participated in combat roles indicate that they experience similar emotions and reactions to those of men.<sup>110</sup> Women in the Israeli armed forces are drafted for a shorter time than men with the assumption that they have to take care of the children; and they are ineligible for combat duty which is a prerequisite for promotion to high-ranking military positions. Women are therefore effectively excluded from leadership positions. Feminist issues are also viewed as secondary to the 'national cause'<sup>111</sup> of protecting society and state against (external) aggression.

Feminists, despite their multiple and often conflicting voices, play an important role in unmasking the true nature of the military. Consistent with their critique of the gendered state, the masculinist and sexist underpinnings of the military as an institution of the state are exposed. It enables us to see why the traditional view of national security and the dominance of the 'security forces' as the main (even sole) agent for the protection of 'national interest' has prevailed. Comprehensive security remains elusive as long as male warriors/citizens continue to protect visible male interests.

Male security is built on one of the most basic dualisms, namely that of 'us' *versus* 'them', the enemy. The language of war abounds with 'macho' terms. Enloe<sup>112</sup> coined the term 'rambo-ization' to describe this possibly universalist phenomenon. The enemy is furthermore depicted in feminine terms as is shown by General Norman Schwarzkopf's description of the plan to destroy the Iraqi military during the Gulf War in terms of a 'Hail Mary' strategy.<sup>113</sup> The current controversy over the admission of gays and lesbians to the military is a further example of how the armed forces maintain the us/them dichotomy a concerted effort to maintain the masculine character of the institution! The male imagery of 'war talk' is further strengthened by the use of metaphors from the world of sport, another domain where men can compete to prove their self-worth. Competition in sports is often depicted as a form of combat. Pictures of women armed with guns when a country is at war are aimed at recruiting men.<sup>114</sup> Hicks Stiehm also "*avers that military trainers resort to manipulation of men's anxiety about their sexual identity in order to increase soldiers' willingness to fight.*"<sup>115</sup> To be called a 'girl' in training is the worst possible insult. Yet, in a bizarre and paradoxical kind of way, soldiers are also required to be almost bisexual, i.e. to be disciplined and to obey orders which require a heavy dose of so-called feminine submissiveness together with a combat ability that represents the ultimate expression of masculinity.<sup>116</sup>

These dichotomies feed on controversial assertions that men, in general, are more aggressive and violent than women. Galtung and Ikeda<sup>117</sup> mention that at least 95 per cent of all direct violence is committed by men. Statistical evidence is often used to develop such claims, but is normally qualified by the proviso that some women can be as violent and militant as men and that men are not biologically destined to rape and kill. Proponents of the 'special qualities' thesis argue that women's unique life-giving capabilities, motherhood and their nurturing/caring role

link women to peace and pacifism, since they naturally value the preservation of life. According to this thesis, women's caregiver role in society is of particular relevance to global security as their tolerant nature not only makes them ideal peace makers, but can also help men to shed their aggressive approach to the solving of conflict.<sup>118</sup> Men, on the other hand, are more prone to violence due to being physically stronger and having higher testosterone levels which make them more assertive. Johan Galtung<sup>119</sup> hypothesises the "*Woman: Man = Peace: Violence*" correlation by arguing that direct violence is an essentially male phenomenon. He extends the argument by further making a conceptual connection between male violence/aggression and male sexuality, thus linking fear and lust. These two emotions share the same physiological/orgasmic trajectory and are intimately linked to the so-called neurological triggers and specific hormonal curves. Carol Gilligan<sup>120</sup> also argues that the different moral development of women makes them more prone to peace than men. Her study of playground activity sharply contrasted boys' competitive (winner-loser) behaviour with girls' win-win approach where a so-called communicative (kinship) web of relationships overshadows a more individualistic and hierarchical mode of thinking. Her research provides an interesting glimpse into human behaviour which may be transferred to the field of intrastate, regional or global interactions regarding security. Recent scientific proof that the differences between men and women in terms of intuition and social behavioural patterns are genetically determined,<sup>121</sup> goes a long way towards strengthening this argument.

However, this intermingling of biological and gender differences justifies the criticism levelled at such arguments. These theories perpetuate dangerous stereotypes and can rightly be typified as essentialist, reductionist, counterproductive and self-defeating for the feminist project. Women are reduced to one-dimensional universalistic characters. Historical evidence on how German women, through their silence, made a vital contribution to the Nazi cause<sup>122</sup> indicates that being female does not insulate one from being a protagonist of horror. Women have also benefited from the war effort, as demonstrated by those who stepped temporarily into men's jobs during the Second World War. What is important, though, is to recognise that all these arguments bear an element of the truth, and that our biological make-up, together with our socially and culturally constructed roles, determine our insecurities. Johan Galtung<sup>123</sup> also supports the notion that an analysis of peace and security issues requires a multifaceted perspective. Gender, if used in isolation, is an insufficient analytical tool. Patriarchy as the root cause of all evil therefore presents an oversimplistic view of the problem. The dilemma for feminists rests, therefore, in finding creative ways of balancing an aggressive stance against militarism, while retaining the values of care and responsibility.

The above-mentioned theses have also been criticised for the lack of empirical evidence of significant sex-linked differences regarding attitudes towards conflict (e.g. to support the hypothesis that women as a rule are more liberal and less supportive of military force). Two recent studies have been undertaken to fill this gap, the first being a cross-national survey by Wilcox, Hewitt and Allsop<sup>124</sup> of eleven large cities in developed, as well as developing countries on attitudes towards the Gulf War. The second is a survey by Tessler and Warriner<sup>125</sup> on the attitudes of four politically, economically and culturally diverse Middle Eastern states, namely Israel, Egypt, Palestine and Kuwait regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. The study of the Gulf War found "*only modest gender differences*"<sup>126</sup> in the interpretation of events, in effect toward the major actors and in support for the goals of the UN actions. The research is disappointingly inconclusive and raises more questions than answers. The value of the study on the Arab-Israeli conflict lies in the fact that it provides a non-western perspective which may be more applicable to the conditions of Africa and the rest of the developing world. The research also shows no significant gender differences in the views of men and women and therefore concludes that there is no evidence that women are more inclined toward the use of peaceful

methods of conflict resolution. Further, an important connection is drawn between attitudes toward the status of women and attitudes vis-à-vis war and peace. Those who were in favour of gender equality were more favourably inclined towards compromise as a means of conflict resolution. What becomes clear from both studies is the fact that much research is needed to determine the validity of the connection between gender and anti-militaristic attitudes in an African context.

## Gender Violence

Feminists reconceptualise military security to include all forms of violence, particularly those perpetrated against women. They contend, firstly, that all forms of violence are fundamentally interrelated, albeit inter- or intrastate, or domestic. Family violence, for instance, must be seen in the wider context of unequal power relations. Secondly, it is argued that violence is a major consequence of the imbalances created by a male-dominated/gendered society. Patriarchy<sup>127</sup> is therefore also seen as a form of violence, i.e. structural violence. It is on this level, namely bringing about an awareness of the correlation between private and public violence, that feminism makes a sound contribution to the notion of comprehensive security.

Jamil Salmi's typology<sup>128</sup> can be adapted to show the pervasiveness of violence against women. His first category, direct violence, includes brutal acts such as murder, torture and rape (sexual violence). Although it is difficult to determine the full extent of domestic violence against women, the following examples paint a rather grim picture. Femicide has increased enormously over the last few decades, especially since women are considered 'soft' targets. In 1995, Amnesty International reported that "*[t]he growth of nationalist, secessionist and ethnic conflicts has seen groups increasingly adopt methods of violence, repression and terror against women. Women have been killed, raped, ill-treated or taken hostage by armed opposition groups in all regions of the world.*"<sup>129</sup> In India, 'bride burning' (the murder of young wives by 'accidental' kitchen fires if families are unable to pay the required dowry) has claimed many lives, and one can be relatively certain that the official figure of 2 449 deaths in 1991 is in reality much higher.<sup>130</sup> Physical attack is often accompanied by sexual violence, such as marital rape, sexual harassment in the workplace, and mental torture, the sum total of which has a devastating effect on the well-being of the family; and is perpetrated at great economic cost to society. The problem is exacerbated by legal systems which for years have failed to offer women protection or recourse. To this day, under the guise of not invading the sanctity of the family, so-called crimes of honour by men are absolved or treated with the utmost leniency. Physical violence is inextricably linked to the political, social and economic inequality of women as exemplified in the second category. Indirect violence threatens the right to survival. This broad categorisation relates to the facets of needs fulfilment, economic and social well-being and manifests itself as hunger, disease, poverty, and environmental abuse (mediated violence). In the case of women in the developing world, these insecurities multiply during times of conflict. Rural women not only lose their loved ones, but also their property and their means of livelihood. Consequently, many of them become economic refugees in the city where prostitution (as another form of social violence) presents itself as the only alternative. Thirdly, Salmi identifies repressive violence, which refers to the deprivation of fundamental rights. Social, economic, and civil-political inequality is part and parcel of a woman's existence: i.e. low social status, inferior employment, unequal access to property for lack of capital, insufficient protection from the state and lack of opportunity to participate in political life due to powerlessness can all be cited as examples of repressive violence. The last category, alienating violence (which, by the way, is where Salmi places women) attempts to depict what it means to be a woman in a gendered society where sexism, just like homophobia, xenophobia, genophobia, and racism is an all-embracing state of mind.

Amidst our focus on women's issues and their bearing on the security of the 'whole', we need to remember that men are also often the victims of direct and indirect violence. But feminists point out that, in most cases, 'gender' serves to establish a connection between institutional (structural or indirect) and physical (direct) violence: "*As institutional violence is a means to maintain privilege and hierarchy, so physical violence is used to demonstrate [that] power.*"<sup>131</sup> Feminists would therefore assert that, until the private/public dualism is broken down and the personal is recognised as political, a truly inclusive human security cannot be built. The UN **Declaration on Violence against Women** recognises this connection between the private and the public spheres. Gender violence is defined as "*any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life ... Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family and in the community, including battery, sexual abuse of female children, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence, violence related to exploitation, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women, forced prostitution, and violence against women perpetrated and condoned by the state.*"<sup>132</sup>

True to their holistic and inclusive approach to security matters, feminists remind us also not to overlook that type of abuse which threatens the survival of the entire planet.

### **Ecological Security: Male Gardeners in a Female Garden?**

The beginning of the 1990s has witnessed a dramatic shift in consciousness regarding ecological issues. The redefining of security in terms of ecological concerns, such as sustainability, balance and protection, was in the first instance born out of the growing awareness of the fragility of the natural environment, the potential of modern weapons to destroy the natural environment, and the devastating effects of ecological degradation and depletion of resources on the well-being of the world's inhabitants. Secondly, this recognition was driven home by the fact that threats such as air and water pollution, environmental disasters, depletion of the ozone layer, and deforestation affect rich and poor alike.<sup>133</sup> Thirdly, there is an increasing awareness of the fact that, in an age where resources are rapidly diminishing and the competition for resources has never been greater, environmental conflict is becoming ever more salient. Whereas the complementary nature of ecological threats obviously warrants collective action, the state-centric composition of the international system mitigates against global or regional co-operative arrangements.

Throughout the centuries, nature has been depicted as female. Some would even be bold enough to argue that this is fitting, as women are closer to nature than men. References to 'Mother Earth', the 'rape of nature' and other gendered metaphors were fundamental in shaping attitudes towards nature, women and non-Western peoples. Even the term 'ecology', which is based on the Greek root for 'house' or 'domestic space', connects environmental security to women's rather than men's experiences.<sup>134</sup>

As a result of this gendered perspective on nature, ecofeminists assert that there is therefore a clear conceptual link between the inattention to environmental problems (the rights of nature), the silence about women's rights in general, and more specifically, the gender-differentiated effects of ecological insecurity on women as subsistence providers, and also in terms of their health and reproductive systems. Women's health often serves as an 'ecological marker'<sup>135</sup> to

measure the health of the planet. As a consequence of the Enlightenment, man has sought to tame and impose order upon nature since the seventeenth century, very much in the same way as man or the state has maintained gender inequality and domination through patriarchy. According to ecofeminists, such mechanistic or instrumental attitudes towards nature make the state unfit to address environmental problems. The colonial legacy of supplying the developed world with raw materials is one of the crudest examples of resource depletion. Ann Tickner points out that, in the post-independence era, "*[p]aradoxically the [state's] quest for national security, which involves the appropriation of natural resources through the domination of global space, is a historical process that has actually contributed to a decline in the security of the natural environment.*"<sup>136</sup> Furthermore, both domestic and international institutions are ill-equipped to address complex interrelated environmental problems, because of their adherence to a bureaucratic and functional task-orientation. Comprehensive security is therefore premised on a more holistic interdisciplinary and interagency approach to both women's and nature's problems.

The danger inherent in the call of many ecofeminists to pursue holism by including gender in their analysis, and to follow a 'natural holism' or 'whole earth' approach and environmental management strategy, is that it presumes an orderly world, thus falling prey to the Enlightenment's desire to control and to universalise. If we accept that nature has just as many irregularities as regularities, then perhaps the term 'fractious holism' (multilevel) is more appropriate. In this regard, Anne Runyan remarks that "*[a]n ecofeminist politics informed by fractious holism would entail resisting the ideal of harmony and stability even as feminists struggle to create more ... just homes within our overlapping ... environments.*"<sup>137</sup> In addition, the inability to establish absolute holism has a bearing on ecofeminism as an intellectual discourse that encompasses a multitude of perspectives. Ecofeminists who draw on the biological link between women and nature have been criticised as being 'essentialist' and as having perpetuated dualisms which most feminists believe need to be challenged.<sup>138</sup> Gwyn Kirk<sup>139</sup> also adds that American ecofeminist writing is far too abstract to be of any use to grassroots ecological activists.

The feminist discourse on ecological security, though far from being completely sound, does offer an enriching perspective on the relationship between man, woman and nature. By exploring the ecological consequences of, for instance, military security policy, it drives home the fact that nature also has rights and that any attempt at holistic thinking can only work if plans are based on constructive and equal partnerships and on practical experience.

## **Evaluation of the Feminist Contribution to the Security Debate**

The strength of the feminist contribution lies in the fact that it not only enhances our understanding of global developments by analysing and confronting the partiality of masculinist accounts, but also offers alternative constructions that could lead to new and creative solutions to our global security problems.

Firstly, alternative feminist thinking on security offers a critique of mono-gendered theories and practices of world politics, and exposes the way in which one's ability to think comprehensively about national security policy and global security issues is inhibited by such theorising and praxis. It therefore examines the gender-specific consequences of international and national processes. Since feminists speak from the experience of those on the periphery of the world system, it can, as Tickner postulates, "*offer us ... new insights on the behaviour of states and the needs of individuals, particularly those on the peripheries of the international system.*"<sup>140</sup> This, in turn, allows us to rethink the interrelationship of political, socio-economic, military, and

ecological insecurities from the vantage point of the powerless, and also to gain an understanding of how deeply entrenched the Western value system is in the behaviour of states. There are definite parallels between women's experience and the experiences of the developing world with regard to the global economy. Both cases are at a fundamental disadvantage within an essentially paternalistic framework.

Secondly, a feminist reconceptualisation of security comes closer to the textbook definition of comprehensive all-inclusive security. Although absolute holism, which takes all relevant and interrelated factors affecting world security into consideration, is impossible to achieve, a multifactor, multidimensional, and multilevel way of thinking comes easily to feminist scholarship due to its inter- or transdisciplinary character.

Thirdly, the feminist analysis enables the scholar to establish a link between the individual and international levels of security, thus giving new meaning to the concept of security as 'the security of all'. Christine Sylvester also defends the feminist approach of shifting back and forth between individual, national and international levels of security by arguing that *"to separate phenomena into discrete and independent categories of analysis leads to artificial islands of sociality."*<sup>141</sup> Fred Halliday argues in this respect that the slogan of 'the personal is political' can be extended to the international milieu, *"in the sense that inter-personal, micro-political relations are greatly influenced by transnational processes."*<sup>142</sup> This kind of conceptualisation thus enables one to recognise the divisions between the private and the public sphere as artificial and 'man'- made.

Finally, an emphasis on a 'female approach' of care and responsibility to security issues gives feminism an edge in terms of practical applicability. It is argued that women's socialisation and historical roles have led to the development of uniquely female values and capacities which can be 'learned' by all human beings and which need to be incorporated into security policy and mechanisms for conflict resolution. Most women's analysis of a particular problem, as well as the solutions they offer, are holistic or global rather than atomistic. Women have the capacity to recognise positive, co-operative and constructive relationships of a non-hierarchical nature and they normally display the ability to synergise resources, which refers to the art of making the whole greater than the sum of its parts. The latter 'virtue' is particularly important in the developing world context where resources are severely limited. It is therefore maintained that these qualities have concrete implications for the way peacemaking and security-building should be implemented.

