

African Women's Movements: Toward a Feminist Conception of Security, Citizenship, and Nationhood

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Abstract:

Notions of statehood, citizenship, and security are conceptualized in many ways, but often share a systematic hierarchal and patriarchal ideological structure. I examine three African women's movements that form their activism around transforming the state and reimagining ideas of security. Through discourse analysis and qualitative coding of website and published materials, I investigate whether the language and semantics of mobilization used by these groups represents a shift in the conceptualization of the political. Findings indicate that the women's activism challenges dominant notions of masculinity and state structures simultaneously, dismantling the false idea of a private-public dichotomy and infusing values of love and community into state and security ideals.

Introduction

Notions of statehood, citizenship, and security are conceptualized in many ways across different localities. Most, however, share a systematic hierarchal and patriarchal ideological structure. In some contexts, feminist and women's movements work to dismantle these structures using a variety of methods, from placing women in positions of political power and altering civil law to symbolic action and mass protest.

Internationally, women's rights communities have successfully passed several documents that encourage governments to involve women in peace and security processes and in government generally. However, while they often succeed in adding women into existing state structures, few resolutions are interrogating the patriarchal paradigms of the systems themselves.

As a feminist researcher located in the United States, I am frustrated by the constant praise my colleagues grant these international laws. More inspiring is the powerful anger present in the discourses of some African feminist and womanist scholars who call these state systems into question. In this paper, I examine three African women's movements that frame their activism around transforming the state and with it, notions of security and citizenship in local contexts. Through discourse analysis and open coding of websites, press releases, recorded interviews, and other published materials, I investigate whether the language and semantics of mobilization used by these groups represents a shift in the conceptualization of the political and whether or not that shift seeks to transform the state as a whole.

Transforming a system, like some African woman scholars suggest, is a powerful yet intimidating difficult approach to politics. Feminists struggling for admission to their nation's hierarchal structures and frustrated by the limitations of civil rights discourse and demands may find a new direction or insight in the language and mobilization methods of these movements. As the world becomes increasingly global, feminist communities have an opportunity to learn from movements and scholarship in many local contexts. From years of participation in a liberal feminist movement in a Western context, I believe that movements ought to begin to examine the impact they are achieving using methods of reform and consider exploring opportunities to transform the structures they currently accept as flawed, but static.

Security Reformed, Not Security Transformed: A Review of the Literature

Since the 1970s, security discourses have been in transition. Some international relations and feminist scholars scrutinized traditional state based security, criticizing the militarism it normalized and the human needs it ignored (Hamber, *et al* 2006, 488-9). In the 1990s, the international community responded to these and other criticisms. The 1994 United Nations Human Development Report, for

example, urged individual states and the international community to consider human security a high priority in foreign and domestic policy. Some feminist scholars praised the human security paradigm and its recognition of the gender politics in peace and conflict (see Anderlini 2003 and Reardon 1993); others, especially some African feminist women, were disappointed by security reform's lack of transformative power (see Clarke 2008, Gqola 2007, and McFadden 2008). Security, these scholars say, is intangible. It has been interpreted and imagined to be about the state, but can be re-interpreted and re-imagined in ways that challenge patriarchal notions of security and citizenship.

Why Study the State Through the Security Paradigm?

When we consider a state's duties to its citizens, we often think first and foremost of its ability or inability to offer protection, or security. States are evaluated as successes or failures based on this measurement. Many states allocate large percentages of their budgets to military expenditure, still the most commonly accepted avenue through which a state can provide security. Because so much of a state's time and funds are poured into concepts of security, we are able to study this high state priority as a proxy variable for the state itself.

The idea of "security" also links to other concepts surrounding the state, such as citizenship and nationalism. By studying to whom a government grants security, we are able to infer who it regards as its prioritized citizens. The same is true for nationalism. The type of security a government prioritizes suggests the kind of nation it seeks to build. A state based militaristic security, therefore, constructs a nation based on violent militarism rather than community.

Moreover, when discussing potential transformation, it is important to study something that is seemingly transformable. Activists often perceive the state as a static structure, an entity they must work within, rather than dismantle. A 2006 study of women's perceptions of security in Lebanon, Ireland, and South Africa, though, found that while many women felt that they were not adequately

secure, they were able to imagine and begin to create a world in which they were (Hamber, *et al* 2006, 492). Since security and the state are so closely conflated, transforming conceptions of security provides an avenue through which to transform the state.

State Based Security: A Dominant Approach to a System of Dominance

For centuries, a state-based notion of security has dominated international thought. State-based security focuses attention on the protection of state borders from external threats and, more recently, on the protection of the authority of the state from internal threats, such as rebel or terrorist groups (Hamber, *et al* 2006, 488). Put more plainly, state based security is defined by the absence of violent threat to the state, though not necessarily to the people who live in that state. Conventional political discourse dictates that a military, and sometimes violent actions from a military, are needed to maintain security (Sutton and Novkov 2008, 3). Billions of dollars, and in 2008, 1.46 trillion dollars,¹ have been poured into military spending around the world in an effort to “keep states secure,” while security concerns that do not flow directly from violent conflict are generally ignored in this security paradigm (Hamber, *et al* 2006, 489). As feminist security scholar Cynthia Enloe remarks, “Ironically, the more a government is preoccupied with what it calls national security, the less likely its women are to have the physical safety necessary for sharing their theorizing about that nation and their security within it” (in Clarke 2008, 54).

What Makes a State?

Researchers from a variety of different backgrounds have weighed in negatively on state-based security. Some scholars maintain that state-based security is a Western notion and is derived from Western understandings of a state and citizen-state relations. It is important, then, to examine and

¹ Figure taken from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute’s 2009 Year Book.

deconstruct current understandings of what makes a state and the history and contextual knowledge that inform those understandings.

A controversial 1999 work by French Africanists Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz² argued that the “African state” is different from understandings of the “Western state.” Modern statehood, according to the Western model, mandates functionally distinct public and private spheres (Chabal and Daloz 1999, 5). In other words, those who are in positions of power in the government are distinguished from the society they rule. This, the authors argue, is not present in African politics. Rather, in a hybrid state model created by the merging of traditional systems of government and the experience of colonialism, rulers pass state owned goods to certain citizens, usually from the same ethnic group or community, in exchange for maintaining political power. This patrimonialism prevents the separation of the public and private realms (Chabal and Daloz 1999, 5).

This conceptualization of state power influences the notion of what citizenship is. While the conventionally accepted definition of citizenship refers to an individual’s membership in a state, a pledge of allegiance and a sense of nationalism in exchange for security—in Africa, an ethnic and more locally focused nationalism prevails. While citizens recognize the territorial state in which they reside, they simultaneously feel allegiance to members of their ethnic communities, both within and outside of that territorial state (Akokpari 2008, 94). Basil Davidson, author of *The Black Man’s Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation State* argues that the model of the nation-state that African states were encouraged to pursue during independence created a false nationalism (1992, 10). The states that were forcibly formed by colonialism had no common history; they alienated the people rather than bringing them together. Because African states maintained the systems of oppressive European colonies, people

² This book, *Africa Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument*, is indeed controversial. While it is heralded by some African scholars as being truly understanding of the workings of their societies, others find it demeaning and patronizing. In referencing it here, I am not stating agreement or disagreement with the ideas presented. Rather, I wish only to show that alternative ideas of state and citizenship do exist.

remained loyal to the tribalism that served as nationalism prior to colonial occupation (Davidson 1992, 11).

Many Western scholars view the African continent as a developing one, both in terms of the economies and political ideas. This concept of the “evolutionary state,” the idea that African states will eventually mature to fulfill a (more correct) Western state model, demonstrates that Western scholars and governments still view African states as infantile. However, Chabal and Daloz argue that this model of statehood is Africa’s own version of a modern state. Works like Chabal and Daloz’s 1999 book that make such generalized statements about Africa have been rightfully criticized. However, their ideas are important because they demonstrate how often the international community simply accepts conventional notions of “the state,” “security,” and “citizenship” without interrogating where such concepts come from and what they might mean in different local contexts. Indeed, if state structures are to be transformed alongside notions of security, it is important to examine where they came from and begin to imagine what they might become.

Militarism and State Based Security

African feminist Patricia McFadden rejects the idea of the “African” state. This racist discourse, she says, further normalizes the Western model of the state and assumes a pro-capitalist institutionalized state to be the correct model (McFadden 2008, 136). Amina Mama echoes her concerns. A Western state structure cannot be assumed, she says, even when a state is not characterized as “African” (1997, 59). The two argue that instead of debating the correct model of statehood, problematic statehood in Africa needs to be examined alongside problematic statehood everywhere, especially where national security is defined by military power (Kirk 2008, 37).

By convincing citizens that their security depends on an enormous military, heads of states are often able to amplify military spending, using state funds to purchase weapons and pay soldiers’ salaries

(McFadden 2007, 37) while diverting important funds away from the development of programs to benefit citizens (Kirk 2008, 43). Of course, not all states in Africa are considered “strong states” in that they have a formidable government structure and large military. However, a state can be militaristic even without armed forces. Militarism runs much deeper than military spending and often results in the militarization of a society’s culture. According to Cynthia Enloe, an American feminist scholar whose work *Maneuvers* examined the militarization of culture, militarization occurs when the language and priorities of military institutions infest the culture, language, educational systems, economic ideas, government policies, national values, and identities of a people (2000, 291). Put plainly, the hierarchy, domination, and power divisions that are present and normalized in military culture become just as pervasive in civil society. Societal militarism, like the institutional military, relies on constructing people who are different as threatening, their lives expendable (Lee 2008, 59). In this way, social injustice is reinforced (Sutton and Novkov 2008, 16).

Enloe’s argument is informed by a Western experience, and should be extended to be applicable in other societies only with caution. However the militarization of culture is something many feminists discuss in their own local contexts and many cite Enloe’s work to ground their examples. Yaliwe Clarke argues that militarization is manifested in some African contexts through militarized masculinities, a manhood that values power and violence (2008, 60). Sylvia Tamale argues that the militarism present in the army legitimates the cycle of violence in the home (2005, 316). Patricia McFadden, too, extends Enloe’s argument to her own context, stating, “Militarism, taken as a system of belligerent domination of society, goes beyond military insubordination, excess in functions assigned to the armed forces or civil disobedience. It is the penetration and influence of its norms and culture of society” (2008, 151). A focus on state based security as necessary for a society’s prosperity not only ignores breaches of security such as hunger, poverty, lack of education, and lack of healthcare. It also promotes and

maintains a culture of violence in the home, ensuring that women simply cannot attain adequate security under the state based security paradigm.

Moving Toward a Human Security Discourse

In the 1990s, the international community began to explore alternative security paradigms.³ The United Nations Development Program made official a discourse that emphasized the importance of economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. Human security, it said, was people-centered and aimed to provide “freedom from want,” in addition to the more standard “freedom from fear,” to the people of the world (Hamber 2006, 489). Kofi Annan, the UN General Secretary, stated that the UN was committed to making human rights central to state security (Anderlini 2007, 11). Under Anan’s leadership, the United Nations also began to explore the position of women in societies around the world, specifically in societies engaged in armed conflict, and to solicit their input in official peace and security processes.

Gender and the United Nations

The first United Nations International Conference on Women took place in 1975 in Mexico City. Subsequent conferences in 1980 (Copenhagen), 1985 (Nairobi), and 1995 (Beijing) affirmed that the United Nations was serious about examining women’s roles in conflict and peacekeeping. In 2000, the United Nations Security Council issued a unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 (SCR 1325). This document, which was passed mainly because of the transnational work of feminist policy makers around the world, recognized the disproportionate impact of war and conflict on women and girls and urged

³ While I’d like to make the claim that international activism for human security initiated the shift, some authors argue that there were ulterior motives involved. For example, Mark Duffield’s work *Global Governance and New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security*, argues that the predominant interest in human security and aid is not to help, but to exercise control over (2001).

women's equal and full participation as agents in peace and security processes (Hamber, *et al* 2006, 490).