The fundamental question that now has to be addressed is whether a feminist strategy or approach to peace and security is necessarily superior to the conventional way. Is a secure world by implication and of necessity female? This raises questions about the way in which the feminist way should best be accommodated within a broader intellectual security framework to ensure the achievement of its goals.

Feminist responses to this question range from an emphatic and radical 'yes' to a more moderate 'yes but' to a cautious 'no, but let's add the feminist perspective and hope it will have some effect'. Many of the feminists who believe that the female approach is superior also insist that women should organise separately for two reasons. Firstly, the use of non-violent methods are more characteristic (though not exclusive) of women and secondly, the connection between the national and international levels of security on the one hand, and the personal level, on the other, can only be established in an environment where women share their experiences with other women.<sup>143</sup> Women's insight into their own insecurity is therefore more valid than the views of outsiders and should accordingly form the starting point in the analysis of international

relations and global security. In this way, rather than being an added body of knowledge, it becomes perspective transforming as it modifies current approaches from within.<sup>144</sup> This extremist view is often criticised, because it keeps false dualisms alive, defeats the object of achieving equality and glosses over the differences in terms of race, class and culture among women, giving the impression that there is a universal female experience. Post-modernists, in contrast, are at pains to point out that women do not have a monopoly on peace *"but through the links with their own experience, [they have] an edge to lead all people towards a more just, more viable and more humane future."*<sup>145</sup> The feminist perspective on security is therefore, according to this view, highly valid, but certainly only one of many approaches to a complex world. Rebecca Grant suggests a more integrated approach to international security with *"a framework where states and systems and women are combined as starting points for a feminist epistemology ... What a feminist perspective can and should do is to identify gender bias, and provide criteria for a research agenda that leads toward a better understanding of aspects of human behavior that have been marginalized in theories of security."*<sup>146</sup> But she does concede that a feminist epistemology can never *"stray completely from the prime task of working from women's experience."*<sup>147</sup> Both schools share the goal of transforming from within, but differ essentially as to the weight that is placed on women's experience. There is also a real danger that if women's experiences are not integrated properly they could end up being assimilated and subverted by the mainstream discourse and subsequently marginalised again.

With regard to possible weaknesses it could be argued that the so-called 'separatist' feminist approach weakens the feminist contribution to an understanding of contemporary security issues. Excluding men from the debate or the bifurcation of female and male approaches undermines the concept of holism, as well as the notion that militaristic and sexist men and women can 'unlearn' conflictual and discriminatory behaviour. A second limitation relates to the overemphasis by radical feminists on patriarchy as the root cause of women's insecurity. While this perspective certainly offers a valuable framework for analysis, it errs in the sense that it overlooks the fact that women's exclusion from global security in practical and academic terms has had negative consequences both for the disciplines of International Relations, Peace Studies and Strategic Studies, and for men and women as a whole.<sup>148</sup> In the third instance, the criticism against the current mainstream security debate as being too inclusive or broad and therefore too cumbersome, can also be levelled at the feminist contribution. Feminism even claims to strive for greater inclusivity than the current conventional thinking. However, in its defence it can be argued that prioritising threats to security is a normal part of the political process, regardless of the extent of the agenda. The broad anti-militarist stance of feminism, as well as the different angle taken regarding military security (i.e. linking public and private violence) help to raise the political profile of non-military (and often neglected) security threats. Judging from the disappointing and non-committal outcome of the UN Earth Summit in June 1997, agreement about common problems does not imply agreement about solutions. In this regard, the feminist approach to issues of comprehensive and collective security is still sorely lacking.

Feminists have made a variety of proposals, including the following mechanisms to ensure the development of 'a new security culture'. Initially, a less ambitious set of objectives concentrating on small-scale localised and contextual projects needs to be adopted. Women have been politically more effective on the local level through their involvement in development, peace and environmental projects and social movements. This involvement leads to an important sense of empowerment and works towards a more secure future. Both through grassroots and non-government organisations and the informal sector women come to improve their lives. On the issue of women's involvement in state or community politics, local government is often viewed as the most important level of government for women as it is responsible for the provision of

services such as health, childcare, water and sanitation, electricity and public transport, all of which impact directly on the lives of women. But, in order for local government to really have a positive impact on women's lives, according to Cathi Albertyn,<sup>149</sup> women must be elected to and employed by local government. In addition, local government must become accessible to women in civil society, and an understanding of women's gender roles, inequality and oppression must permeate all local government thinking. In this way, the danger of women's local projects remaining 'women's projects' can be overcome. Local government thus serves as a bridge between women in civil society and their access to the centres of power and decision-making.

A second mechanism or tactic has to do with women's unique way of taking decisions, which is directly related to their decentralised, non-hierarchical, grassroots way of organising and networking. Women at various peace camps practised alternative cyclical ways of decision-making using group discussions and intensive dialogue. This not only broke the conventional Western style, but also eventually led to a far deeper understanding of the problem.<sup>150</sup> While such an approach may appear anarchic, disorganised, and time-consuming, it provides more insight than a top-down approach and is far more interactive, with the result that consensus may finally be easier to achieve.

The monitoring of security policy by means of national machinery, such as a women's caucus, is another mechanism advanced by the feminist contribution to security thinking. A change of approach about security and structures must be reflected in security policy. Women need to assure themselves that the implementation of strategies is monitored in terms of compliance with articulated policy principles and the goals set. Betty Reardon<sup>151</sup> suggests four criteria by means of which the four dominant types of security can be monitored:

equity as a means of safe-guarding political security, the protection of human rights, and freedom from discrimination;

vulnerability as a way of keeping the socio-economic needs of the poor and the powerless on the agenda and highlighting its link to other forms of insecurity;

Protection (from harm) as it relates to the narrow concept of military security (war and public conflict), and the broader concept of all forms of physical security (violence in the private realm); and

sustainability which raises the importance of ecological issues and consequences of policy decisions by asking whether a particular policy will harm or enhance ecological security.

The effects of policy decisions on women are to be used as a barometer of the value of each decision regarding security policy.

Women can also make a valuable contribution to the employment of non-violent mechanisms applied to conflict resolution. Women's experience of local organising and peacemaking within the family creates opportunities for more contextualised approaches to conflict resolution and the application of non-violent techniques. Reardon describes this approach as "*[a] familial or kinship model of conflict resolution, in which maintaining constructive human relationship is a primary concern, seeks fairness and reconciliation rather than victory and retribution.*"<sup>152</sup> Unlike conventional institutionalised conflict resolution methods which involve power élites, promises of rewards by the mediator, and at times a superficial analysis of the roots of the conflict, the kinship model offers a degree of flexibility where non-government organisations, mothers, professional and/or interest groups and business<sup>153</sup> have the freedom to address the insecurities

of communities with a specific cultural context in a more humanising and personalised way.

Finally, women have had a long involvement in peace education as a mechanism for change. As parents and as primary and secondary school teachers, women can play a significant role in shaping attitudes about peace. Even at tertiary level, women are beginning to make their mark, as is borne out by, for instance, the dominance of women in the Peace Studies department at the University of Bradford, in the United Kingdom. The fundamental aim of peace education is social transformation. It is a life-long process and takes place in every situation and structure of human society. In this regard, Nancy Shelley, an Australian peace activist and feminist, defines peace education as being concerned with *"respect for persons, personal relationships ... social justice, sharing the world's resources, cooperation, and community. Peace education deals with oppression, sexism, racism, injustice and a recognition that violence has to do with power. Peace education involves a radical approach to curriculum, the structure of schools, and the personal relationships within schools. Peace education is concern for the planet, the environment and the connectedness of humans to other life..."*<sup>154</sup>

Against the background of this theoretical synopsis, the issue of the relevance of the feminist perspective on security for Africa will be addressed below. The state of women's security in Africa needs to be examined before the theoretical and practical implications of the feminist perspective on security for Africa can be evaluated.

## **SECURITY OF WOMEN IN AFRICA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF CONTINENTAL PEACE**

Many people in Africa are considered to be without rights despite the existence of various treaties and declarations. In practice, a combination of poverty and violence places people in situations where their lack of rights is taken as a given. For African women, this situation is compounded by the effects of patriarchy. The absence of rights thus embodies African women's comprehensive insecurity.

The purpose of this section is to analyse, within the framework of the holistic feminist viewpoint, the challenges facing women in the developing world, but particularly on the African continent. The women's movement is often criticised for not being able to translate political gains in terms of equality before the law into material security gains for women, and it is therefore in this context that the question 'How secure are women in Africa?' is posed. Another issue which will be put under the spotlight, is the way in which gender is used as an organising principle in African society and how it impacts upon women's political, socio-economic, military/bodily and environmental security. Finally, the prospects for achieving human security on the continent will be examined.

In the first place, it is contended that a feminist rethinking of the nature of threats relates directly to the threats facing the developing world. Whereas white Western middle-class women of the 1970s and 1980s were concerned with the threat of nuclear war, women in the developing world were and still are faced with a broad range of insecurities associated with imperialism, militarism, racism, sexism and poverty. The second premise relates to the contention that holistic feminist thinking on security, since it takes the recently broadened concept of security beyond its gendered underpinnings, has definite intellectual as well as practical value for men and women in Africa. The feminist perspective has much in common with what Sandra Harding calls an African worldview, where *"the individual is seen as part of the social order and as acting within that order rather than upon it. ... such a view of human behaviour could help us to think from a more global perspective that appreciates cultural diversity but at the same time*

recognizes a growing interdependence ..."<sup>155</sup>

There is, however, a danger of presenting African culture as stereotypically collectivist and Western culture as stereotypically individualistic. Not all Africans are communalistic, and Westerners are not uniquely individualistic. Other factors such as acculturation the difference between urban individualism and the more group-oriented rural mode of life need to be born in mind. But this kind of generalised comparison or typology does provide a framework for analysis and shows how compatible the feminist and African mindsets can be.

African thought processes, according to Van der Walt,<sup>156</sup> emphasise human interaction as opposed to Western thinking which has a tendency to objectify all behaviour; holistic integral knowledge as opposed to reductionist fragmentary knowledge; closeness to concrete reality as opposed to aloof abstraction; warm, personalised individual knowledge as opposed to a coldly clinical universal knowledge; synthesis as opposed to analysis; intuition, emotion, and experience as opposed to reflection, intellect, and technology; cyclical flexible and lateral thinking as opposed to linear and methodical, structured thinking; consensus and complementarity of differences as opposed to competition and binary dualisms. These differences can be reduced to the differences between the dictum 'I am because we are' and the saying 'We are because I am'. The African notion of *ubuntu* (compassion), if used in such a way that it includes women, can definitely play a role in building a greater communal spirit.

Afropessimists would contend that, while there certainly appears to be broad intellectual similarities, as well as consensus about the objects of security (human security), it remains questionable whether the merging of feminist and African mindsets can achieve for African women what the women's movement so far has failed to do. Given Africa's specific historical, political, and social context, any achievement of a comprehensive and collective security is severely hampered by a number of factors, such as:

governments operating under severe economic constraints and political instability;

the fact that mere lip-service is being paid to the principle of an egalitarian society;

the pervasiveness of patriarchy and sexism in African society; and

the weakness of civil society which may necessitate retaining the weakened state as the primary referent of security.

Efforts at generalisation and prediction are made extremely difficult by political instability and the continuous change from civilian to military rule and *vice versa*; by the fact that African society and gender roles are culturally diverse; that class is an important variable which influences the status and opportunities of women; and lastly by the fact that gender inequality in Africa reflects a combination of indigenous, precolonial and European influences.<sup>157</sup>

## **The State of Women's Rights in Africa**

The prognosis for the achievement of political security on the African continent is poor. The euphoria in the aftermath of the peaceful settlements on the continent, such as in Namibia, Mozambique, Benin, Zambia and South Africa soon made room for more cautious assessments. In this regard, Michael Bratton points out that, in comparison with the experience of Poland and Brazil where democracy evolved over a period of time, "*African regime transitions seemed frantically hurried. Insofar as democratization involves the institutionalization of procedures for*

*popular government, precious little time was available for such procedures to take root, implying that the consolidation of democratic institutions in Africa will be problematic in years to come."*<sup>158</sup>

In gendered terms, Africa's history of modern state formation is no different from that of most of the world it was also a fundamentally gendered process. It is different, though, in the sense that this process has been exacerbated by the superimposition of Western patriarchal values and practices. In precolonial times, African women enjoyed a great deal of (informal) political influence. For instance, the female chiefs of the Mende and Serbro of Sierra Leone and the 'headmen' of the Tonga in Zambia enjoyed positions of informal authority. On a formal level, the queen mother in many West African societies had the power to select the king, and female warriors for example, Queen Amina of Hausaland during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and Nzinga of Angola who led the earliest resistance to the Portuguese were revered for their leadership in battle. Women's organisations existed parallel to men's groups and enjoyed recognition as such. Within such organisations, women had the power to make decisions concerning their own interests. Economically and socially, too, women had a fair amount of informal and indirect power. Division of labour and the fact that women played a vital economic role as producers and preparers of food for the family, tending animals, and selling surplus products in local markets, were translated into high status and autonomy for women. April Gordon argues that, while the practice of polygamy is frowned upon by Westerners and feminists, it was much more indicative of the central role women played in the economic well-being of the family. In precolonial times, bridewealth (the transfer of goods or services from the male's family to the bride's family) also signified the high value attached to women in African society, since families had to be compensated for the loss of their daughters. They did not entertain the modern notion of women as a commodity.<sup>159</sup>

Parpart and Staudt sketch how a custom such as bridewealth was manipulated by colonial authorities and so-called 'traditional' men: "*Men provided increasingly large amounts of wealth in exchange for wives, thereby securing greater marital control over wives' labor. Colonial officials had an interest in stabilizing domestic relations and strengthening accumulation processes.*"<sup>160</sup> Europeans thus imposed their own gender biases by promoting all-male tribal authorities while an emphasis on 'African tradition' enhanced men's position politically, economically, as well as culturally at the expense of women. Men's advantageous social position was inextricably linked to the interchange between political and economic factors. Their access to positions of political power facilitated the unequal distribution of resources, thereby increasing gender inequality. But their economic power was derived from an easy access to education, jobs and property which, in turn, enabled them to occupy the leadership positions in post-colonial Africa. Men in the newly independent states of Africa modelled their style of leadership on those of their former colonial masters male control of public political power was therefore viewed as the logical extension of the private division of authority where the man is the head of the family.

The male-controlled state thus became a major source of insecurity for women. With the emergence of the modern Western-style state, traditional avenues of decision-making through families and local community organisations were replaced with a highly bureaucratic and centralised system.<sup>161</sup> What little control women had over the allocation of resources by means of decentralised structures was now taken from them. Add to that the dismal track-record of African states in respect of women's political representation, and one has a recipe for the complete marginalisation and neglect of women and their interests. For instance, there have been no female heads of state in Africa. Women constitute about half of the franchised population in Africa, yet during the mid-1980s, women held a mere six per cent of the legislative positions and two per cent of cabinet or equivalent positions where they are relegated to the so-

called traditional female portfolios of health, education, social welfare and women's affairs! Half of all African states had no women in cabinet at all in the mid-1980s. On the local level, however, the position regarding female representation was slightly more encouraging, namely ten per cent.<sup>162</sup>

Since that time, there have been some gains for women in terms of representation. At the end of 1995, 25 per cent of parliamentarians in Mozambique and fifteen per cent in Zimbabwe were women.<sup>163</sup> The Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly in South Africa and the Deputy Speaker in Zimbabwe are also women, although Maxi van Aardt<sup>164</sup> points out that, of eleven countries only 24 women hold positions as ministers and/or deputy ministers in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In South Africa, for instance, since 1994/95 women have occupied about 25 per cent of the seats in the National Assembly. South Africa also has a higher average in terms of gender representation than its counterparts in North America, Western and Southern Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan as members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. On a provincial level, the figure is even higher, with women members constituting 33 per cent of provincial legislatures. Yet, it was found that women were still grossly underrepresented in South African local government structures (18,75 per cent) by November 1995. Patriarchal values are also still dominant in the overwhelmingly male traditional authorities.<sup>165</sup>

The general public often assumes that increased women's representation will be enough to address women's inequality. It is estimated that a thirty per cent level of participation is the minimum requirement for women to exert a meaningful influence on the national decision-making process. Most African countries still have a long way to go in this regard. Furthermore, quotas do little to change deeply entrenched mindsets. In military and/or one-party states, women also have even less opportunity to express their views.