Praise for SCR 1325

Security Council Resolution 1325 has been hailed by many women researchers as the future of security. Generally, these researchers, consciously or not, use language and follow ideals of two distinct branches of feminist theory—Difference Feminism and Liberal Feminism. Difference Feminism, a theory popularized in the 1980s with Carol Gilligan's book, *In a Different Voice*, argues that women and men are ontologically different, and thus have different qualities to contribute to the world. Based on these principles, some peace and conflict scholars make the claim that females are inherently more peaceful than males and therefore approach peace and security differently. Because of this, the researchers claim that SCR 1325 is important because it includes women and their different approaches in security discourse.

Betty Reardon's 1993 work, *Women Building Peace*, makes the case for a "feminine approach" to security reform (166). Women, she says, see peace not as an absence of state violence, but envision a positive peace where justice is present (149). By listening to women's voices, the world will begin to see women's four fundamental peace visions: the birthright vision, in which all human beings are entitled to human security; a world equality vision, in which men's and women's needs receive equal attention; a vision of a disarmed world, where no one is the victim of war; and a vision of ecological security, in which we acknowledge that we depend on one another for existence (Reardon 1993, 150-66).

The sense that women are inherently more peaceful than men is longstanding and is becoming more engrained in international relations discourse (Charlesworth 2008, 348). Often present in the language of UN documents is an emphasis placed on the need to include women in peace negotiations,

implying that women ought to be included because of their affinity with peace, not because of their equality as human beings (Charlesworth 2008, 349). This argument can be used to keep women in their place and ultimately undermines them as political players in their own right. If women are included in peace processes because they are assumed to have a natural affinity for peace, their involvement will be limited to their “womanly instincts.” In other words, their representation in peace building will be restricted to the feminine tasks of nurturing and mothering, rather than allowing them to explore their full agency (Charlesworth 2008, 350). This one-dimensional peaceful feminine self is contrasted with the perceived male norm of violent aggression, effectively othering not just women, but their role in the peace process (El Bushra 2008, 135).

Not all women who have admired SCR 1325, though, believe that women are inherently peaceful. Rather, some scholars view the resolution as a key milestone for women in international relations because it guarantees women a spot at the table simply because they are equal and agentic human beings. Liberal feminists, who strive for equality through political and legal reform, are often proponents of “adding women in” to existing structures to achieve change. Women’s unique life experiences, they believe, have led them to experience peace and security differently from men. If they are represented in the security sector, they will work to share these experiences with others and to craft legislation that reflects them, effectively reforming the security sector and forcing it to address women’s needs (National Alternatives Fund).

While accepted by many, this approach has encountered some criticism from some feminist scholars. One counter argument is that simply adding women into an existing problematic system might reform it, but will never address the troubling qualities of the system itself. Because human security was created to exist side by side with, not to replace, state-based security, it does not question the context that creates the lack of human security to begin with (Hamber *et al*, 2006, 489-90).

SCR 1325 and the Lack of Systemic Transformation

Despite the UN's attention to gender in conflict, a state security discourse continues to dominate the international sphere. Several authors have responded to the praise given to SCR 1325, maintaining that it simply does not push the status quo hard or far enough. Studies have shown that although this reformative approach incorporates women into government structures and even allows them to be elected to positions of government power, it fails to interrogate the gendered natures of these problematic structures, and cannot transform the societal system within which these structures operate (Tripp 2009, 180). The analysis must move beyond simply addressing women's marginalization from the state (McFadden 2007, 38).

Transformative Notions of Security: What Women's Re-Imaginations Look Like

Many Western feminists⁴ who have commented on security have failed to include the views of African women in their scholarship. Despite this neglect, some of these excluded voices are demanding the transformative notion of security lacking in Western discourses. In order to get to the bottom of the militarism, "a system of belligerent domination of society," (McFadden 2008, 151), African feminist voices are demanding a deconstruction of militarized masculinities and a closer look at how women conceptualize and are re-conceptualizing their identities as citizens to the state.

Deconstructing Militarized Masculinities

Adding women into traditional security formulas assumes things about the gendered behavior of women, but does not deconstruct a masculinity that has become highly militarized (Clarke 2008, 60).

⁴ Western feminist scholarship is a rich and diverse body of theory and I am not attempting to homogenize the work coming out of this region of the world. Rather, I am pointing out a noted overall deficiency of voices from other regions of the world in the work. Bisi Adeleye-Feyemi notes the gap in writing about Africa specifically. "How many feminist writers on Africa refer to the works of African women? How many books on international feminism include contributions from African feminist scholars and activists?" (Adeleye-Feyemi 2005, 115). There has long been a silencing of African women's voices and experiences.

However, post conflict situations do present the opportunity to explore the historical context of violent masculinities and the societal factors that maintain them. In many African societies, modern militaries were introduced by European colonists to maintain the domination of the white settlers over black (non) citizens. After wars of independence were fought and won, these militaries, like many aspects of the colonial state, were not dismantled, but were instead taken over by the newly independent state. Despite their colonial nature, the role of the military in relation to the new state and the accompanying militaristic culture was not questioned (Clarke 2008, 55). Additionally, there was no interrogation of how a system often responsible for carrying out extreme measures of violence could possibly provide security for women (Clarke 2008, 57).

Because mainstream feminist discourse has failed to address these problems, a culture of silence about militarism has prevailed, allowing violence to, “become a constant companion in our midst” (Gqola⁵ 2007, 114). Truly gender transformative work requires that masculinities be revisited and transformed, beginning with unmasking our collective denial of women’s lack of progress (Gqola 2007, 118). The international community must first re-think its praise for the “women’s empowerment” it claims to have achieved, for true empowerment does not mean a published United Nations document, but the freedom of movement, sexual autonomy, and bodily integrity. According to Gqola, the hype surrounding women’s inclusion in the peace processes perpetuates violent masculinities because the international community is celebrating rather than confronting them (2007, 117).