The ambivalence of African (male) society towards women's rights is one of the most fundamental causes of women's current politico-legal insecurity. Lip-service is paid to the principles espoused in the Western-style constitutions and declarations of many African countries. By 1995, only 33 out of 53 African states had signed the 1979 **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women** (CEDAW), which "*affirms the right of women to enter freely into marriage; to equality during marriage and its dissolution; to equal rights to guardianship of children; and to equal rights to property.*"<sup>166</sup> By 1995, six SADC member states (Namibia, Zimbabwe, Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, and Zambia) had signed and ratified the Convention. Public treaties become meaningless when signed by countries such as Zambia which has built an escape clause into its constitution which exempts marriage and personal and customary law. The Ivory Coast, Kenya and Ethiopia all allow women to inherit and own property. In the Ivory Coast, polygamy and bridewealth are forbidden. In Senegal, women have the right to choose a husband, but must consent to the husband taking additional wives. Men no longer have the right to grant themselves a divorce. Yet sadly, many of these reforms are weakly enforced and, in practice, the man remains the head of the family. Under the guise of preserving tradition, a dual legal system which perpetuates women's subservience to men is unofficially condoned and maintained. In contrast to the West where economically dependent women at least enjoy legal protection in compensation for their economic dependence on their husbands, African women in a similar situation have no automatic right to their husbands' assets or their children in case of death or divorce.<sup>167</sup>

Since gender is not central to the African analysis of politics and security, it comes as no surprise that most African governments have failed to integrate women into policy formulation, partly as a result of a lack of understanding of gender issues and how to translate these into

policy and also because of a reluctance on the part of male power-holders to lose or share deeply entrenched privileges.

So far in this discussion, the state has been depicted as one of the main sources of women's insecurity. But the analysis is, in fact, more complex. While it is true that men benefit more from the African state than women, it is also correct to point out that, in the context of a continent in crisis, where corruption, undemocratic government procedures, and lack of political accountability exist, and where *élites* control civil and economic power, both men and women are left insecure. On the one hand, a weakened state can be equated with an insecure state. But in theory on the other hand, weak states offer the chance for robust social movements to shape their own security. In this regard, Parpart and Staudt cite Thomas Callaghy who warns that African states' ability to mould society should not be reified. The coexistence of traditional and Western values however hypocritical that may be shows that African states are "*neither monolithic nor unchanging*."<sup>168</sup> This suggests that there should be enough room for the development of a vibrant civil society, both to give substance to the concept of human security and to foster a regional consciousness based upon common interests. However, civil society in Africa, in general, is hampered by the legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism, an unfamiliarity with a base-line approach, and poor communication between countries. Other impeding factors include a lack of consistency and cohesion, the absence of a clear sense of identity and the ephemeral, transitory or crisis-ridden nature of many such movements.<sup>169</sup> A severe shortage of resources, coupled with the unwillingness of states to sacrifice sovereignty, further hinders the sustainability of civil society.

Women can and should play a pivotal role in building a security community based on common values. Since the mid-1980s, there has been a significant growth in the number of women's organisations. Formal and informal women's associations, such as grassroots self-help groups formed by poor rural women, serve as vehicles of economic security and assistance. Women's groups that are modelled on their Western colonial counterparts focus on social welfare activities and are dominated by *élite* and middle-class African women. Since the 1970s, international organisations also began to promote small-scale 'women's projects' such as commercial crafts production. Although these organisations have played a valuable role in raising consciousness and self-confidence, as well as in building capacity and leadership skills, they are hampered by a number of problems. Isolated international efforts to foster women's development have failed to place them on the mainstream development agenda. Women's lack of education, management skills and finance minimise the success of women's groups; networking and co-ordination between women's organisations are insufficient; and women's work in the community severely limits the amount of time available to pursue the larger goal of promoting common values and comprehensive human security. But the greatest problem, according to April Gordon,<sup>170</sup> is that most women's organisations are essentially middle-class and consequently fairly conservative, antifeminist and content with the *status quo*. These organisations not only fail to challenge gender-role assumptions, but have also been insensitive to the needs of poor women. Due to their lack of a civic political agenda, such organisations should technically not be regarded as truly part of civil society. More politicised and militant women's movements also have their share of problems. Now that the South African post-election euphoria has subsided, the cracks in the ANC Women's League are all the more apparent. Instead of giving primacy to women's issues, the movement is paralysed by party-political in-fighting. This has alienated many women and led to the proliferation of national institutions committed to the empowerment of women, such as the Office on the Status of Women, the *ad hoc* Committee on Improving the Quality of Life and Status of Women, the parliamentary Women's Group and the Commission on Gender Equity.<sup>171</sup> The proliferation of women's organisations or structures should not be seen as a drawback, or as a symptom of a lack of cohesion, but rather as one way of building a

security community.<sup>172</sup> The notion of civil society as the sum total of these organisations also fits in with the recognition that women's experiences are diverse and multiple. Women are able to co-operate despite differences, as seen in the networking initiatives encouraged by the third **World Conference on Women** in Nairobi (1985), the African Platform for Action at the fifth **African Regional Conference on Women** in Dakar, Senegal and the fourth **World Conference on Women** in Beijing (1995).

## From Securing Basic Needs to Sustainable Development

If structural violence is used as a yardstick of women's security on the African continent, then the prospects for their well-being seem bleak, both in spite and because of international and local efforts at development. African women suffer (and even die) as a result of an unequal distribution of resources within global and national economic, political, and social systems. In a recent survey of local entrepreneurs in 69 countries on the issue of the link between credibility and investment, sub-Saharan Africa was singled out "*for the most severe deterioration in the state's effectiveness*"<sup>173</sup> in meeting basic needs and providing a safe environment for development. Most sub-Saharan countries are situated at the bottom of both the gender empowerment measure (GEM) rankings (devised by the UN **Human Development Report**) and the gender-related development index (GDI) which focuses on gender inequalities. Sierra Leone, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso are among the five lowest on the scale.<sup>174</sup>

In this context, David Lamb rather cynically describes the life of the African woman as follows: "*Her comforts are few, her burdens many. But if liberation means freedom to work, rather than from work, she is the world's most liberated woman.*"<sup>175</sup> In preparation for the Beijing Conference, the African Platform for Action spelt out African women's economic insecurity. It noted that 35 per cent of all households have a woman at the head and are in dire need of support in the form of policy; special economic programmes for poor women especially in the informal and the agricultural sectors are required; and gender-biased laws which constrain the economic potential of women need to be changed.<sup>176</sup>

In precapitalist Africa, men and women (although men played a dominant role) worked together as a single productive unit. Where women had rights to land, animals, and the products of their own labour, their status was higher. But with colonialism came the forcible integration of African states into the global capitalist economy. The capitalist system reinforced women's inequality. To ensure a cheap labour supply and to extract the mineral wealth of Africa, agriculture was commercialised and mechanised with the purpose of producing cash crops for export. Men took control of cash crop production and women were left behind in the traditional sector responsible for local subsistence food production. Thus, the introduction of a wage-labour market reduced the economic interdependence between men and women and enabled men to increase their economic power, whereas women's exclusion from certain areas of production made them economically more dependent upon men.<sup>177</sup>

In Africa, women's economic contribution is higher than in other regions of the developing world. African women spend 44 per cent of their time in economic activities whereas Latin American and Asian women work 28 per cent and 36 per cent<sup>178</sup> respectively of all their time in the market or in the subsistence sector. Nevertheless, African women's contribution is often omitted from national income accounts. Women in Africa play a dual role in the economy, inside the home as subsistence farmers and care-takers, and outside the home in the agricultural sector and in the informal urban sector. Women farmers in sub-Saharan Africa are responsible for between sixty and eighty per cent of all agricultural production,<sup>179</sup> thus forming the economic backbone of the rural community. While men earn cash on nearby plantations or in the cities, women in the rural

areas work long hours in the fields with primitive equipment. An average of 1 000 hours per annum (in rural Kenya 56 hours per week)<sup>180</sup> is spent in the field, planting and harvesting crops, collecting firewood and fetching water. An extra three to four hours per day are spent on unpaid domestic work such as food preparation and childcare. Where women are employed in seasonal part-time agricultural work, they are also generally paid less than seventy per cent of men's wage rates.<sup>181</sup> Men spend money on themselves, while women spend their money on the household and their children. Not only is women's subsistence work accorded lower social and economic value, as being unscientific, traditional and unproductive, but the state has also contributed towards the deterioration of women's traditional situation by keeping the price of traditional food crops low in order to benefit urban consumers.<sup>182</sup>

For women farmers in Africa, their struggle for survival is deeply intertwined with the competition for land, and access to the resources (capital and technology) for its development. Women have little legal control over the land they farm. Often the best land is granted to men for the production of cash crops while women are deprived of their ancestral claims to land. Colonial policies, such as the **Swynnerton Act** in Kenya in the 1950s which introduced private land ownership for the male heads of households,<sup>183</sup> continue to this day and threaten the economic security of women. The only way women can gain access to land is often through marriage. Yet, in Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland, married women are under the permanent guardianship of their husbands and have no right to manage property. In Zimbabwe, husbands allow their wives a piece of land where they can grow 'women's crops' such as sweet potatoes, nuts, and millet, but the decision on cultivating the remainder of the land rests ultimately with the husband, even though caring for the crop is the woman's responsibility. According to the UNDP's **Human Development Report** (1995), only 69 per cent of female farmers receive extension visits, compared with 97 per cent of male farmers, and only seven per cent of extension agents/advisors are women. Rural women in Africa receive less than ten per cent of the credit available to small farmers and only one per cent of the total credit to agriculture. Technological changes often aggravate the disadvantaged situation of women. In Sierra Leone, the mechanisation of rice cultivation cut men's workload, but increased that of women because more planting and transplanting (traditionally female tasks) were required. Due to cost and tradition, women rarely use draught animals. However, the practice of weeding can be done six times faster with animal traction. If these women were to receive the same kind of assistance and incentives as men, their productivity would increase dramatically.<sup>184</sup>

The validity of the well-known gender dualism in African agriculture, namely that men are responsible for cash crops and women for subsistence food production, is questioned by Whitehead in the present context as it "*understates the involvement of women in the modern sector of the economy [women's involvement in cash crop production] and ignores the fact that food crops are also grown as cash crops.*"<sup>185</sup> Women entered the wage labour market towards the end of the colonial period only to have their unequal status confirmed by multi- and transnational corporations that, in an attempt to escape minimum wage requirements, working-hour regulations, and environmental legislation at home, exploited the newly appointed female labour force in the developing world.<sup>186</sup>

Women's economic hardship in the rural areas and their disadvantaged position in the formal employment sector have forced them into the informal unremunerated sector. Women's involvement in the informal sector is often overlooked by governments and international agencies. Sixty per cent of Africa's labour force works in this sector, the major part of which are women. In Nigeria, for example, 94 per cent of street food-vendors are women. Women's resources are most of the time directed *via* informal, unregulated or non-state channels. Selling foodstuffs and crafts, as well as 'black market' enterprises, such as prostitution, smuggling and

illegal beer brewing, are examples of their involvement in the informal sector.<sup>187</sup> This sector grew dramatically during the 1980s, because of the decline in security of employment in the formal sector. The informal sector is increasingly being viewed as a safety net and a source of alternative income. Another reason for its popularity among women may be attributed to the fact that women are considered risky clients by commercial banks. Informal financial institutions such as 'people's banks', saving and loan co-operatives and revolving credit systems have stepped in to fill the void. Other factors which encourage women to enter the informal sector are their inadequate skills and knowledge of simple business management techniques such as book-keeping and marketing, their lack of access to and the high cost of business premises and basic infrastructure such as water and electricity, and cumbersome laws and regulations relating to taxation and licensing.<sup>188</sup>

In a negative sense, the growth of the informal sector (which is also quite precarious in terms of minimum wages and working conditions) may be regarded as a reflection of the failure of efforts at development and as a desperate attempt at short-term poverty alleviation. Michael Todaro<sup>189</sup> estimates that of the world's total households, seventeen to 28 per cent (in South Africa more than forty per cent) are headed by women and that such households are among the poorest in society, partly as a result of women's inequality. Caroline Moser<sup>190</sup> maintains that, in parts of Africa, the figure may even be higher than fifty per cent, while in refugee camps it could be between eighty and ninety per cent. This is not a new phenomenon, but its significance lies in the fact that it is on the increase and is currently also more openly acknowledged. The 'feminisation of poverty' is therefore inextricably linked to the notion of food insecurity. Moreover, female impoverishment and food insecurity are manifestations of structures and policies which foster deeply entrenched gender differentiation.

African food security declined steadily during the 1980s, and food dependency is currently closely linked to factors such as environmental degradation, rising mortality and unemployment rates, and the negative effects of global profit-driven policies. The gendered effects of such factors and policies are particularly salient in Africa. The main food producers of the continent and their children are often worst hit due to their unequal access to resources. Tradition also plays its part when women allow the family to eat first, when men and male children are given the biggest and most nutritious share of the food, and when boys are breastfed longer, and taken more readily to health services.

Women's plight is aggravated by the fact that policies to alleviate poverty usually benefit African men in allowing them greater employment opportunities in the urban sector via a ready access to education and skills training. Gender disparities in education (as the key to women's empowerment) are, however, slowly but surely being addressed. The UN **Human Development Report** (1995) has noted that "*[g]ender gaps in adult literacy and school enrolment halved between 1970 and 1990 in the developing world, and women's literacy rose from 54 per cent of the male rate in 1970 to 74 per cent in 1990. In Africa, female enrolment rates at secondary level increased from 8 per cent in 1960 to 32 per cent in 1991. Zimbabwe raised the adult women's literacy rate to 70 per cent or more.*"<sup>191</sup> However, by 1990, sub-Saharan Africa still had a female illiteracy rate of 62 per cent. The highest female illiteracy rates are in West Africa with Burkina Faso (91 per cent), Sierra Leone (89 per cent) and Nigeria (61 per cent) topping the list.<sup>192</sup>

The extreme poverty and underdevelopment of Africa places a severe burden on existing formal and informal systems of social security. Social security as the sum total of all assistance to individuals and social groups, is designed not only to ensure their physical survival, but also to afford protection from any deterioration in their standard of living. Countries such as Zimbabwe,

Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi and Mozambique do not have comprehensive social security schemes. Formal social security systems in Southern Africa are also not sufficiently gender conscious. In Tanzania, for instance, family relief allowance is given to male and unmarried female employees, but not to married women whose husbands are employed. Differentials in legal retirement ages for men and women discriminate against women as their old-age benefits are automatically smaller. Free medical care should, but is not always available to the lowest paid employees who are mostly women.<sup>193</sup>

Women's health is directly affected by economic, socio-cultural and psychological factors. There is a definite link between women's unenviable position of being 'poor, powerless and pregnant', together with the increase in the feminisation of poverty and the lack of government attention to primary health care for girl-children and reproductive healthcare for women. African women are 200 times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than women in industrialised countries. According to the **Human Development Report**, "[m]aternal mortality rates in sub-Saharan Africa are the highest in the world, with 150 000 dying from birth-related causes each year."<sup>194</sup> Avoidance of pregnancy through birth control is an important factor both in prolonging women's life expectancy and improving the socio-economic life of the family. However, by the early 1990s, up to ninety per cent of women in ten African countries were not aware of modern methods of contraception. Apart from increasing awareness and improving facilities, cultural barriers need to be overcome in order to halt the reproductive treadmill. In many African societies, a woman's status is determined by the size of her family, and very often children serve as an important source of labour and income for poor families.<sup>195</sup> In South Africa, as in many other African countries, female farmworkers are the most disadvantaged of all, also in terms of health care. They often suffer from respiratory problems such as bronchitis, tuberculosis and asthma. Their poverty and general deprivation of civil rights are compounded by the fact that, in remote rural areas, access to primary health care facilities is limited and irregular.<sup>196</sup>

In recent times, acquired immunity deficiency syndrome (AIDS) has also become a 'feminised' disease and a global security threat. By 1990, an estimated one in forty adult men and women in Africa was infected with the human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV). For women aged fifteen to 49, the rate of infection at that stage was 2 500 per 100 000. There is a high rate of AIDS/HIV infection among urban women, especially prostitutes. The World Health Organisation has estimated that, around the beginning of the nineties, about two million women in sub-Saharan Africa carried the AIDS virus. Between 1,5 and three million women in Central and Eastern Africa's AIDS belt are expected to die from AIDS in the 1990s. Most of the infected women are at the reproductive age who have a fifteen to 45 per cent chance of passing the virus to their infants.<sup>197</sup> This is particularly disturbing, given the fact that fertility rates have increased in eleven sub-Saharan countries.<sup>198</sup> In South Africa in 1995, 10,4 per cent of women throughout the country were infected with HIV, and with an infection rate which doubles every five to twelve months,<sup>199</sup> there is certainly cause for concern. With the rise of Muslim fundamentalism in Africa, women's health is under threat from religion. Archaic religious laws and customs are manipulated to justify barbaric practices, such as circumcision and genital mutilation.

On the issue of the impact of development strategies on the socio-economic security of women in Africa or the developing world, two broad feminist schools of thought have emerged. The first view is represented by Ester Boserup who, as far back as 1970, challenged the assumption that the problems of women in the developing world was the result of insufficient participation in the process of modernisation. She and other scholars, such as Janet Momsen in her study of *Women and Development in the Third World* (1991), have concluded that economic development has had a divergent impact on men and women, development aid having actually negatively affected the status of women. This view argues from the perspective of Northern

feminists and is premised on a critique of gender-biased or sexist approaches to development. The second perspective, a combination of radical and Marxist feminist thought emerging from the developing world, argues that women's declining position is directly related to their assimilation into the global market economy that is built upon a patriarchal exchange between North and South.<sup>200</sup>

The modernisation approach to development did not see women as a distinct and particularly disadvantaged group. Seemingly gender-neutral initiatives simply assumed that men were the beneficiaries of aid and training and that women would benefit *via* their husbands. Male privilege was justified in the name of African tradition. Many development projects failed because they were imposed upon communities and did not take the specific context and dynamics of the situation into consideration. The effects of such an approach on women's economic security are well documented. Bernal's (1988) study in Northern Sudan and Carney's (1988) study in The Gambia of irrigation schemes where cash crops were given preference, resettlement schemes in Cameroon, and women's increased workload as a result of cash crop production and their lack of access to the money they raised in the production of cash crops, indicate how men were given preferential treatment by development agencies and African governments.<sup>201</sup> The welfare approach to development also failed as it led to the creation of two parallel approaches on the one hand, as financial aid for economic growth and, on the other, as relief or survival aid for so-called socially vulnerable groups. Women were treated as passive recipients of development, rather than as participants in the development process. The primary aim of another approach, the equity approach, was to give women their fair share of the benefits of development in the public and the private spheres of life by means of top-down legislation and policies. Many development agencies, as well as developing world governments, found this to be politically unacceptable. Both groups perceived the attempt at addressing broad gender issues in society by fundamentally redistributing power as a form of intervention in the affairs of a sovereign state.<sup>202</sup>

(Northern) feminists, who focus entirely on gender bias and sexism as the root cause of the unequal impact of development on women, are criticised for overlooking "*the deep-rooted mechanisms established by Northern countries, with the participation of Southern states, mechanisms which result in a negation of basic needs ... the financing of white-elephant projects while basic infrastructure ... fail miserably; the unfair economic exchange wherein the technology of Northern countries is bought at high prices, while natural resources are purchased at low prices...*"<sup>203</sup> The more radical view therefore emphasises that the impoverishment of women is derived mainly from (structural) domination of the South by the North. Women, according to this view, are a separate issue on the development agenda, since they argue, from a functionalist perspective, that the involvement of women is vital for the efficiency of any development scheme. Morally, they argue that the empowerment of women is the motor force for meaningful development.<sup>204</sup>

It is in this context that International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank policies of structural adjustment have been the target of severe criticism. Loans are extended only if the debtor countries adjust the so-called 'distortions' (such as support given to the poor in the form of food subsidies) in their domestic economies. External debt must be reduced by cutting domestic spending and switching to export-led strategies of growth in order to compete in the global market. Women in Africa, as in the rest of the developing world, have been harshly affected by the reduction in public spending because, as social welfare programmes in areas of health, food subsidies, education and housing are cut, women, who are traditionally the providers of the basic needs of the family, have had to carry this burden with little or no government assistance. Switching from subsistence to cash crop economies has led to the displacement of farming

families and turned them into a cheap and exploited labour force. Loss of income, combined with a sharp rise in food costs, has forced women to find extra income.<sup>205</sup> According to the UN **Human Development Report**,<sup>206</sup> the number of women dying in childbirth in Harare, Zimbabwe, doubled in two years after an adjustment programme was implemented in 1991 and health spending was cut by a third. In The Gambia, child malnutrition increased and in Nigeria in the 1980s, many women who moved into public sector jobs after the petroleum boom of the 1960s and the 1970s lost their jobs as a result of structural adjustment.<sup>207</sup> The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that a few million pounds of debt reduction in sub-Saharan Africa would save the lives of hundreds of thousands of children and thousands of women in childbirth. Over the next four years, Ethiopia will pay more than US \$1 billion in debt servicing, spending four times as much on debt servicing as on health.<sup>208</sup> A growing awareness of the impact of these policies on the poor and on women, in particular, led the World Bank (1989) to admit that "*[m]odernization' has shifted the balance of advantage against women. The legal framework and the modern social sector and producer services developed by the independent African nations (and also most externally sponsored development projects) have not served women well.*"<sup>209</sup> However, instead of changing the basic structure of structural adjustment programmes, compensatory measures were merely added, as was reflected in the document entitled *Protecting the Poor during Periods of Adjustment* (1987).

Only if development is recognised as a right for all, will threats to African women's well-being and economic security be taken seriously. However, meeting basic needs as a second and a third generation right is difficult to guarantee and implement, especially if the resources available to the state are limited. The states in Africa face a major challenge if they want to pull this off, because only economic development itself can ultimately bring about a change in gender roles.

Addressing the marginalisation of women in the development process would not only help women, but would enable them to make a meaningful contribution to the overall development effort. Caroline Moser<sup>210</sup> argues that a distinction between strategic and practical gender needs may provide useful methodological tools for the planning of an economic security framework. These two categories are also causally related. Strategic gender needs are essentially feminist as they challenge women's subordinate position in society. In contrast, practical gender (or rather women's) needs are more tactical and usually non-feminist in nature, because they are formulated from women's concrete experience, that is, the effects of women's engendered status. In this regard, a World Bank policy report (1995) identified education, health, wage labour, agriculture, the management of natural resources and financial services as key areas where strategic demands for equal opportunity and access, together with basic needs such as food, water and shelter, must be met.<sup>211</sup>

Within the framework of an empowerment approach to development and socio-economic security, power is viewed less in terms of domination over others (i.e. a gain for women implying a loss for men), and more in terms of a base-line process through which "*the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength ... the right to make choices in life and to influence the direction of change through the ability to gain control over crucial material and non-material resources*"<sup>212</sup> are being realised.

Political activism, the awakening of consciousness and popular education, together with receptive public policy and the legal acknowledgement of women's right to economic security, can play a role in preventing conservative interests from erecting barriers to female participation in policy formulation and strategic planning initiatives in the agricultural and monetised sectors of the economy. Strengthening women's organisations albeit at a grassroots level as small-scale

self-help projects, peasant co-operatives, credit associations or national networks has the potential to exert political pressure on both internal and external donors to enter into partnerships with women's groups. A fair amount of government intervention<sup>213</sup> may also be required to specifically target poor women in terms of access to land, credit, and skills. April Gordon notes that sufficient government attention to the informal sector could spur it on to become "*the fertile ground for the expansion of indigenous African entrepreneurial activity and economic growth*" by creating "*a large, female, small- to medium-business class.*"<sup>214</sup>

Given African women's precarious situation, especially in the rural areas, a jointly-run, self-reliant model of development may be the best answer in the short term. Participatory social relations, grassroots development and a decentralised approach to decision-making may best serve women's interests in the short run.

## **Women in Combat at Home and on the Battlefield**

Whereas women's socio-economic security and physical survival in a material sense are often linked to more indirect external and structural factors such as the global economic system, their physical well-being is also directly threatened by other human beings through civil strife and the prevailing legacy of a militaristic culture.

By drawing the United States and the former Soviet Union into intervening militarily, economically and politically in Africa, the ideological dimension of the Cold War fostered a synergy between global, regional and local dynamics of security. As a result, the plight of women and their own struggle to gain equality and freedom from oppression were obscured. One ought not to forget, however, that the wars of liberation in Africa had many victims of both sexes. The end of the Cold War has not brought significant gains for African women. To some extent one may even argue that the end of the old world order has impacted negatively on the security position of African women. The surge towards democratisation has raised great hopes for lasting peace on the continent. But this can only be achieved over an extended period of time. How can 'instant' democracies in the midst of regional economic difficulty, saddled as they are with an inability to carry out the critical functions of government such as overseeing national resources, rendering basic services and maintaining law and order faced with an inhospitable global market, and lacking a deep-rooted commitment to tolerance and the protection of human rights, be expected to care about women? In many African states, such as Kenya and Cameroon, multipartyism exists only in name. Already weak states, further 'emasculated' by ethnic and tribal strife, have neither the resources nor the moral and political will to secure one of the most marginalised groupings in society. Strong ethnic sentiments within deeply polarised societies justify, in part, the maintenance of military and paramilitary forces whose loyalties lie with the ruling *élite*. Amidst mutual retaliation and counter-attacks, ethnic conflict has taken on genocidal proportions in countries like Liberia, Ethiopia, Somalia, Burundi, and Rwanda. Bringing peace and stability to such areas is often hampered by the presence of criminal paramilitary activity, protection rackets, and warlordism. Even in Southern Africa, one of the few areas where superpower withdrawal has facilitated relative stability and reconciliation, cracks are beginning to emerge. Hutu militias and refugees are spilling over into Angola. Members of Zaire's former President Mobutu Sese Seko's presidential guard are crossing into Angola to join UNITA, which is currently regrouping with the aim of crossing swords with the Angolan government over the control of the Cabinda diamond fields.<sup>215</sup>

Not only are women and children among the many who die in these bloody conflicts, but civil war has the ability to displace entire communities, mostly women, children and the elderly. By 1994, it was estimated that women and children constitute eighty per cent of the 22 million

internally and externally displaced Africans.<sup>216</sup> These women are physically threatened by war, starvation, malnutrition, poor sanitary conditions, as well as rape and other forms of sexual violence. It is further important to remember that non-refugee women whose lives are at the best of times in dire straits, have to compete for scarce resources with refugees flowing into their areas. In Southern Africa, the legacy of the Cold War lives on in the form of landmines and the proliferation of light weapons such as AK-47 assault rifles. While landmines kill indiscriminately, it is also true that in the rural areas women and girls who collect water and carry wood over long distances are particularly vulnerable. The proliferation of weapons poses a real danger in areas where crime syndicates operate, thus placing women, among others, in the crossfire again.

In 1984, while receiving US \$534 million for famine and development aid, Ethiopia spent \$447 million on military forces in order to fight the civil war. In 1988, Angola spent sixty per cent of its government revenues on military forces.<sup>217</sup> In the post-Cold War period, there have been sharp downward trends in conventional arms-production in developing countries such as Iran, South Africa, Iraq, Egypt, Israel, Argentina and Brazil. Generally, arms imports from less industrialised countries have also declined substantially. However, the root of the problem, namely both a deeply entrenched culture of militarism and vested interests cannot be expected to disappear overnight. Paul Dunne explains: *"The end of the Cold War has removed the justification for huge expenditure on arms by the superpowers and their allies. But there remain many who argue the contrary ... the vested interests within the 'military industrial complex' are continually defining new threats which require the maintenance of the present force and procurement levels ... This is not to say there are no real threats ... But ... the new potential threats will not require the same level of resources as were devoted to the military during the Cold War."*<sup>218</sup> In Europe, the cuts in military spending did not lead to a noticeable peace dividend. In fact, the savings in military expenditure were reallocated to reduce budget deficits during a time of recession. In the light of the European experience and the African economic crisis, it remains dubious whether military savings can be translated into benefits for education, health, welfare, and housing. Even in South Africa, where there is a relatively high degree of political commitment towards human development, the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme is hampered by hawkish elements in the defence industry and government who wish to maintain current levels of defence spending. In June 1997, the Defence Review proposed and accepted a compromise between hawks and doves by opting for a smaller and cheaper, but better equipped defence force<sup>219</sup> to be achieved mainly through cutting personnel rather than equipment.

The main argument of the South African National Defence Force, namely to maintain its capacity to deal with a threat should it arise, serves as a reminder on the one hand, of the real concern about diminished security if military readiness and protection from external (state and non-state) aggression are neglected. On the other hand, this statement is not only indicative of the prevalence of the militarised culture in Africa, but also has very definite implications for women in Africa. A number of internal and external factors combine to explain the tenacity of militarism. In the post-independence period, most African states adopted the Western masculinised military model as a symbol of their newly found independence. Heightened by the effects of the Cold War where the West and the former Soviet Union exported war into Africa, the military in Africa began to act as protectors of *élite* interests in the face of popular discontent. Military spending in African countries is further encouraged by the profit-driven goals of the North, which sells surplus arms to the developing world. Such practices are also often not sufficiently highlighted and challenged. Northern feminists, in particular, take flack for their frequent silence on the effects of arms sales to the developing world. Internally, African women's organisations are faced with such a vast array of feminist issues, like the feminisation of poverty and violence against women, that selective prioritisation is inevitable. Consequently, the linkage between

women's poverty and the increased military spending is often either overlooked or given less prominence. One of the ways of ensuring that funds are directed towards the civilian sector is to develop a 'women's budget'. Limited efforts have been made in this regard in South Africa but it remains problematic, since the women's budget has an alternative status which defeats the object of transformation from within.

As long as African governments continue to pay lip-service to basic democratic principles, the military will remain largely a sectarian and undemocratic institution founded on the principles of the protection of dominant racial, class, ethnic, and gender groupings.

With the exception of post-apartheid South Africa, African countries have displayed an ambivalence towards the position of women in the military. It is hoped that policy guidelines with regard to equal selection and training procedures and those pertaining to the increase of the number of women in senior positions and at all levels of decision-making, will eradicate discrimination in the South African military institution.<sup>220</sup> But these efforts, though hailed as progressive and courageous, have been problematic. Political expediency has paid scant attention to various logistical and practical considerations such as day-care for children and family disruption when both parents are serving members and have to attend courses or be deployed away from home. Very little research, if any, has been done in the South African context regarding training men and women together, the impact upon the combat unit and the experiences of women in the liberation armies. A concomitant of this is the fact that careful research of the US experience (Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces submitted to the US President on 15 November 1992 after the Gulf War) revealed a strong case against engaging women in ground combat.<sup>221</sup> This is a complex and sensitive issue, and policy-makers and gender caucuses need to take cognisance of public opinion. Two surveys conducted by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) in 1995 and 1996, concluded that sixty per cent of respondents (in the 1995 survey) and 48 per cent in the 1996 survey were against women in combat positions. So, while there is a small shift towards acceptance of women doing active duty in the frontlines, it is counter-balanced by respondents' overall rejection of women taking part in police patrols in dangerous areas. In spite of all this, more than three-quarters of the respondents are in favour of recruiting more women into the armed services. Only five per cent of ANC supporters were in favour of allowing women to volunteer for combat duty. This is surprising, given women's high profile in Umkhonto we Sizwe, as well as the role women leaders are currently playing at the national level.<sup>222</sup> The black community's opposition to the deployment of women in combat positions may suggest that cultural gender stereotypes are still very strong and that, while the leadership may be enlightened, a change of attitude has not yet worked through to the grassroots level. The 'discrepancy' may also suggest that the strategy of incorporating women into the armed forces to promote equal rights and/or to break the link between militarism and masculinity is well intended, but grossly oversimplistic. The matter is particularly complex in Africa society is still deeply patriarchal, the politics of the day is largely undemocratic, and militarised violence has become a way of life.

Feminist theorists have made a significant contribution towards freeing the concept of military security from its narrow association with physical and 'organised' violence during war. A broader conceptualisation of violence, to include violence against women, is particularly apt in the African context. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has expressed its concern over the world-wide increase in the incidence of intentional injuries inflicted on people in general, but especially on women and children. It has therefore urged the WHO director-general to "*[i]dentify the types, magnitude and causes of violence, as well as the public health consequences by using a gender perspective in the analysis.*"<sup>223</sup>

The sharp rise in violence against women in Africa manifests itself, among others, in rape, pervasive sexism and victimisation in secondary and tertiary institutions. Rapes of Kenyan women students by high-school men are commonplace as is indicated by the case of 360 male students who raped 71 students of the dormitory of St Kizito boarding school in Meru in July 1991. Nineteen women were suffocated or trampled to death in the process. Ironically, it was the killings that incidentally exposed the prevalence of such rapes.<sup>224</sup> Cases from tertiary institutions in Kenya, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Somalia and Senegal have also demonstrated a sharp rise in sexual violence against students by male students and lecturers in recent years.<sup>225</sup> Between 1974 and 1995, the incidence of rape in South Africa increased by 149 per cent.<sup>226</sup> During the years of political transition in South Africa (1990-1994), the incidence of rape cases increased by 42 per cent.<sup>227</sup> While official statistics often do not accurately reflect the situation due to underestimation and/or under-reporting, in South Africa *"rapes reported between 1990 and 1995 show a gradual increase each year from 20 321 to 36 888."*<sup>228</sup> Between 65 and 75 million women world-wide are victims of some form of genital mutilation, such as circumcision, excision and infibulation. In Somalia, for instance, some girls' vaginas are stitched together to ensure purity until marriage.<sup>229</sup> Since the late seventies, awareness of such barbaric practices has increased and has led to many African governments discouraging or outlawing these practices. It also led to the establishment of the Inter-African Committee to combat such practices.<sup>230</sup> However, legislation has done little so far to change deeply entrenched mindsets.