Both men and women have a role to play in the collective struggle to eradicate violent masculinities. Men must be held accountable for their violent masculinity and recognize that each individual male is responsible for rejecting militarized masculinities. Eliminating the “passwords” that enable a shift in responsibility is the first step . Instead of silencing the real debate on gender based

⁵ Though Pumla Gqola is writing in a specific contemporary South African context, her arguments and ideas been used to support notions of violent masculinities in many contexts outside of South Africa.

violence with discourse such as “not all men are rapists,” we need to recognize the reality that, in not intervening to challenge idealized masculinity, all men play a role in maintaining violent masculinity (Gqola 2007, 119).

Gqola also calls on women to become psychologically liberated from violent masculinities and the militarized system that perpetuates them (2007, 121). A militarized society implies not only that the world does not belong to women, but that there is nothing wrong with such a violently militaristic space. In order to truly realize a transformative security paradigm, Gqola notes that the international community must take steps toward eradicating the patriarchal myth that nurtures male power and entitlement (2007, 122). I believe it is important to note, too, that this discourse faces the challenge of deconstructing violent masculinities without presuming that men have an affinity for violence, and women for peace. Rather, the discourse needs to explore the connection between these violent masculinities and how the qualities they value preserve state based security and a militaristic state, while the people of the community remain insecure (Tickner 1992, 3).

New Visions of Citizenship

African feminist scholarship has also begun to question the dominant understanding of the state and its capacity to treat women as citizens (McFadden 2008, 148). According to Patricia McFadden, citizenship in an African context is one derived from colonial practices and attached to positions of privilege and power (2005, 4). Often, societies that value violent masculinity grant a higher level of citizenship and security to those who embody qualities of power (McFadden 2005, 5). Though power is traditionally understood as one’s position in a societal hierarchy, women can redefine the notion of power to value dialogue, coalition building, and community (Tickner 1992, 65).

By redefining citizenship to value community instead of hierarchy, women are able to redefine the duties of the state (McFadden 2005, 5). Because women’s ideas of security depend on the

eradication of structural violence associated with imperialism, militarism, racism, and sexism, they can insist that the entire state system be reconstructed (Tickner 1992, 54). Thus, feminist transformational security moves beyond human security because it mandates that the complexity of power be examined (Thanh-Dam, *et. al* 2006, xiv). Moreover, “care” must be inscribed in the state and take the place of security as the highest priority (Thanh-Dam, *et al* 2006, xviii). In essence, the state will become secure when it begins to function as a community, not a hierarchy.

Table A explains the security paradigms as they are understood and discussed in this study, and what those understandings imply for a state and society.

TABLE A			
Security Paradigms			
	State Based Security	Human Security	Transformative Security
What it Is	Protection of State Borders from External Threats	People-Centered; Freedom from Want	Community Centered; People and State Care for One Another
What it Means	Societal Militarism	Focus on People’s Needs within the State Structure	Deconstructed State Structure; Societal Shift Away from Valuing Power toward Valuing Love

Meeting the Challenge: Is Security Being Re-Envisioned?

African feminist scholars have called on feminist activists in their nations to take a stand against traditional notions of security and citizenship. Patricia McFadden believes that African feminists are, “challenging the state and its related institutions, critiquing notions and practices of hegemonic masculinity, questioning the normalization of war and military budgets in various countries, and

proposing alternatives to militarism” (2008, 143). I hope to contribute to the scholarship by exploring whether the language and semantics of mobilization of three African women’s movements represent this transformational shift..

Feminist Methodology

Feminist methodology is an alternative approach to research that uses reflexive strategies to critically explore the biases and experiences of the researcher in relation to her research. While positivism, a method often employed in traditional social science research, requires the researcher to maintain an impossible objectivity and hide herself in her work, feminist methodology necessitates a deep self awareness in order to create knowledge (Sprague 2005, 32-6). The first step toward achieving a knowledge that is more complete and less systematically biased is recognizing that all knowledge is constructed from a specific location; it is “partial, local, and historically specific” (Sprague 2005, 41). I take care to critically locate myself and my interest in this research throughout my work in hopes of accounting for my influences and biases.

Reflexivity

In the Spring of 2009, I had the privilege of studying at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. While there, I took a course through the African Gender Institute that explored the connections between African women’s theory, politics, and action. Though I had long since questioned the work of some Western feminist scholars because of the homogenization of women’s experiences in the so-called “Third world” (see Mohanty 1988), this course forced and taught me to question many things I had once accepted as fact. Aided by the voices of African feminists in my course readings and lectures, I began to deconstruct the meaning of a state as a unit. Consequently, I was required to look more closely the

security the state provides to those who fit within its conception of citizenship. I was encouraged and moved by the possibility of reimagining these often patriarchal and hierarchal entities.

After returning to the United States from South Africa, I wanted to continue to explore these concepts, despite the limitations my physical distance from the local contexts could have on my work. However, it is due to my social location of privilege that I am able to study state and security structures from a distance and provide a critique of those systems and the groups that interact with them. I also acknowledge that my social and physical location inform my conception of the political, the state, security, woman, and feminism. As a white, middle class woman located in the United States, I have undoubtedly adopted some of the values of my dominant society, such as a sense of nationalism and individualism. These understandings may influence my work. I therefore I attempt to thoroughly ground this project in local context and use African feminist and womanist voices to inform my selection of movements and coding parameters.

Though I have since explored both scholarship and myself more fully and have tried to account for elements of my Western experience that I find troubling, it may be true that I have retained some elements of privilege or bias that I do not recognize. I thus strive to realize myself and my biases throughout the project. This transparency is important in feminist methodology. In qualitative research, the researcher is often the primary measuring instrument, or judge of the material at hand (Sprague 2005, 23). I try, at least, to recognize my own “material and political interest in the questions [I] ask and the interpretations [I] prefer (Sprague 2005, 25).