The high incidence of violence against women in Africa can be attributed to an interconnected range of cultural/religious, economic, political, military and criminal factors. Culture or customary law is the first factor that influences the physical security of women. The subservient status of women, particularly rural women, in many African countries is deeply rooted in tradition. Through various marriage rituals, most of these women are objectified. Rituals such as *lobola* (bridewealth), (female) child pledging, and the tradition of inheriting women (being regarded as the property of fathers, uncles, husbands and older brothers) depersonalise women. These practices set the stage for inflicting harm on women such as beatings by husbands, marital rape, femicide, sexual harassment, and genital mutilation. In the name of tradition, different moral standards often apply to men and women. Wives are expected to remain sexually faithful, while their spouses are permitted to have as many girl friends and wives as they can support. McFadden remarks that *"[i]n some societies, sons are the ones who are tasked with the murder of their mothers as the only way to cleanse the family from her alleged or real sexual promiscuity. Matricide becomes the ultimate purifier polluted by uncontrolled ... female sexuality."*<sup>231</sup> Young girls' bodies are mutilated since premarital sex is traditionally taboo in rural Africa. Removal of the clitoris or death are some of the ways in which women are controlled or punished. Mutilation can also take place after death: *"There are still societies where a woman cannot be buried if she dies a virgin, and must be occupied by some male, so that 'her spirit can rest'; [or] where her corpse has to be sexually occupied by the village fool in order that her husband, who is still living, can take another wife without being haunted by her spirit, ... None of these practices are extended to men."*<sup>232</sup> Educated African males are often the most hypocritical in their views about women's physical integrity. They often argue that this concept is the product of bourgeois and liberal thinking and therefore 'unaffrican'.<sup>233</sup> Such a schizophrenic political position is clearly illustrated by the case in 1979 of the Kenyan parliament (168 men and four women) which considered a bill to legalise polygamy and to codify marriage standards with the aim of 'safeguarding the interests' of wives and children in the case of the death of the husband. On the basis of objections to the corporal punishment section of the bill which would have denied a man his 'traditional right' to beat his spouse, the bill was finally scrapped.<sup>234</sup>

A second factor related to the cultural origin of violence against women is the stranglehold that some religions, particularly Muslim radicalism, have on traditional society. According to a recent study, almost 97 per cent of Egyptian girls undergo circumcision. The many deaths resulting from botched operations by untrained barbers and midwives led to the Ministry of Health banning such practices in hospitals and clinics in 1996. But in 1997, an Egyptian court ruled that the ban was contrary to Islam.<sup>235</sup> Furthermore, in Egypt, acid attacks are the favourite method of punishment of Islamic terrorists against young women seen as offending religious sensibilities by wearing make-up and miniskirts.<sup>236</sup> This form of misogyny (hatred of women) has recently taken a 'nasty' turn as this punishment is now being meted out by economically and sexually frustrated lovers, husbands and fathers.

The previous example ties up with a third reason for the increase in violence against women, i.e. economic factors. Maria Mies<sup>237</sup> contends that traditional violence against women has increased as a result of the process of modernisation in the developing world which led to a breakdown of traditional social values in the home. One could speculate as to the possible connections between class and gender violence. It may be argued that gender violence flowing from economic frustration is mostly a middle-class phenomenon where changes in traditional gender roles women entering the corporate world and gaining economic power are at the root of some men's hatred. However, it is also a fact that poor women in urban areas are more vulnerable to sexual and other forms of violence due to their marginalised position in the workplace, e.g. as domestic workers.

A feminist reading of the evidence points towards political factors (structural violence) as underlying all forms of physical violence against women. In Africa, patriarchy of the state, blatant or masked by cultural and religious rituals, is the common denominator. Lenient sentences and severely limited recourse to the law render states the perpetrators of violence against women. States also act indirectly as condoners or passive bystanders through their failure to challenge the private/public divide in all spheres of life.

A further contributing factor to the *malaise* is the omnipotent culture of military and criminal violence in African societies. Research has also shown that countries undergoing transition to democracy are prone to a sharp increase in crime,<sup>238</sup> because change is usually accompanied by a reshaping or transformation of the instruments of social control, such as the police and the military. Such a situation presents opportunities for organised crime to gain a foothold. In the Southern African region, countries such as South Africa, Namibia, and Mozambique are at present in the process of consolidating democracy amidst rising popular expectations and shrinking resources. The rise in the rates of sexual crime against women must be seen against this background.

It may not be easy to curtail the wave of gender violence in the short term. Legislation aimed at preventing sexual violence represents a first step in the fight for women's personal security. But the promulgation of laws and the adoption of politically correct constitutions and gender sensitive policies cannot be expected to effect social change. A complex range of variables, such as police attitudes, clarity of procedures, the involvement of non-government organisations in training, more attention to victim empowerment and harsher sentences, among others, need to be inculcated. The law can only provide the backdrop against which a meaningful transformation of attitudes can be achieved through an evolutionary process of education and socialisation. It is furthermore important for women to critically look at rituals and what they mean. What may on the surface appear to be benign, traditional and even acceptable, could very likely be masking a disregard for women's right to security.

## The Role of African Women in the Ecological Security of the Continent

The actions of human beings in their capacity as users, consumers, producers, and managers of the natural environment, impact directly upon the security of the planet. In the developing world context, the relationship between human beings and nature and between women and nature are much more intimate, in the same way as the effects of environmental degradation on women in the developing world are more immediately and materially felt than in the developed world. Overgrazing, commercial logging and the gathering of wood, land clearance, deforestation, the burning of crop residues and dung, soil erosion, sedimentation, flooding, and salinisation are some of the most critical environmental problems facing Africa.<sup>239</sup>

Women's insecure position in the development process impacts upon the ecological security of the family and the community and also consolidates their multiple roles as agents of ecological destruction, victims of ecological degradation, and managers of limited natural resources. Western-style development approaches often turn sources into resources that have value only if they are profitable. In the process, rural communities are impoverished and rural women are burdened with the responsibility of taking care of the environment when men migrate to the cities. In contrast, sustainable agriculture respects the integrity of all living entities: the earth, water, animals, seeds, people's knowledge, skills and labour.<sup>240</sup>

Poverty forces African women in their traditional role as collectors of firewood, water and food to exploit natural resources. Farming steep hillsides and thereby aggravating soil erosion and flooding during heavy rains become, in this context, a matter of economic necessity. Energy in rural Africa is mainly biomass (wood for fuel, crop residues and manure), which accounts for ninety per cent of fuel consumed in sub-Saharan Africa. The gathering of wood, for instance, is often named as a cause of deforestation. This assumption is, however, not always correct as women collect mostly dead wood. It is ironic that a woman's social value is measured in terms of how she exploits nature, how 'productive' she is in discovering arable land and firewood. In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, about 73 000 women and children make a living by collecting firewood from protected forests and selling it in the city. These people belong to the poorest section of society, are unorganised and do not (usually) participate in the planning of development policy programmes. On a more commercial level, due to rural constraints, women enter the labour market as plantation or forest industry workers, thereby contributing towards deforestation. Collecting, processing and selling forest products are often the only ways in which rural women can obtain a cash income. In Egypt's Fayoum province, 48 per cent of women work in the forest industries. In Northeast Tanzania, in at least fifty per cent of the households surveyed, one member of each household was active in the forest industry.<sup>241</sup>

There is therefore an almost symbiotic relationship between being an agent and a victim of ecological insecurity. Women are often the worst victims of ecological devastation. Collecting firewood and carrying water are strenuous and time-consuming tasks. In some parts of Africa, women spend eight hours a day collecting water. Not only are the water collection points situated far away, but the pumps are often inaccessible and difficult to operate and repair. Moreover, the quality of the water is frequently very poor, posing a general health risk, particularly among young children. According to Gwyn Kirk,<sup>242</sup> it is estimated that 40 000 children die each day mainly in Africa and Asia from malnutrition and the lack of clean water. Girls start at a very young age to carry water. This unremitting burden can distort their pelvis, making the recurrent cycles of pregnancy and childbirth more dangerous.<sup>243</sup>

Since women in Africa are often seen as part of the environmental problem, their role as conservationists and managers of natural resources is often overlooked. As the primary

producers of agricultural products, as those who control the storage and the use of water in large parts of Africa, women are ideally placed to play a leading role in the process of sustainable development. Most African women in rural communities experience and interact with the natural environment on a daily basis. These women have an expert knowledge of local water conditions and indigenous plants for medicinal use and of seasonal conditions for growing crops. Such skills are passed on from generation to generation. Their holistic understanding of the intimate relationship between environmental, socio-cultural and economic issues such as population growth is demonstrated in the West African Sahel where women, through their involvement in the control of desertification, played a pivotal role in the change of male attitudes toward large families.<sup>244</sup> In Africa in particular, behaviour towards the environment is quite overtly culture-driven. In Mali, for instance, only women have access to the Karite tree and its resources. Many ecologically sound development projects have been organised by women, of which a prominent initiative is the establishment of the aforestation movement called the National Council of Women of Kenya's Green Belt Movement in 1977.<sup>245</sup> Especially at community level, women's networks can rally around natural resource management and conservation.

Women's contribution to sustainable ecological practices must be recognised and rewarded through, among others, policy decisions on local, national and regional level. Addressing women farmers' economic insecurity by providing appropriate technological assistance and credit facilities are some of the ways in which the prospects of environmentally sound agricultural practices may be enhanced. In order to ensure that women's needs are met on all the above-mentioned levels, sufficiently stable communication/interaction between women's groups and structures is a prerequisite.

With this in mind, the focus shifts to the issue of the institutionalisation of security as a means of securing women's position both horizontally and vertically. A brief analysis of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is undertaken with the aim of exploring its potential as a regional pillar of human security.

### **Institutionalisation of Security: A Case Study of SADC**

With regard to the institutionalisation of security in feminist terms, women essentially have three mutually inclusive choices. The first option is to rely on the African state's dubious capacity to maintain and provide security. For this alternative to become viable, states will have to shed their ambivalent position regarding the prominence of women's rights in relation to cultural rights and traditional practices (customary law). (Many influential, but conservative women would also argue that the best avenue towards security for women lies in strict adherence to cultural norms.) The state can make a contribution by committing itself to the increased political representation of women in areas of traditional security such as foreign policy and defence, but also to raise women's profile in the areas of advanced economics, trade and finance. The intervention of women in such positions would then be determined by how well they themselves understand the holistic nature of human security and how gender impacts upon it.

A second option would be to adopt a less ambitious agenda for change by working through localised grassroots associations and non-government organisations as agents of civil society. While references to the breakdown of formal government and the impotence of civil society may sound like clichés, they certainly reflect the current realities. In South Africa in the post-apartheid era limited resources have paralysed many non-government organisations. In addition, their leadership has been swallowed up by the government which now acts as the main conduit of international aid.<sup>246</sup> Thus, civil society is forced to become a reluctant bedfellow of

government, and more often than not, this has led to women's interests being under- or misrepresented.

A third alternative, namely the establishment of regional security, was born out of the desire to strike a balance between the national sovereignty of states and a commitment to regional co-operation built upon a supranational sense of responsibility and accountability. For this purpose, an institutional framework for security co-operation needs to be developed.

The current emphasis on multidimensional human security is reflected in the objectives of SADC. The organisation has committed itself to the principles of political security such as the *"sovereign equality of all Member States; solidarity, peace and security; human rights, democracy, and the rule of law; equity, balance and mutual benefit; peaceful settlement of disputes."*<sup>247</sup> The regional economic development arm of the organisation aims to address economic and development security by concentrating on economic growth, the alleviation of poverty, support of the socially disadvantaged and the enhancement of the standard and quality of life within the context of sustainable utilisation of resources (ecological security).<sup>248</sup> The security arm of SADC, the Organ for Politics, Defence and Security expresses similar sentiments. References to collective security, mutual defence and non-violent methods of conflict resolution (mediation, preventive diplomacy) against the backdrop of the promotion of *"the political, economic, social and environmental dimensions of security"*<sup>249</sup> all reflect the change of priorities.

Commendable as these holistic objectives may be in the long term, a feminist reading reveals that the organisation still has a long way to go in both theory and practice with regard to the 'insemination' of feminist values into a regional security framework. To SADC's credit, however, one must point out that it was wise enough not to set up a separate women's unit, since that would have given women even less power in terms of strategic bargaining and decision-making.

While the decision to split the organisation into two wings, namely development and security, was clearly motivated by historic, bureaucratic and pragmatic reasons, and while the interrelatedness of development and human security<sup>250</sup> is recognised throughout, the decision, from a feminist perspective, still does not seem plausible. From the above, it appears as if human security is the means to economic development. Such a dichotomy is artificial and will inevitably lead to divergent interests on the level of planning and implementation. Signs of this are already evident in the fact that formal horizontal interaction between the two arms mentioned earlier only exists on the summit level where the chair is located. Vertical overlap between sectors within one entity, coupled with crosswise or lateral mechanisms may be one way to facilitate the integration of the dimensions of security.<sup>251</sup> However, as it stands, a sectoral or fragmented approach to security within the organisation could prevent meaningful engagement with women's security needs. A reason for this is the fact that, without structural communication or fusion, concrete mechanisms on how to integrate women's issues into the two arms will remain beyond reach. The gender blindness in the terminology does not bode well for women's security. Categorising women by implication as part of the so-called *"socially disadvantaged"*<sup>252</sup> smacks of gender neutrality.

Another concerning factor is the lack of consensus on the political values espoused in the organisation's manifesto. The lack of a sense of shared responsibility towards the protection of human rights and the promotion of democracy among member states not only impacts upon the kinds of methods used to deal with such issues, but also jeopardises women's rights. Malan and Cilliers<sup>253</sup> propose the establishment of an Institute for Democracy and Human Rights to foster a common democratic system and ethic. The feminist cause stands to benefit from such a think

tank in two ways. Firstly, it may assist in transforming the institution from within, thus inculcating feminist values and more evenly balanced approaches to peace through a process of an open exchange of ideas, informed debate and a relationship of mutual trust between SADC members and the institute. In addition it could also counter another rather serious flaw in the organisation. Despite SADC's commitment in Article 23 of its treaty "*to involve fully, the peoples of the Region and non-government organisations*",<sup>254</sup> no room is allowed for any formal liaison with non-state actors in the areas of human rights research and early warning. Civil society at large, as well as women's voices, are therefore effectively silenced. Regularised communication between the organs of SADC, researchers, academics, security specialists and feminists can therefore help to strengthen democracy.

The flaws in SADC indicate that national interest is still the main driving force behind regional co-operation. A sectoral approach to security is adopted which makes the organisation more of a security regime than a security community.<sup>14</sup> The stated objectives of SADC and the security organ, however, indicate that there is a willingness (though still rather disparate) to work towards establishing a security community where the security of one depends on the security of all. In such a scenario, the region, rather than the individual states, is the primary referent of security. A regional identity or common value system is fostered where collective security really means a commitment to mutual defence, and civil society is accorded its rightful place as an equal partner. Evidence shows that, at least on paper, the seeds for co-operation have been sown.

## CONCLUSION

The new world order has opened up room for gender in reflections on the security issue. But sadly, this is still largely a contested area. This article has focused on the dual aspects of this dissension, proceeding from the general to the specific case of Africa. Although substantial progress has been made to shed the military ballast encumbering the security concept, many of the changes have not come about as a result of a fundamental commitment to feminist principles. In this light, it was therefore argued that a feminist perspective on security may not only enhance our understanding of international developments, but could also offer alternative solutions to the issue on a global scale.

The feminist epistemology, though extremely diverse, makes a valuable contribution to the security debate because it looks at security through the lens of gender, follows an agenda for change and provides a reconstructed vision of human security. Its critical agenda forces disciplines such as International Relations, Strategic Studies and Peace Studies to rethink their respective paradigms fundamentally. The statist discourse with its masculinist underpinnings, the phallocentric quality of strategic debate and the trappings of gender neutrality in the deliberations on peace all come under fire. The feminist conceptualisation of security redefines the notion of 'comprehensive security' by expanding the emphasis to include an analysis of patriarchy as one of the roots of insecurity. Feminists further give new meaning to the concept 'collective security' by drawing on the interdependent, collaborative approaches which are characteristic of women. Within the triad of 'research-action-education' the following elements are united: positive peace *versus* structural violence; participatory methods; and non-hierarchical learning structures.

Feminist theory on security has a particular relevance for the developing world, since both women and the developing world act from a position of inequality in relation to men and the developed world, respectively. The case of Africa shows that gender permeates and informs all dimensions of current areas of insecurity. Political security in Africa and elsewhere in the

developing world can only be achieved if women's rights (both in the public and the private domain) are acknowledged without cultural bias and hypocrisy. Increased political representation will have no impact as long as female leaders themselves are unclear about how gender impacts upon women's security. The women's movement in Africa is also doomed to failure if it is not coupled with an explicit agenda for change. Socio-economic security underpins all other forms of security. Feminists apply the concept of structural violence as an analytical tool to link underdevelopment, social and economic security and women's inequality in Africa. It helps them to see how historically and culturally imposed divisions have contributed to women's economic insecurity. True to the holistic nature of the feminist analysis, it also highlights the complex cyclical relationship between factors such as poverty and food security; health, education and employment, famine, environmental quality and war, and poverty and military spending as they impact on women. The socio-economic quality of life for most women in Africa is very poor. Only in the area of education have marginal gains been made. In addition, their situation is aggravated by short-sighted, gender-insensitive efforts at development. Research suggests that one of the ways in which women's insecurity may be alleviated in this regard is to distinguish between long term strategic gender needs and the short term tactical needs of women. Only if development is fully engendered, does it have any hope of not being endangered. Political activism and receptive policies should also be considered.