Neither my care in locating myself, nor my interest in African women’s movements, nor my inspiration from African feminist voices, however, excuse any bias, privileged language, or misunderstandings in my work. Such tools of racist patriarchy ought never be used to examine or dismantle the fruits of the same patriarchy (Lorde 1984, 111). If I have incorrectly misrepresented a group, person, or symbol, been ignorant or offensive in my choice of language, voiced over the voices I

use to inform this project (Spivak 1988, 295), or simply misunderstood discourse I attempt to analyze, I ask that others speak up so that we can foster dialogue as we “develop the picture from different social positions” (Sprague 2005, 3). Only through this interdependent dialogue “can the power to seek new ways of being in the world” be realized (Lorde 1984, 111).

Movement Selection

Definitions and Limitations

Before I could select which African women’s movements to examine, I felt it important to consider how I defined “Africa” and what I meant by “movement.” Because many African women’s movements reference African identities as part of their activism (see Gqola 2001 and McFadden 2004), I felt it appropriate to classify the movements as such. However, I did limit my geographical scope to some extent. Though many powerful women’s movements exist in the North African region, I decided to work with movements taking place primarily in sub-Saharan Africa. I recognize what a vast and diverse area this encompasses, and I in no way wish to homogenize the dozens of states in this region. However, I did want to have the freedom to select from movements in a variety of localities in Southern, East, or West Africa. Thus, I chose not to limit my definition of Africa further.

According to Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi, we must begin to expand our definitions of activism and movements to include all women’s voices and action, not just those who have access to traditional forms of activism (2001, 115). I think this is an important and powerful suggestion. Indeed, if we are to deconstruct ideas of power and hierarchy, we have to acknowledge that these very systems keep many people from accessing certain channels to dismantle them. I defined movement as broadly and openly as possible.

Purposive Sampling

In this paper I hoped to discover whether or not African women's movements evoked transformative discourse and activism. Because my intent was not to find out how many groups were using a transformative approach, but the methods and language of those who were, I used purposive sampling⁶ to select which movements to analyze. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select cases on the basis of her own judgment about which will be most useful (Bloor and Wood 2006, 154). Thus, I selected movements that, upon informal and preliminary analysis, appeared to take transformative approaches to state and security. Their discourse problematized violence, power, and hierarchy in both the home and the state. It is important to note that my goal is not to claim that the movements I have chosen are representative of all women's movements in sub-Saharan Africa. Rather, I was looking for those who are doing something specific and possibly new.

Though I did choose which groups to examine, I did not approach them with a specific hypothesis in mind. As feminist researcher Joey Sprague notes, "When testing any one hypothesis, a scientist is also testing that set of other hypothesis embedded within it—all the background assumptions contributing to the worldview that supports the hypothesis in the first place" (2005, 35). I did not want my preconceptions of state and security, or what I thought they should become, to drive my work. I tried, instead, to let the discourse of the movements drive my analysis and lead to my conclusions.

Excluded Movements

Many compelling forms of activism are community based and grassroots with no formal structure, funding, or online presence. However, because I was unable to secure funds to study any African women's movements in person at this time and because I was unable to access data for

⁶ Purposive sampling is also referred to as theoretical sampling (Bloor and Wood 2006, 154).

“nontraditional” activist groups, I was forced to exclude them from my study. Their omission is certainly a weakness in my work.

Movements for which I was unable to access data were not the only movements I excluded from my sample. I elected not to include certain classifications of activism. Though they have played an instrumental role in obtaining cease fires and ending violence against women, I did not consider traditional women’s peace movements in my study. In order to challenge the state-based security paradigm, I believe it is important to challenge conventional ideas of “peace time” and “war time.” Indeed, states can be at war with women or citizens without being in a civil conflict or war with a neighboring state (Essof 2005, 34). If notions of security are imagined in transformational ways, understandings of “war” and “peace” would also be altered. Thus, for this project I decided that I would focus on movements that were not organized around bringing a state in a traditional war back to traditional peace.

I chose, too, to exclude African feminist movements who use *solely* liberal feminist strategies to achieve change. I defined “liberal feminism” here as groups that focus only on adding women into existing state and security structures in order to reform them. These movements simply do not fit my parameters of transformation. As Zimbabwean feminist Shireen Essof said of some Zimbabwean women activists she considers transformational, “Our battle is not with the law *per se*, but with patriarchy” (Essof 2005, 34). I wished to take a closer look with groups that seemed to have a similar approach to change.

I also decided not to examine groups with large Western financial donors. As the current Director of the women’s group at American University in Washington, DC, I understand the importance of funding and the politics behind securing and maintaining donors. I know that movements are sometimes forced to tailor their missions and mobilization tactics in order to acquire the funds necessary to operate. Thus, women’s groups with large Western donors might take a more normative,

or even more Western, approach to state and security due to this influence.⁷ While they certainly play an important role in many African states, they will not be included here.

The Movements

The Women Writing Africa Project

The Women Writing Africa Project began as a conversation between a few female scholars and local leaders who set out to compile and publish women's voices throughout history in Africa. Since then, the project has earned international grants and has expanded its goals beyond simply recording voices. The editors say that they have reached a conceptual breakthrough, re-conceiving the notion of writing to capture the landscapes of women's worlds by using a blend of verbal and written forms of expression. By capturing women's interactions with their societies, histories, and creativities, women, are, "in short, making a world" (Daymond, et al 2003, xviii). Does this cultural reconstruction project actually construct new and transformative ideas of an African state? I sought to answer this question as I explored the discourse from the Women Writing Africa Project.

Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA)

WOZA, the acronym for Women of Zimbabwe Arise, is a Ndebele word meaning "come forward" (Women of Zimbabwe Arise). The translation defines this grassroots women's organization of over 75,000 members. Their goals include providing women a united voice to speak about issues in their daily lives, empowering female leadership, encouraging women to stand up for their freedoms, and lobbying and advocating on the issues selected by the members. While WOZA does employ some liberal strategies for change, they also use non-violent action and civil disobedience in their protests, a strategy

⁷ Women Writing Africa, one of the studied movements, did indeed receive funding from a Western organization. However, theirs was a one time grant from the Ford Foundation based on an initial project proposal. I felt that because this funding was given at the beginning of the project, it would not have affected Women Writing Africa's mission or goals drastically. I decided to include them based on my own discretion, and acknowledge that I could be mistaken in my assumption.

they call “tough love,” in an effort to “build a better tomorrow.” I sought to understand if the tomorrow they envision is one of a transformed state, and with it, one that is built upon new definitions of security and citizenship.