In a purely military sense, the feminist contribution grapples with the question of whether women should be included in the military, whether they should be excluded from combat, to what extent women's inclusion might have an effect on security policy and how human security in general is perceived. Controversial arguments emphasising biological theses at the expense of sociological ones and *vice versa*, run the risk of essentialising women's experience. It is therefore maintained that this debate would be better served by a multifaceted perspective wherein patriarchy is seen as one of many explanations. The inconclusivity of many research findings invites further investigation. In Africa in particular, research on the connection between attitudes to peace and conflict and gender bias is presently lacking. One of the most valuable contributions of the feminist perspective is that it redefines military security to include all forms of physical violence against women. Gender serves as the analytical tool by means of which a connection between institutional or indirect violence and physical or direct violence is established. The increase in gender violence in Africa may be attributed in part to the prevalence of traditional cultural values, fundamentalist religious practices, the economic consequences of the process of modernisation, structural or institutional violence, and an omnipotent culture of military and criminal violence. Legislation can only provide a backdrop to the long process of popular socialisation in this regard. It is, therefore, ultimately up to women themselves to be critical about rituals which may appear to be benign.

A feminist reconceptualisation of security provides an enriching insight into the relationship between man, woman and nature, and drives the fact home that any attempt at holistic thinking has to include an environmentally sensitive approach. The article concludes that women's multiple and symbiotic roles (as agents, victims, and managers) in the ecological security of Africa are often overlooked. African women have an expert ecological knowledge which needs to be shared *via* community networks.

Finally, a case study of SADC is used to examine the prospect of building a truly holistic and comprehensive understanding of human security in a regional context. While there is a definite willingness to foster a common culture, it still lacks an integrated gender perspective which can be translated into practice. Without that, it is argued, change from within remains a pipe-dream which will not only impact negatively on women's security, but on that of men too.

The prospect for a truly non-gendered perspective on the African continent (and elsewhere) is still fairly remote. But as the countdown towards the 21st century begins, there is real hope that women's visions of global security are increasingly being recognised. Through analysis of gender and its impact on the security of men and women, we can move toward the creation of a truly secure world.

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## Response

### **Professor Virginia Gamba**

Heidi Hudson has produced a remarkable contribution to the understanding of security through the lens of gender. Her scholarly work serves many purposes: to explore the changing nature - and the defects - of contemporary security concepts; to understand the feminist conceptualisation of security; and to provide a more gender-based definition of security in Africa. In writing about these topics, Hudson both educates and guides the reader into the discourse of feminist security concerns, concepts, and implications for overall human development. Her arguments are logical and powerfully justified. This is, as Hudson points out, the right moment to broaden our existing security assumptions by incorporating feminist epistemology. But the article's value, as will be pointed out below, should not be determined by the quality of its discourse on security, but must rather be judged on the way in which the author strives to present the evolution of feminist thought and all its variants to make it applicable to the realities of modern politics, with particular relevance to Africa. It is in this discourse that the article stands its own ground and makes a compelling case for revision.

Hudson exhaustively explores a variety of feminist approaches and their differences in terms of "*gender inequality, difference, and scholarship*." She then undertakes a feminist critique of the mono-gendered state and peace studies, and proposes a feminist conceptualisation of society, including political, socio-economic, military, and ecological security patterns. In the last two sections of her work, Hudson evaluates the feminist contribution to the security debate under four headings: as a critique of world policies; as a definition of comprehensive all-inclusive security; as a link between the individual and international levels of security; and in terms of its practical applicability. She then exemplifies all of these by writing about the security of women in Africa and its implications for the achievement of continental peace. Here, Hudson's text is synthesised to reflect the state of women's rights in Africa, the needs for sustainable development, and the roles of African women in combat and ecology. Finally, she proposes a collective security instrument that might take these feminist concerns into account and might be institutionalised through the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Because this work is really about the position, problems and views of women in Africa, it appears that the shorter sections, that serve as introduction to the latter, have been written with the view of creating a favourable climate for the latter discussion. Because of this, the sections on contemporary strategic and security concerns and on a revision of feminist thought are not conclusive.

Firstly, by acknowledging that the contemporary security agenda needs to be broadened both "*vertically and horizontally*", leading scholars have opened the way for incorporating non-traditional objects of security: to upgrade non-military threats to the level of security concerns and to strive to find a people-centred approach in defining the objects of security policy. These new considerations are far removed from the more technical and impersonal approaches followed during the Cold War era, with its emphases on the underpinning mentality of nuclear deterrence and the necessity to identify potential enemies at all costs. The timing for the inclusion of a feminist view of security in the determinations of priorities, security concerns and viable alternatives, is therefore ripe.

But Hudson's article, although it describes change and an ongoing revision of security trends, does not recognise that feminist theory has already made an impact in this field. This is rather surprising as many of the scholars and decision-makers, who have pushed for the broadening of the security agenda for the last fifteen years, are women. Their views and contributions to the new security agenda have been firmly recognised, as for example, in the case of the so-called **Brundtland Report**.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, instead of looking at the direct and indirect contribution that women politicians, scientists and scholars have made to the new security agenda, Hudson concentrates on explaining feminist thought as if it existed in isolation from the mainstream of security thinking. And yet, just like women have made a fundamental impact on the changing character of security concerns world-wide, they have also been instrumental in developing what Klein calls the existing "*quality of strategic discourse*", much as they have assisted in the perpetuation of a specific security paradigm and have supported "*the patriarchal basis of the modern state*." On the issue of security, therefore, it is important to acknowledge that, regardless of their wisdom, security paradigms have been a product of both male and female thinkers in the past.

A second problem in this article arises from the general feminist studies section, where the discourse related to theories on gender difference, inequality and oppression curiously omits any mention of religion or culture in reference to the basic structures of male supremacy in almost all societies. The role of patriarchy and of basic male supremacy is afterwards used extensively in the main body of the paper but, by not making adequate reference to the influence of male-centric religions (except for a fleeting reference to Islam later in the text), a very important problem arises which poses difficulties in accepting the proposals for change put forward by the author. The "*patriarchal basis of the modern state*" is not only based on a "*premeditated*" power relationship between men and women as inferred by the author. The patriarchal basis of society could easily be justified in terms of the literature mentioned by Hudson, but the reality, like that of the security paradigms which she explores earlier, is that there is no 'us' *versus* 'them' rivalry between men and women: it is both men and women who have devised, accepted and supported a patriarchal system, as well as the predominance of male-centric religions. Women have perpetuated the state of their subsidiary and supportive role, rife with oppression and abuse. Women are the educators and perpetuators of tradition and custom. As long as women perpetuate a role for themselves that is inferior to men's, society in general will not change. Painful, as it is, this must be said, particularly as the author dedicates the main body of her text to the creation of an environment conducive to protect women's security in Africa, a region where women play an important role in the perpetuation of the systems that cast them into submission.

Regardless of the items that could have been reinforced in this text, it is important to note that the areas where Hudson sees the need to bring women perspectives to bear in the African security debate are crucial: women's rights as human rights; securing development by meeting basic needs; undermining a culture of militarism by creating an awareness of personal security;

and finding the link between the "*inattention to environmental problems and the silence about women's rights*." Sustainable and equitable development, conducted in peace and guaranteeing personal security is, without a doubt, the road which Africa should strive to follow, but putting this basic and fundamental need in terms of gender differences is to simplify the problem and confuse its solution.

There is much more that needs to be done to secure Africa and its peoples: democratisation, professionalisation, constructing a law-abiding society by the provision of effective judicial and criminal systems, the eradication of corruption, the resolution of ethnic conflict, and resorting to solidarity and co-operation in solving common problems are all important issues in Africa, which should be placed on a par with the need to secure women's rights. Hudson acknowledges this when she reviews the options open to African women: to rely on the African state's capacity to provide security; to work through grassroots organisations; and to establish a mechanism for regional security. Of all three, the latter is the one that Hudson favours. She concentrates on one regional mechanism above others - the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and explores the flaws in its construct. As she points out: "*The flaws in SADC indicate that national interest is still the main driving force behind regional co-operation. A sectoral approach to security is adopted which makes the organisation more of a security regime than a security community*." And yet, this is the mechanism that the author believes might assist in developing an agenda that looked at African security concerns in a broad light, taking into consideration feminist thinking and women's security concerns. The one thing that Hudson does not comprehend, is that SADC is deficient, not because of its national interest construct, but because it is not operative. Thus, in as much as SADC might be turned into an organisation that can adequately consider women's views and needs, it first needs to work in an efficient manner.

The feminist view of security, advanced as it is, can only be implemented in the way that other views grew to dominate society in the past: by consensus. There will never be a consensus regarding the status and role of women in different societies if this is not approached as part and parcel of the evolution of civilisations. Women perpetuate the image we have of women: for women to break this mould, particularly in rural societies, education and self-discovery are needed. For the latter to occur, society must function first. Men and women must work with their inherent nature to create an environment where these and other ideas might prosper to the advantage of all. To disregard this, is to continue with the tradition of a past that requires contradiction and strife to be able to move forward.

## ENDNOTES

Gro Harlem Brundtland was the Chairperson for the World Commission on Environments and Development Report; see G H Brundtland, **Our Common Future**, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987.

## THE APPLICATION OF THE NEW SECURITY AGENDA FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

*Maxi van Aardt*

## INTRODUCTION

Academics, like fools, often rush in where practitioners, and other angels, fear to tread. But this is the job of academics. To quote Ken Booth<sup>1</sup> on the role of academics, with reference to Southern African security: "*... academics can help to provide knowledge, and so a truer image of the 'real world', they can help to give longer-term perspectives than those of decision-makers; they can help provide a more sophisticated language with which to talk about these matters;*

*they can engage in a dialogue with practitioners which may fertilise the latters' minds about the ways in which concepts might be translated into practicalities ..."* One of the clearest and best examples of this interaction between theory and practice, academics, researchers and practitioners, is the new approach to security which has evolved since the end of the Cold War. When surveying the field of security, one cannot but think in terms of fertilisation and of a confirmation of the old expression that 'there is nothing so practical as a good theory'.

The development, no, transformation of traditional security into what is currently referred to as 'new security' or 'broad security' was and still is the result of intellectual enterprise. This is evident in the seminal work of Buzan<sup>2</sup> and the flood of academic writings which followed it, as well as the intense exploration of the practical needs and meaning of security for people and states at the end of this century contained in, for example, the Brandt, Palme and Global Governance Commission reports, and closer to home, the Kampala Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa (CSSDCA) of 1991. With reference to Southern Africa, Breytenbach<sup>3</sup> gives an overview of the academic work in this regard, and the various contact meetings between academics, researchers, practitioners and political decision-makers in the early 1990s which encouraged the development and application of new security thinking in the region. The exploration of ideas and concepts, the formulation of new ideas, frameworks and approaches, and their transfer or, at the very least, their discussion, are therefore important functions with solid practical or 'real world' implications. Therefore, what might at first look like flights of fancy, academic or theoretical enterprise is the lifeblood of practice. Thus, this article aims to stimulate debate between academics and practitioners.

The article deals with the topic of the application of the new security agenda for Southern Africa. This is done by paying attention to a number of problems with regard to the application of this agenda. These problems or issues point to areas in which conceptual work is becoming increasingly important in order to inform thinking on, debates about and policy formulation concerning the application of the region's security agenda. In order to create and maintain a secure region and a secure world, our thinking about security and its application needs to be ever reflective, always questioning, and constantly innovative.

## **PROBLEM AREAS AND GAPS IN OUR THINKING: TOWARDS 'THEORISING THE MISSING LINKS'**

Broadly speaking, contemporary security is characterised by a normative concern for people,<sup>4</sup> no matter how superficial it is, or to what extent only lip service is paid to it. Perhaps the cynicism which exists in terms of the notion of human security can be attributed to the fact that so many conceptual uncertainties and so much unexplored terrain still exist. But 'new security', as is the habit with fashionable terminology, can also easily fall prey to the tendency of becoming an ideological screen to "*obscure relations of dominance and sub-ordination*."<sup>5</sup> One should keep Chomsky's reminder in mind, "*to ask where power lies and how it is exercised*",<sup>6</sup> a point that will be returned to, though in a way and for a different reason than that which Chomsky has in mind.

In two recent analyses of the newly established Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ for Politics, Defence and Security,<sup>7</sup> four problems pertaining to this institution were identified, namely the lack of a political institution or framework, little, if any, clear provision for early warning, the absence of formal horizontal links between SADC's development and security 'pillars', and the lack of or insufficient provision for civil participation in the Organ (and, incidentally, in SADC as a whole). At least four problem areas, related to the institutionalisation of regional security, are part of and underlie these problems. These relate to:

the challenge of dealing with sovereignty, that perennial excuse for lack of political will;

the challenge to incorporate and institutionalise relations between civil society and SADC;

the issue of the agents of security, i.e. who is responsible for security who has the power, whether willingly or unwillingly, wittingly or unwittingly, to decide, provide and maintain security?; and

the apparent 'retreat' of military security and its implications for creating and maintaining broad/new security.

It must be clearly stated from the outset that these problems are not the only ones and not even necessarily the most important ones. A brief outline of each of these will be provided and the challenges to and gaps in our knowledge and application of the new security paradigm will be identified. In a sense, this will present a potential research agenda on the topic of new security in the region. The aim is throughout to address the application of the SADC security agenda as set out in the founding documents of the Organ.

## SOVEREIGNTY

Three basic principles underlie sovereignty: territoriality, independence and non-intervention. From these principles the 'double' dual nature of sovereignty is derived: a distinction is drawn between internal and external sovereignty, and a further distinction is drawn between sovereignty as a juridical status and as a political concept. Increasingly, there are calls to reconceptualise sovereignty, or for an adjustment in the exercising of sovereignty.<sup>8</sup> The sharing of sovereignty or the transfer of at least elements of sovereignty to a supranational level, it is argued, will ease many of the problems related to international relations, economic activities and development. In the field of security as well, particularly in the field of peacekeeping and humanitarian intervention, there seems to be an urgent need to adapt the norms derived from sovereignty to 'recognise changing realities.'<sup>9</sup> This need is also recognised within the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and stated explicitly in the SADC Treaty. OAU Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim talks about "*the need for accountability of governments and of their national and international responsibilities*." In the process of discussing these issues, he says, "*we shall be redefining sovereignty*."<sup>10</sup> And the SADC Treaty explicitly states the necessity to change when dealing with national sovereignty in order to achieve the organisation's needs.<sup>11</sup> All that remains to be done, it would seem, is to redefine sovereignty and then we will have peace, security and development.

However, we know that this is not the case. The double-duality of sovereignty precludes an easy solution and makes it an area in which we need to apply our thinking in order to facilitate, enhance and promote the building of security. The conceptual problems regarding sovereignty and the application of a new security agenda are, in essence, the difficulty to distinguish between sovereignty as a juridical concept and as a political concept, the linkage of sovereignty, particularly internal sovereignty, with democratisation, and the fact that in our age and within democratic theory and practice, sovereignty ultimately derives from the people. It is a power to be exercised by, for and on behalf of the people of a state.<sup>12</sup>

Too often adjustments to sovereignty a partial 'giving-up' of sovereignty in one area is viewed, presented and exploited (usually for domestic political purposes) as evidence of the 'loss of sovereignty'. It is implied that a country is now 'less equal', that somehow its legal status as an

independent country recognising no legal superior, has been impaired or diminished. Worse, political sovereignty the ability to act in a certain kind of way is deemed to have been violated. The question is whether these arguments hold water. Two examples follow below in an attempt to provide an answer.