Gender 10 (G10)

Kenya has many thriving women’s organizations, many of them liberal non-governmental organizations seeking to add women into government structures. The Gender 10, commonly referred to as the G10, is a national coalition of those organizations.⁸ The G10 has cells across the country that operate protests and campaigns at local and national levels. While, individually, the groups within the G10 seek to put women in positions of political power, the G10 as a coalition group has a larger self defined mission as a whole—“to use women’s voices and actions to redefine political space” (Gender 10). While G10 has waged a number of campaigns, I focus primarily on the sex strike the women leaders called in 2009 in an effort to demand true safety and security for the nation. I interrogate the language, goals, and semantics of this protest to determine if it reached toward transformational objectives.

Discourse Analysis and Qualitative Coding

I examined the discourse of Women Writing Africa, Women of Zimbabwe Arise, and Gender 10 as presented in written materials available online and elsewhere in search of themes that represented transformative views of state and security based on African feminist scholarship. Overall, I was attempting to recognize a shift from valuing power and hierarchy to valuing love and community.

⁸ The Organizations in the G10 are The Coalition of Violence Against Women (COVAW), CAUCUS for Women Political Leadership (CAUCUS), Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW), Federation of Women Lawyers Kenya (FIDA-K), Tomorrow’s Child Initiative (TCI), Women in Law and Development (WILDFAF), African Women and Child Features (AWC), Development Through Media (DTM), Young Women Leadership Institute (YWLI), Maendeleo Ya Wanawake and the National Council of Women in Kenya (NCWK).

Because each of the three movements differ in context, approach to activism and language, and materials available, the discourse I analyze and the language I look for differs between the movements.

To aid in my analysis, I openly coded for phrases that I felt served as proxy variables for the overarching concept of “transformation.” Thus, each of the variables suggested a challenge to the known system, rather than a request for inclusion within it. The appropriate codes arose from both my understanding of African feminist scholarship and the discourse material. It is possible that my own conceptions of the political and my biases influenced their selection.

The Women Writing Africa Project

The Women Writing Africa Project had no webpage or online presence that I could locate as of March of 2010. However, the “Note to the Reader,” “Preface,” and “Introduction”⁹ of the print volumes for the Southern, East, and West regions focused on the project’s goals and approaches to change and provided ample material for analysis. Though I recognize the contextual importance of each piece of writing included in the Women Writing Africa Project, I organize my discussion of the volumes thematically, rather than by region. I made this decision because much of the introductory text describes the Women Writing Africa Project as a whole, not the work and the context it was composed in. For the Women Writing Africa Project, I openly coded for the following themes:

- Women responding to social forces
- Making a world / nation
- Gendering history / shifting focus
- Deconstructing a hierarchal history (time, chronology)
- Women as women or in women’s roles
- Heterogeneity as strength
- Recovering voices and redefining writing
- Women’s bodies

⁹ I coded the discourse in the “Introduction” sections until they shifted from describing the project to summarizing the specific works contained in the volume. I determined where this shift occurred at my own discretion.

Women of Zimbabwe Arise

Women of Zimbabwe Arise had a large web presence as of March of 2010. My material for analysis came from their website at www.wozazimbabwe.org. In addition to examining the discourse on their webpage, I explored twelve different WOZA publications released between 2007 and 2010 that were also available online. For Women of Zimbabwe Arise, I openly coded for the following themes:

- Courage, Strength, Human Rights Defenders
- Community, "The People"
- Unity, Support Solidarity
- New Leadership
- Love (Respect)
- Motherhood, Sisterhood, Traditional Women's Roles
- Building a Better Tomorrow, Making Dreams a Reality
- New Citizenship

Gender 10

Because the G10 is a relatively new group, I had some difficulty finding the voices of the movement online. What I had access to from my physical location in the United States was a press release about the sex strike the group waged in 2009, quotes from the leaders of Gender 10 in news articles, and a five point agenda. Therefore, I decided to expand my analysis to include the discourse in select news articles and blog posts about the G10. I conducted a Google search for "Gender10 + Kenyan Women" on March 18, 2010 and looked at the first 50 results. After eliminating news stories that repeated in more than one media outlet and blog posts and news articles shorter than five sentences, I had nine news articles and ten blog posts with which to examine discourse. Though these are not the voices of movement members, they are important because they demonstrate whether or not Gender 10's discourse is mirrored by the wider society. In the Gender 10 discourse and discourse available from news stories and blog posts, I openly coded for the following themes:

- Redefining a political space
- Gender based violence as lack of security
- Lack of and need for a common Kenya vision
- People driven / collective strength

- Love and respect
- The use of female body for political power

*Qualitative Coding*¹⁰

The coded themes serve to elaborate and support thematic analysis and show the consistency and frequency of themes across the discourse. Like the selection of the coding parameters, the decision whether or not to classify a piece of discourse as part of one of the categories was mine alone. While the discourse sometimes directly reflected the title of the coding category, at other times I was forced to decide whether or not something fit the group based on my best judgment. Because my social location and, possibly, my conceptions of transformation, differ from the contexts of the movements, I may have coded a piece of discourse differently than a person approaching the research from a different standpoint.

Proxy Variables for Transformation

I decided which concepts to code for based on guidance from African feminist scholarship and the themes presented by the discourse of each text I coded. However, each coding category links directly to transformative approaches to state and security. Table B below enumerates how transformative principles and the coding categories interact.

¹⁰ For numerical coding charts, see Appendices A, B, and C.

TABLE B		
What is Transformative?	Coding Categories	Explanation
Challenging What We Know	<p>Women Writing Africa: Making a World / Nation; Gendering History / Shifting Focus; Deconstructing a Hierarchical History (Time, Chronology); Recovering Voices and Redefining Writing</p> <p>Women of Zimbabwe Arise: New Leadership; Building a Better Tomorrow and Making Dreams a Reality; New Citizenship</p> <p>Gender 10: Redefining a Political Space; Gender Based Violence as Lack of Security</p>	<p>The idea that we create and imagine what our world, history, knowledge, and tomorrow look like is transformative because they deconstruct what does exist, problematize it, and construct it differently.</p>
Challenging What We Value	<p>Women Writing Africa: Women Responding to Social Forces; Women as Women and Women in Women's Roles; Women's Bodies</p> <p>Women of Zimbabwe Arise: Courage, Strength, Human Rights Defenders; Motherhood, Sisterhood, Traditional Women's Roles; Love (Respect)</p> <p>Gender 10: The Use of the Female Body; Love and Respect</p>	<p>Revaluing the roles of women and the way they respond to their environments shift our perceptions of what is valued. If we value women, we value motherhood. If we value motherhood, we value things like care, love, and nurture.</p>
Challenging How Society is Organized	<p>Women Writing Africa: Heterogeneity as strength</p> <p>Women of Zimbabwe Arise: Community / "The People;" Unity, Support, Solidarity</p> <p>Gender 10: Lack of and Need for common Vision; People Driven / Collective Strength</p>	<p>Envisioning a communal movement or state as valued or important challenges the traditional hierarchical state.</p>

Data Analysis

The Women Writing Africa Project

As we begin to expand our definitions of movements and activism, we include not only informal and grassroots groups in our characterization, but groups taking a more academic¹¹ approach to change. While their activism remains largely within the volumes of the Women Writing Africa series, the Women Writing Africa Project is nonetheless a movement with goals and a specific method they use to, “locate the fault lines of memory and so change assumptions about the shaping of African knowledge, culture, and history (Sutherland-Addy and Diaw 2005, xviii). They are, in fact, a good movement with which to begin our discussion of the discourse analysis because their volumes of women’s voices link theory with practice and illuminate the connection well.

Contextual History

The idea for the Women Writing Africa Project came about in 1990 after the book *Women Writing in India* was released. An initial exploratory group decided that the project was both feasible and necessary. In order to produce representative rather than all inclusive volumes, the Project decided to organize the volumes by region instead of by nation (Daymond, *et al* 2003, xviii). They obtained a grant from the Ford Foundation for their work and assembled leadership and research teams of local scholars for each region. Each regional team, of course, had technical and conceptual difficulties unique to the works and region they were analyzing, and each used their own regional and scholarly expertise to select which works would be included in the volumes. However, out of the four teams did come four complete volumes¹² of *Women Writing Africa* and hopes of expanding the project further.

¹¹ Because the Women Writing Africa Project is grounded in scholarship as well as activism, it is biased toward elite voices in that only some will be able to access the material presented.

¹² Only three volumes are discussed here. The North Africa volume falls outside of the sub-Saharan area I am covering in this project.

Exploration of Themes

In the opening pages of each volume of *Women Writing Africa*, the editors note the conceptual breakthrough they were able to achieve when they defined what they considered “voice” and “writing.” The redefinition of these concepts was an important theme to this group, and was reiterated a total of thirty-six times throughout the text I examined. By re-imagining voice and writing as a way of expressing agency, the *Women Writing Africa* Project re-values women’s perceptions of the world.

Calling women’s experiences “sacred and profane,” *Women Writing Africa* works to restore women’s voices to the public sphere through publication (Sutherland-Addy and Diaw 2005, xviii). Their choice of language is important. The project does not claim they are “giving voice” to African women, language that implies a homogenized group that lacks agency. Rather, the act of restoring voices acknowledges multiple unique voices that have been present throughout history.

In order to actually account for all women’s voices, not only those who have access to education, the *Women Writing Africa* Project redefined writing to include oral traditions, which are often dominated by women. Not only did this decision re-value oral communication and women’s words, but, “the oral traditions, the myths, the legends told by women themselves often place women where they belong: at the center of the historical and legendary origins of their civilizations and at the heart of their people’s struggles” (Lihamba, *et al* 2007, 1). However, according to the editors of the project in West Africa, valuing oral traditions does more than just place women in these worlds, it acknowledges their ability to create them (Sutherland-Addy and Diaw 2005, 4).

The unique blend of women’s verbal and written expression in the pages of the *Women Writing Africa* volumes captures the ways in which African women envision their lives in relation to the societies they live in. According to text in each of the volumes, “The creative interaction between women in the actual world and the flux of history [is] in short, African women making a world” (Daymond, *et al* 2003, xvii-xxviii). The idea of making a world or a nation was one that turned up in each of the volumes, and

seven times all together. The editors of the Southern volume explain the concept in more depth.

“Creating a country, a nation, or a region was not necessarily in the consciousness of the women whose voices we have here, but we nonetheless see them as, together, offering a new way of reading and understanding the vast, varied, interlinked, and independent set of places we call Southern Africa,” they state (Daymond, *et al* 2003, 4). The Women Writing Africa Project views women’s voices as not only an important part of history, but capable of offering new understanding and creating alternatives to the dominant world of both the past and the present (Daymond, *et al* 2003, 5).

Creating new alternatives challenges what is known—in this case, societies structured around power and hierarchy. The Women Writing Africa Project seeks not only to demonstrate what these new alternatives look like, but how current societies and values came about. On nineteen separate occasions throughout the introductory pages of all three volumes, Women Writing Africa questions what constitutes history and how it is organized (Sutherland-Addy and Diaw 2005, xxv). There is, for example, a longstanding idea that history is the study of war and law, things that, while affecting women both directly and indirectly, are primarily the creations and activities of men. However, just as it is wrong to pretend that Africa had no history prior to colonialism, “pretending that male achievement defines Africa erases women” (Sutherland-Addy and Diaw 2005, 3). The way history is organized also make women’s contributions invisible because a chronological focus maintains masculine imperialist history. “A strictly chronological ‘master’ history flattens out the unevenness of the process of change that has convulsed the Southern African region and the lives of women,” the editors explain (Daymond, *et al* 2003, xxv).