The creation of the Universal Postal Union in 1874 required that states had to relinquish certain powers to an international body. The main result was that states now had the capacity to set up an effective postal system and this is one of the purposes of sovereignty to provide the ability for capacity-building and to realise social goals. By giving up some of its powers, *"the bundle of powers that a state possesses as a sovereign body is thereby simultaneously diminished and enhanced."*<sup>13</sup>

Another example is closer to the security agenda and perhaps more contemporary in that it reflects not so much the enhancement of national capabilities, but rather the trend towards recognition of complex interdependence. The example referred to is the recent Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) meeting in Harare and the various decisions taken there, all of them binding, some of them in favour of applications from Southern African states, others less so.<sup>14</sup> The decisions reached at the meeting entailed that CITES member countries accept them, that they abide by the rules, that they agree to have their policies regulated, and to some extent dictated by an international body. The result is that these countries are acting towards implementing the goal of sustainable development and the maintenance of environmental security again with the aim of enhancing their own capabilities in the long term, again giving up some of their powers enhancing and diminishing sovereignty simultaneously, but with a view to national and global interests. Does the fact that South Africa's application to investigate trade in white rhino products was rejected make of the country a 'lesser' equal vis-à-vis its peers? Does it imply a diminishing of sovereignty to the extent that the country's autonomy has been seriously curtailed? One should also keep in mind that, as a member of CITES, South Africa in its turn had the authority to exercise its opinion in terms of various other matters discussed at the meeting. This is what a sharing of sovereignty translates to in practice 'political' sovereignty is not monolithic, but implies multiple rights, functions and duties which may be unbundled and which may increase or decrease across a spectrum of activities.

What the CITES example proves, is that sovereignty, or the sharing of it, implies a matter of give and take, of collective responsibility and decision-making. The increasing focus and emphasis on people, implied in concepts and doctrines such as those related to 'humanitarian intervention', 'democracy', 'democratisation', 'human rights', 'human development' and 'human security', would seem to indicate an increasing resonance in the area of sovereignty and conventional notions about the term 'notions' is used, because sovereignty has never been absolute in practice, except perhaps as a legal status. Even the *"most basic external capacity of a state"*<sup>15</sup> the capacity to make war is regulated, e.g. in terms of the various Hague and Geneva conventions and the **UN Charter**.

One way in which we could perhaps begin to get our minds around the idea of 'changing' sovereignty in order to increase regional co-operation, peace and development, is to pay more attention to the unbundling of sovereignty. This should be linked to an identification of institutional means of pooling or sharing sovereignty, within the framework of the difference between 'government' and 'governance'. While 'government' refers to a pattern of political and legal processes and institutions backed by political power, governance refers to the *"methods or means of realising shared values, interests and goals that may or may not derive from a formal centralised political power."*<sup>16</sup> 'Governance' in this sense differs from the usual understanding of

it as used in the expression 'good governance'. It refers to supranational co-operation but in an authoritative sense, much as is implied, for instance in the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) principle of 'consensus minus one'.<sup>17</sup> The concept of governance, its relationship to government, its theoretical and practical implications and the possible advantages of structuring regional co-operation on the basis of governance, needs theoretical exploration and, again, interaction between academics and practitioners on the needs of the region.

It is not so much necessary to reconceptualise sovereignty; rather, we should understand the theoretical distinction between and practical implications of this dialectic of the enhancement of sovereignty by means of 'diminishing' it. The building of security does not require giving up sovereignty, but diminishing it in order to enhance capacity, capabilities, internal order, stability and progress in short, those very goals which sovereignty is supposed to serve.

## **REFERENTS OF SECURITY**

A second problem related to thoughts about security, and one that is hardly touched upon when it comes to the application of the new security agenda, is the way and extent to which the primary referents of security, namely people, participate in the provision and maintenance of security. Furthermore, we should remember that many of the new, or now acknowledged threats to regional security emanate from this level. Crime and disease are but two examples. Note also that the term 'application of the new security agenda' implies some form of order, planning, organisation and conscious and deliberate action, in short, a framework within which security is 'applied'. The fact that SADC has established a security sector furthermore indicates an assumption that such an application is or will become institutionalised.

Conventional security had as its prime referent the state, and, in practical terms, this meant the security of a particular regime and/or government in many cases. New or broad security privileges people, in most cases also assuming that this is a broadening of referents. In other words, the state is not excluded, but it is no longer the only or prime referent of security. In the case of conventional security, the state was both the referent and the agent of security, the latter being the particular province of the military and, in cases of regime and government security, also the province of other security forces, such as the police. The fact of the matter is that security, as far as its referents are concerned, is not a passive condition; the referents participate actively in the provision and maintenance of security and, by implication, in defining the content of security.

The problem in this area is that we have not yet come to an agreement, or, even more elementary, do not have a clear idea of what is meant by terms such as 'civil society participation' or, as Article 23 of the SADC Treaty would have it, the full involvement of the people of the region. There is little evidence that this issue is being explored and addressed at the conceptual and/or practical levels within the Organ, but the attitude of officials involved in the development of the Organ indicates a willingness to consider these aspects, provided that some input is given. To provide guidelines on thinking about this aspect, the first point to consider is the measure of formality and organisation inherent in an institutionalised framework. It is therefore necessary to consider involvement and participation of 'the people' in terms of a formal, regularised and systematised arrangement which gives purpose and lends credibility and legitimacy to such a system.<sup>18</sup> The extent to which people as referents of security are therefore drawn into the application of the security framework of the region should be along the lines of the concept of civil society the organised public sphere.

Following from this, another question to be considered is not so much 'who' within civil society the various dimensions of security in effect provide this answer but rather 'how' civil society should be accommodated. A logical way, it would seem, is for the initiative to come from the Organ and the way in which it is structured. People as referents should be involved, and even provide a measure of co-responsibility and other functions necessary for the provision and maintenance of security. Yet the power to implement security remains that of state and regional institutions, the latter as representatives of the collectivity of states bringing us back to sovereignty as a bundle of powers and capacities<sup>19</sup> emanating from the political dimension of sovereignty. And let us not consider formalised or any other form of civil society participation as something trivial, an aspect of political correctness which is at most a mild irritant. Apart from the skills and knowledge that this sphere may provide, the importance of such involvement *per se* in implementing security should not be underestimated: the essence of civil society is its pluralistic character the way in which it provides for and constitutes different interests and identities which cut across traditional primary identities such as race and ethnicity. The more vibrant and diversified civil society, the lesser the chance for major cleavages and divisions within society, or for these to erupt into major or violent conflict. As such, civil society, and its incorporation into an institutionalised security framework, in itself becomes a factor contributing to conflict regulation and a building block of security and stability.

## **AGENTS OF SECURITY**

Closely linked to the previous aspect, and one of the least developed 'sub-concepts' of security is the 'agents of security' the 'who' has and takes final or ultimate responsibility for the implementation of security. The dimensions of security have been broadened, as has the reference group, but little attention has so far been paid to the agents of security. Within traditional security thinking, the prime agents of security are the military. Does this mean that in broadened or new security thinking, the military retains this role, and if so, is it equipped to deal with security in its various dimensions? The example albeit perhaps not one hundred per cent relevant of Nigeria under a military dictatorship rushing to the defence of democracy in Sierra Leone earlier this year (and with the consent of the rest of the world) springs to mind and one begins to understand the dilemmas inherent in applying new approaches by means of old methods.

At this stage, the problem within SADC related to the agents of security is somewhat different and concerns two aspects. The first is that despite the establishment of the Organ which makes provision, on paper at least, for political rather than military leadership and direction in the field of regional security, there is as yet no clear political institution within the Organ. At the same time, the Inter-State Security and Defence Committee (ISDSC) is well established and has been operating for quite some time, having had to take responsibility, in some ways, for security decisions which are or should be political decisions. This brings us back to Chomsky's question, referred to earlier, about the locus of power, and the implication that the locus also points to who is privileged: in this case, whose security is privileged. It would seem that the power to determine security and its implementation is still firmly and largely in the hands of the military, although by default rather than through design or as the result of the actual locus of power at national and regional levels. The military might exercise this power and the decisions stemming from it reluctantly, but it does not change the fact that the agents of security are still narrowly and inadequately identified and defined.

Related to this problem is that of whether the military is equipped, on the one hand, and, on the other, legitimate to the extent that their responsibility for broad security is adequate, politically sound and safe, and truly efficient and sufficient. One should not lose sight of the fact that the

requirements for the military to adapt to the changing nature of and increasing need for military responsibilities in the field of peacekeeping are already comprehensive and demanding. In this area, there is a serious need for SADC, and for the Organ, to institutionalise and regularise political leadership, and to consider, with regard to the dimensions of security and the range of threats facing the region, which other agents of security exist and to incorporate these into the Organ's structures.

## **THE RETREAT OF MILITARY SECURITY**

The recent (and ongoing) debate about the defence budget in South Africa, and the conditionalities of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) structural adjustment programmes which require, among others, that countries cut their defence spending, point to another problem area regarding the application of the new security agenda. To cut a long story short, it would seem that the broadening of the dimensions of security, together with the demands of structural adjustment and the neo-liberal 'Washington consensus' have put military security on the defence and worse, on the retreat. Large defence budgets are not propagated here, nor are military establishments and governments defended. On the contrary. But if the military is largely responsible for providing and maintaining security, whether conventional or new, as it seems to be the case at present, it should also be provided with the means and wherewithal to carry out these responsibilities. While it may be true that conventional military threats to states in the region have largely subsided (although not altogether), it does not mean that the maintenance and continuous modernisation of a country's defence force are no longer priorities. And modernisation does not refer solely to equipment or materiel, but also to the philosophy, attitudes, approaches and doctrines underlying the role and functions of a modern defence force, a point returned to shortly.

Two things stand out when considering this issue. In spreading the gospel of new security, and in our fervour to eliminate the means, and even the approaches and attitudes towards regional relations which were characterised by violent conflict, destabilisation, militarisation and a lack of democracy and respect for human rights for so long, we threw the baby out with the bathwater. In the minds of the public at large, and encouraged, as implied earlier, by Northern liberal economic principles, the perception developed that there are no threats to the region which need armed forces and military 'equipment' to deal with them. Worse, spending money on the military, it is sometimes argued, might even result in a prolonging or flaring up of hostilities, or might become a threat in itself, and anyway, this argument continues, such money could be spent better 'elsewhere'.

The result is an almost tangible animosity towards the military and its needs or views on what is required in terms of security. One only has to read newspaper accounts of the South African debate over the past year to realise how serious this animosity is. Although most of the arguments against defence spending have a grain, and sometimes a bushel of truth in them, and should therefore be treated seriously, the apparent lack of understanding of current demands on security forces in the region (and not only on the defence establishment) is, to say the least, concerning. One thinks here, for instance, of the fact that Mozambique has, at the moment, no coastal defence and the extent to which this is being exploited by, among others, South Korean fishing trawlers. Genuine regional security demands that other SADC members come to Mozambique's aid. If they do not have the means to assist either, where must Mozambique look to? Further complicating this question is the fact that we live in an era which preaches 'African self-help' and 'Africa must take responsibility for its own destiny, security, stability, growth, development' our list of responsibilities seems to become very long indeed.

The second point is that, in neglecting the security forces and the military in particular, we may have created a huge problem for ourselves. By 'stigmatising' military security in order to make space for other, equally important security dimensions, we contributed to the development of a rather widely-held perception that military security is no longer relevant. It also points to a lack of understanding of the nature and scope of the new security agenda and in particular of the new international ethos regarding peacekeeping and peace support operations.<sup>20</sup> Military security, particularly in terms of the military's skills, knowledge and experience of dealing with disasters, for example, is essential to underpin and maintain aspects of environmental and human security in general.

But there is also another point that need to be investigated, one that is raised hesitantly and somewhat reluctantly because of the history of apartheid, destabilisation and the role of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) in South Africa itself in the past. Yet, it is a point that is implied in much of what is being written on the topic of the future of the SANDF and more particularly in this case, the SA Army. It is generally accepted that, given the high crime rate in South Africa, the South African Police Service (SAPS) needs the assistance of the SANDF in combating this problem. The latter is therefore periodically involved in deployment in support of SAPS operations, although such assistance seems to be considered a temporarily arrangement to last "*until law and order is forced down by the SAPS*."<sup>21</sup> The main task of the Army is perceived and formulated to be "*the protection of the territorial integrity of South Africa against external threat*."<sup>22</sup> However, is it not time to begin to think the unthinkable, namely that conflict and violent conflict occurs increasingly at the intrastate level, especially in the developing world (which includes the former 'Second World' of Eastern Europe), admittedly with spill-over implications for neighbouring countries? The acceptance of this fact as also holding true for Southern and sub-equatorial Africa (*vide* Zaire/New Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Angola *circa* mid-1997) unfortunately necessitates the question whether the changing nature of conflict also warrants a re-thinking of the role and functions of defence forces *vis-à-vis* states' internal situations and conditions. In other words, will the main task of a defence force remain, for the foreseeable future, the 'protection of the territorial integrity of a country against external threat'? Or will this philosophy and its doctrines, approaches, assumptions and applications have to be broadened to accept and prepare for the possibility that defence forces will increasingly have to be prepared for and also operate at the intrastate level. This is a veritable Pandora's box with huge political implications, but one that might need to be opened, if only at this stage at the theoretical level. The mere fact that international peacekeeping and related operations are gaining importance (if not always practical support) exactly because of increased intrastate conflict, actually shows the logic of raising this problem.

What is to be done? At the theoretical level, we have to revisit our conceptualisation of the various dimensions of security and the links between them, with particular reference to the nature of and demands on contemporary military security at the national, regional and global levels. With regard to the national, or intrastate level, the relationship and differences between police services and defence forces (note the use of 'service' and 'force' and the implications implied by such terms) should also be investigated in relation to internal conditions regarding, for instance, crime, the collapse of law and order, and civil unrest. We should also foster a knowledge and understanding of these new demands and duties among the public at large, and politicians in particular. In the case of South Africa, the 'world out there' should be brought 'back in' and our being part of it and collectively responsible for it should be reflected in much clearer detail in our defence debates and in the review and restructuring of the SANDF. The latter at present focuses almost exclusively on restructuring in terms of national political and military conditions and needs.<sup>23</sup> There seems to be a tendency towards conducting the transformation process to reflect a more demographically realistic outcome, and not necessarily transformation

that would also reflect new demands on military security and its role in the provision and maintenance of other dimensions of security.<sup>24</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The application of the new security agenda in Southern Africa needs much attention, and urgently so, from academics, researchers and practitioners who are concerned with building a peaceful, prosperous, secure region. This is needed at both the academic and practical level, concerning the whole spectrum from philosophy and attitudes, to training and arms. There is also a greater need for public debate on these issues, but in order to ensure an informed public equipped with the knowledge and understanding of the issues to be debated, we are back to the role of academics and researchers in 'opening up' these issues, no matter how sensitive or uncomfortable.

The words of LeRoy Bennett are apt in conclusion: "*A rising tide of revolutionary international problems is met with the slow, evolutionary development of international institutions ... Tradition and an excessively conservative set of attitudes toward international political change could easily be humankind's own worst enemy.*"<sup>25</sup> Let SADC and its individual member states and governments not turn out to be their own and their peoples' worst enemies.

## ENDNOTES

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3. W Breytenbach, *Conflict in Southern Africa*, **Africa Insight**, 24(1), 1994.
4. See, for instance, H Solomon, *Towards the 21st Century: A New Global Security Agenda?*, **ISS Papers Series**, 6, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, June 1996,.
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13. C Brown, **Understanding International Relations**, Macmillan, London, 1997, p. 126.
14. See **Beeld**, 18 June 1997, p. 8.
15. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
16. J Busumtwi-Sam, *Models of Economic Development in Africa: Lessons from the Experience of Ghana, 1957-95*, **Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Studies**, 34(3), November 1996, p. 178.
17. See M Malan & J Cilliers, *SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security: Future Development*, **ISS Papers Series**, 19, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, March 1997, p. 4; this paper provides a number of thought-provoking and practical recommendations as to the institutionalisation of regional security and serves as an example of the kind of work necessary at the level of the interface between academia and practice.
18. See I Claude, **Swords into Plowshares**, Random House, New York, 1984, chapter 2, particularly pp. 21-34.
19. Brown, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
20. See, for instance, the discussion by R Williams, *Don't Hold the African Crisis Response Force Hostage to Unrealistic Demands*, **ISS Papers Series**, 20, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, April 1997.
21. R Otto, *Preparing the South African Army for the Twenty-First Century*, **ISS Papers Series**, 21, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, April 1997, p. 5.
22. *Ibid.*
23. See for instance J Modise, *The transformation of the SA Army*, **ISS Papers Series**, 21, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, April 1997; and Otto, *ibid.*
24. Steven Friedman remarks with reference to state change that the term 'transformation' is open to different interpretations, although these are not necessarily mutually exclusive: "[transformation] can mean a commitment to ensure that the state plays a different role in society, that it becomes an agent of development rather than control. But it can also mean that it ceases to be the preserve of white males and begins to reflect the society's racial

demographics." See S Friedman, *Privatisation and the Reform of the South African State*, paper delivered at a conference entitled **Privatisation: Brazil and South Africa in Comparative Perspective**, Foundation for Global Dialogue and Brazilian Embassy, Braamfontein, 26-27 June 1997, p. 3.

25. A L Bennett, **International Organizations**, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1995, p. 6.

## RESPONSE

**Professor Marie Muller**

Maxi van Aardt's application of the 'new security agenda' to the Southern African situation makes a number of important explicit points. However, in making these points, at least two very important implicit points are made as well. These should be highlighted and the implications investigated further. This short article will attempt to do so.

Van Aardt observes the interaction between theory and practice and the importance of what academics do for the world of practitioners. Some academic work is, of course, aimed very directly at influencing the 'real' world and the policies which shape it. However, much academic work does not have the specific aim of impacting directly on practitioners. Nevertheless, "*... ideas have consequences and thus the contemplation of ideas is an intensely practical undertaking.*" Of course, practitioners often realise this, and those who want complete control of this world - often because they believe that they already have the complete answer - will not welcome true intellectual activity, as this may well have unwelcome consequences. With the opening up of South African society in the early 1990s and the emphasis on transparency and consultation, the reverse seems to be the case, at least for the time being. Much contact and real interaction between practitioners and academics are taking place, often at the instigation of practitioners or policy-makers,<sup>2</sup> and underlying this seems to be a real desire to stimulate intellectual activity in the search for solutions to problems or just for clearer thinking about them. The point to be made is this: these are welcome and positive developments, not only for academics who may feel flattered by the attention, but for society as a whole which will derive benefit from it. It is also a wonderful 'window of opportunity' which must be actively utilised to develop a habit of open intellectual debate in narrow academic circles as well as in broader context, in South Africa and eventually in the region as well. The 'window' can easily close again as practitioners become disillusioned by the contribution made by academics or, much worse, because they fear the 'unwelcome consequences of the contemplation of ideas'. Such an occurrence should be actively guarded against, and one of the ways of doing so may be to openly articulate the danger of its happening.

There is another implication of the foregoing: much emphasis is currently being placed on the natural sciences in the transformation and redirection of research and tertiary education in South Africa. Though not necessarily openly acknowledged, the implication is a down-scaling of the social sciences and the humanities. Few would deny the need for better schooling in mathematics and science and more trained natural scientists in South Africa. However, there is no reason whatsoever to believe that South and Southern Africa can do with fewer competent and optimally functioning social scientists, or without an active non-academic intellectual community trained in the social sciences or the humanities. There is a great danger in becoming too focused and 'technocratic': society will pay a very dear price if it does not retain and further develop a creative component able to 'pull the strings together' at the social and political level. Without such a component, South and Southern Africa will either stagnate or deteriorate at the socio-political level or be the mere recipients of 'recipes' devised elsewhere. In order to become masters of our own destiny, we need the will, as well as the creative ability and the training to

deal with highly complex socio-economic and political problems. We do not want to be completely reliant on 'technology transfers' from elsewhere, least of all in the realm of social construction - or the search for security.

The second point which is implicit in Van Aardt's application of the new security agenda to the Southern African situation, is the need to visualise security as part of a complex of issues which go to the very core of the way we perceive and deal with socio-economic and political problems. As is clear from her exploration of sovereignty, as well as the referents and agents of security, the problem we are interested in does not manifest as a zero-sum situation where more sovereignty (or security) for one means less for the other: the problem is much more complex and therefore challenging. What is also striking about the discussion, in particular of the referents of security, is how globalisation is now impacting on political thinking: the same realisations which came in an earlier era of democratisation in the Western world of how national societies should be conceptualised and structured, seem to have entered the thinking on political matters at the regional and even international level. Democracy (security) is government (the provision of security) by the people for the people, or as Van Aardt puts it "... *security ... is not a passive condition; the referents participate actively in the provision and maintenance of security and, by implication, in defining the content of security.*" In the Southern African context, an added problem is that providing security, in many cases, has to be attained at the national, regional and more inclusive levels all at the same time. The situation facing us on our subcontinent is truly one which can only be dealt with by way of an integrated approach to security and development.

What is meant by an integrated approach to security and development? Simply that development and security should not be regarded as divorced or separate concerns.<sup>3</sup> This both implies and flows from such realisations as that structural economic and social development cannot be actualised without a relatively secure environment, and that security implies the absence of certain 'threats', including socio-economic 'threats' to the state/nation and to people, i.e. that which is implied by the 'new security agenda' or the horizontal and vertical widening of the concept of security. The idea of an integrated approach to development and security is therefore already implied in the extended concept of security. When one runs through the typical list of 'new' security issues in Southern Africa and in the 'post-conflict' 1990s, the interconnectedness and the need for an integrated approach in dealing with these, become abundantly clear:

- rapid population growth;
- AIDS and other diseases;
- water, food and environmental security issues;
- landmines;
- the proliferation of light weapons;
- crime;
- illegal drugs;
- poaching and cattle theft;
- mass migration;
- unemployment;
- insufficient economic growth;
- a culture of violence;
- a culture of civil disobedience;
- ethnocentric nationalism(s); and
- instability due to processes of democratisation.

The idea of thinking of development and security as two sides of the same coin is neither a radical nor a new one; it is implied in the broad range of functions entrusted to the state as an institution as well as to the United Nations. It is also recognised in other institutions, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), through the potentially broad range of functions and organs they provide. However, the implications are often not clearly spelt out.

Certainly, the 'security forces' have a role to play in addressing some aspects of these issues and Van Aardt makes a valid point in warning against incapacitating the military on the grounds that there are no more military threats. Indeed, the military have often been the carriers of those skills and qualities which are essential for dealing with many of the 'new security threats'. Qualities such as discipline and self-sacrifice are normally associated with a well-trained military, and would be equally valuable if inculcated in the rest of society. The question, therefore, is not whether the roles and functions of defence forces should be rethought *vis-à-vis* states' internal situations and conditions. Clearly, it will have to be, as the resources invested in the military are simply too valuable not to use to their utmost in dealing with security in all its aspects. The critical question is how the negative aspects associated with the military can be eliminated or substantially minimised for it must not be forgotten that the primary distinguishing characteristic of the military is their training to kill. Can the baby be retained without keeping the dirty bathwater as well?

A second implication is that the inseparability of development and security should be even more clearly articulated in the context of development assistance or foreign aid than is at present the case. Furthermore, the 'donor community' should recognise the necessity of using a percentage of development aid budgets for dealing with problems which have not traditionally been termed 'developmental' in nature. The clearing of landmines in areas that could be used for agricultural or other productive purposes would be an excellent example. Strategies to combat lawlessness would also qualify for development funds, as these would be redressing situations that impair secure environments and therefore socio-economic development.

Thirdly, security is in essence about equality or, put differently, insecurity is about inequality. What this implies is that in the real world neither security nor equality is ever absolute, but relative and interconnected: for example, people do not regard themselves as insecure because they will eventually die that is regarded as a fact of life but only when they perceive that they are more likely to die younger or less naturally than others, is insecurity experienced. Deprivation, as such, is also not regarded as a security threat, but relative deprivation is. Security comes into play where people are markedly unequal, where they are differently effected by disease, insufficient food or water, environmental degradation, or unemployment. The essence of insecurity is therefore being relatively less secure than others. Perhaps this is why the new, expanded security agenda came to be generally accepted at a time when the world was becoming significantly 'smaller' and, according to many, inequalities more pronounced. Globalisation will, among others, facilitate the dissemination of knowledge about the circumstances of life of other people and would therefore contribute to insecurity across a broader front, both for the less 'secure' and the more 'secure'. As soon as substantial inequalities are perceived (or inequalities between substantial numbers of people), insecurity results in both directions: not only do the unemployed feel insecure, but the employed also do because they immediately realise what the effect on their opposite number will be. However, it is important to note that it is not what people have in absolute terms that makes them secure, but as De Gaay Fortman puts it, "... *it is in their positions in entitlement systems that people find socio-economic security.*"<sup>4</sup> What is meant by this is that inequality in a socio-economic sense goes far beyond inequality in income and this is apparently recognised by the literature on the topic.<sup>5</sup> This also implies that security is better served by some 'entitlement systems' than by

others: as 'subsidiary entitlement' (compensation for marginalisation) may be easily affected by the socio-political culture as expressed in the spirit of the time, while people's 'primary entitlement' in the sense of having access to resources and rights to goods and services on the basis of their reintegration into the community.<sup>6</sup> Much the same reasoning could apply in the political sphere.

Both the use of the military and foreign aid, as has been pointed out, can contribute in addressing security issues. However, such use would still not go to the heart of socio-economic or political insecurity. Foreign aid, in particular, implies providing for 'subsidiary entitlement' and is therefore less 'reliable' than other ways of 'accessing' security. Use of the military has always proved less 'permanent' or 'sustainable' than other forms of security. Neither is 'equal deprivation' at the level of the lowest common denominator a solution to the security problem. To try and keep everyone at the level of those least inclined (or able) to try and improve their circumstances, is no solution. If successful, such an equalisation attempt would mean that mankind as a whole would be less well off than it could be and redistribution in accordance with a 'culture of entitlement' would certainly not encourage productive activities as was shown by the collapse of the command economies in Central and Eastern Europe. De Gaay Fortman may well be pointing us in the right direction when he argues that, what went wrong with economic reforms in Russia and led to a frightful trend of reverse development, was that people were unprepared for them, that they were imposed from above, that they lacked subtlety and graduality and that there was no integrated approach to the economic, political, legal, social and cultural aspects of the transition.<sup>7</sup> In essence, he concludes that deregulation does not mean the absence of legal intervention, but in effect unprecedented re-regulation of society by the mechanisms of private law. If this is true in that context, it could be equally true in a broader context as well. It would also bring us back full circle to the idea of security as complex, non-zero-sum, and something which should be provided by people for people.

The implication of this conceptualisation of security is that Van Aardt's conclusion about the importance of having institutional developments in Southern Africa keep pace with regional problems, is both valid and insufficient: only if the structures which are developed go to the heart of the security issue, will it turn out to be really relevant and important.

## ENDNOTES

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2. In the context of foreign policy, various workshops held to discuss, among others, the **Foreign Policy Discussion Document**, SADC restructuring and South African participation in peacekeeping operations may be cited as examples.
3. M Muller, *An Integrated Approach to Development and Security in Southern Africa*, commissioned paper read at the **47th Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs**, Lillehammer, Norway, 1-7 August 1997, p. 1; the remainder of the exposition of this approach is taken from this source.
4. B de Gaay Fortman, *Beyond Income Distribution: An Entitlement Systems Approach to the Acquirement Problem*, **Working Paper**, 249, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague, 1997, p. 2.

5. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-6.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

## CONCLUSION

**Maxi van Aardt**

The collection of essays and responses in this monograph started off with Solomon's reference to the 'tectonic shifts in the global security landscape' which have been taking place since the late 1980s. These shifts have not occurred only in security theory. The way in which they have also impacted on security perceptions and practice in the 'real' world is particularly obvious in Southern Africa where the concept 'regional security' has changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War and the demise of apartheid.

Two features of the changed thinking and application of security are particularly salient with regard to the Southern African region and to security thinking in general. The first is the interconnectedness between security thinking and practice and the concomitant influence, very often directly, that such thinking has on security application. The second (and the first confirmation of this) is the extent of continuity and change within security practice, again also witnessed within Southern Africa. These two features are furthermore interlinked. The contributions in this collection bear strong evidence of these features, whether implicitly or explicitly, and in this conclusion the elements of the interconnectedness between theory and practice and its implications, and on continuity and change will be focused upon. In doing this, some areas and issues in need of further research will be pointed out.

The interconnectedness between security theory and practice is part of the continuity inherent in security studies. Although Van Aardt and Muller point to the interaction between academics and practitioners in South Africa regarding security, and particularly new security thinking and its application, this is of course not really 'new', as illustrated in Solomon's overview. The content of security changes over time, depending on era and context. As far back as the 1930s, American national security thinking revolved very much around economic security, changing to an overriding concern with military security during the Cold War era. Towards the late 1960s, the idea of security as being something 'more' than military security was put forward by Robert McNamara, the then president of the World Bank. During the 1970s and 1980s, the conceptualisation of security slowly broadened, both in the developed and developing worlds. In Europe, the Helsinki process and the idea of comprehensive security slowly gained ground. In Africa, the Front-Line States (FLS) increasingly came to include economic and social security as part of their security agenda which initially consisted of opposing apartheid and South African military destabilisation. The FLS founded the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC, now the Southern African Development Community SADC) in 1980 the first example, it would seem, of a link between security and development. The essential meaning of security freedom from threat has not changed. Contemporary conceptualisation of security as being multidimensional and aimed at people as the main referent of security (human security) are therefore also not necessarily pointing to 'the end of security', to borrow from Fukuyama, but may change over time as era and context change.

The way in which the current conceptualisation of security finds application in practice is also continuously being interrogated and challenged. Hudson's feminist reading of security in Africa attests to this. One cannot really do justice to Hudson's rich contribution in this brief chapter, but

a number of points raised by her contribution need to be emphasised, however briefly. They indicate a range of issues and problems concerning security thinking and practice that need to be explored further.

A reading of Hudson points to the threefold 'nature' of security when one attempts to study and apply it in a comprehensive way, making it inclusive of all people as referents of security. The genuine broadening of the security concept needs and benefits from a feminist reading exactly because it broadens the lens through which we view security. The contributions of feminists such as Carol Giligan and the difference feminists<sup>1</sup> who espouse the idea of responsibility and care gave practical understanding to the way in which security needs to be defined and applied in order to benefit people. The work of liberal feminists on gender equality opens up a Pandora's box on the role of women in the military. Women are increasingly accepted into the military even though the debate about their exact role is not settled. Does equality mean women should become 'like' men? Is this what is wanted and needed? How does such a view fit in with the idea of responsibility and care? These questions complement the points raised by Van Aardt regarding security structures and the agents of security. Merely including women into these structures as agents is suitable to the liberal feminist approach of equality, but will not necessarily make a difference to the way in which security is perceived and applied. The examples of Margaret Thatcher and Golda Meir those 'manly' and war mongering prime ministers, spring to mind. The changing nature of peacekeeping and the move towards peacebuilding may serve as a practical way of changing traditional military philosophy and dogma. Feminist thinking should form part of this debate and of the changes in military thinking and practice to adapt to new demands on the military for making and keeping the peace

Hudson also refers to the fact that security needs to include women, and that security is inextricably linked to the security of women in Africa, if only because so much of production, whether wage-related or subsistence activities, depend on them. Broad security, for instance economic and social security, and economic and social policies, needs to reflect a concern with women and their status, position and need. Again, feminist contributions in this field, such as those of Caroline Moser<sup>2</sup> give practical guidelines and frameworks for planning and implementing policies that will benefit women and contributors to human security. But as Van Aardt points out, the agents of security need rethinking. Security is not only (also) for women, but women should also participate as agents of security, represented and involved in decision-making positions and other initiatives aimed at building and maintaining security. Hudson mentions the low participation of women in, for instance, the peacekeeping training projects conducted by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD). We need to reactivate the debate on the idea of whether quota systems for female participation is necessary to promote women as active participants in planning and working towards a secure and prosperous future Southern Africa. And what about SADC? How are we to include women as subjects and not objects of security?

The third aspect of security that flows from Hudson's work is the fact that just referring to the need for, or working on the principle of an holistic approach to security is not sufficient. Hudson uses the term 'fractional holism' which captures the idea that human security in itself is not monolithic, but that what constitutes human security may vary according to, once again, era, context and even gender. This calls for the need, in policy terms, to look anew at the application of sovereignty, a point raised by Van Aardt. Security is multidimensional: applying it may also mean that the ability to deal with it demands 'unbundled' sovereignty. The principle of subsidiarity as practised by the European Union may offer some useful insights for Southern Africa.

A last point is that of the nexus between security and development. This link, or the need for such a link to be established in theory and practice, has been emphasised by all the contributors to this volume. Muller in particular raised the interesting and important link between development, aid, security and the idea of 'entitlement systems' in order to promote equality, notions which bring one back to Hudson's fractious holism. According to Muller, security is in essence about equality. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that security touches, in a fundamental way, on equity rather than equality. Needs are related to expectations and concrete conditions and experiences. Not everyone needs or wants the same level of security, but security needs to be distributed equitably. Development is about choices. To be more exact it is about widening choices, and security provides the environment in which those choices are safely exercised. The levels of security and development available, exercised and maintainable are very much dependant on place and time, or era and context. No wonder Boutros-Ghali emphasised the need for development to become part of peacebuilding in other words, to be incorporated into security thinking in areas rife with conflict. We need more research in this area as well. How do we incorporate development into peacekeeping and peacebuilding, in general, and in specific circumstances? How do we build and maintain and promote the link between security and development within the region? What can the region contribute to the rest of the continent in this regard, and how?

The exciting thing about security, and about the ideas and concerns raised in this volume, is the fact that it opens up a new world of discovery in our attempts to use our scholarship as a means to improve the human condition.

## ENDNOTES

1. On the work of Giligan, the difference feminists and the way in which these ideas may be incorporated into regional security thinking, see M van Aardt, *In Search of a More Adequate Conceptualisation of Security for Southern Africa*, **South African Journal of International Affairs**, 1(1), 1993, Spring, pp. 82-101.
2. C Moser, **Gender Planning and Development Theory, Practice and Training**, Routledge, London, 1993.