The anthologies attempt to correct the distortions of subject and time that characterize African historiography (Lihamba, *et al* 2007, 1). By redefining history to include pratory, the project opens the door to new voices that “expose a phallogentric social order in which women’s lives are ignored” (Sutherland-Addy and Diaw 2005, 3). Thus, we glimpse not only women’s worlds, but ways in which

they challenge power structures, and the “writing” from which they derive power themselves (Sutherland-Addy and Diaw 2005, 6). The included women’s texts also “subvert the accepted sense of linear, imperial chronological history” by organizing around conflicts and social events having to do with fertility, birth, and land (Daymond, *et al* 2003, xxv). The Women Writing Africa Project thus reconstructs both the focus and organization of history. Though this may seem like a very academic pursuit, by challenging existing structures of history, Women Writing Africa problematizes it and can begin an activism in which they structure it differently.

In essence, by deconstructing a hierarchal history, the Women Writing Africa Project creates a gendered history. Their responsibility of creating a history where women were not just incorporated, but were a focal point in the construction of a social and political society, was a theme that came up twenty-two times throughout the introductory chapters of the volumes. By noting that “gender is crucial to the articulations of identity, social aspiration, and voice” (Daymond, *et al* 2003, 2), rather than an afterthought, women come to be seen as “articulate and talented producers of art and knowledge and as heroic makers of history” (Lihamba, *et al* 2007, 1).

A gendered history allows for a more thorough examination of the ways women interact with social and political forces. Often, these interactions involve challenging colonial and patriarchal power structures (Sutherland-Addy and Diaw 2005, 4). Women’s interactions with society, were, of course, complex, and varied from acceptance, refusal, complicity, and revolt (Lihamba, *et al* 2007, 3). However, many times women’s actions in large social, national, and international issues, such as religion, race, and nation building, revealed new conceptions of what state citizenship ought to entail. According to the editors of the Eastern volume, women sought “the power to be, to do, and to grow in the face of a hostile environment created mainly by patriarchal impositions” (Lihamba, *et al* 2007, xx).

What is particularly interesting is the project’s focus on the way women use their bodies and traditional roles to seek such change. Western history’s focus on Africa as an evil woman that drew in

and then killed white men displaced the reality of African women and the stereotype painted a picture of them as homogenous, and lacking individual thoughts. Thus, others sought to control the access to the reproductive and work capacities of women's bodies (Daymond, *et al* 2003, xxv). "The focus on women's bodies drew attention away from the female mind, resulting in a preponderance of images of women as serial child bearers in colonial topography" (Sutherland-Addy and Diaw 2005, 2). By focusing on women's bodies and their roles as child bearers and mothers in a space where women's song, performance, and creative imaginings about those topics are valued, we are able to re-value women in their traditional capacities as well. When women are valued for their loving and caring abilities that enable them to be the glue of their communities and mothers of the nation, the values of love and nurture become valued overall (Sutherland-Addy and Diaw 2005, xxv).

By challenging what constitutes history and what makes a nation, the Women Writing Africa Project constructs a gendered history and nationalism by placing women's voices and experiences back in a public focus. This allows qualities that women have historically brought to their communities, such as love and nurturance, to become visible and valued. In this way, these qualities become powerful and may eventually dominant the state.

Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA)

The Importance of Contextual History

The history of the Zimbabwean state and its evolution since independence is important to Women of Zimbabwe Arise, and something they use to frame their activism. Indeed, many of their publications, one which is even titled "Looking Back to Look Forward," ground their goals and missions in a detailed historical context. As such, I believe a brief history of Zimbabwe is necessary for discussing WOZA's language and semantics as a movement. The following information comes from a lecture on

the gendered history of Zimbabwe given by Shireen Essof, a feminist scholar and native Zimbabwean, in 2009 at the University of Cape Town.

A Brief Gendered History of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe finally achieved its independence from the white Rhodesian government after a long guerilla struggle and civil war popularly known as the Chimera War. The Lancaster House Agreement which ended the war at the end of 1979, led to a constitution that ensured that minority rights were protected and emphasized the importance of land, two of the main things for which the war was fought. Women were very much equal partners in the liberation struggle, but felt forgotten after the war. They advocated for legal reforms to ensure that they were recognized as full and agent adults by the Zimbabwean state. These reforms granted them the legal right to work and own land.

The state, however, soon began to assert its authority over women and their bodies. In 1983, the Zimbabwean government launched Operation Clean Up, during which police were ordered to arrest prostitutes to sweep the streets of crime. However, many other women in public space at nightfall were also arrested, beaten, and raped. A debate surrounding meanings of citizenship and womanhood began in Zimbabwe. Many women's groups and scholars saw the political violence carried out on women's bodies as a manifestation of the patriarchal political authoritarianism. This, they stated, resulted from entrenched notions of militarism, illuminated by the blatant militaristic language that surrounded the event. Operation Clean Up was not a policy, but an "operation," a term normally used for military action. Moreover, the operation was waged much like a military offensive, carried out in a calculated and violent manner.¹³ According to Essof, women's groups recognized this militaristic shift and noted

¹³ Operation Clean Up is often compared to Operation Murambatsvina in 2005. During Murambatsvina, the Zimbabwe Republic Police destroyed the homes and businesses of about a million urban poor citizens in an attempt to dismantle Zimbabwe's informal sector. Journalist Mary Ndlovu, who studied Murambatsvina in depth called it a military operation because citizens were given no warning of the destruction, which was carried out with "calculated violence and brutality" (2008, 226).

that their activism had to change with it. Realizing that advocating for political reform was not enough, they formed the Women's Action Group (2009).

Despite the women's efforts, the Zimbabwean state, and with it, society, continued down a militaristic path. In the early 1980s, tensions between war-time political parties returned. Though Mugabe's ZANU party, based largely in the North, and Nkomo's ZAPU party in the South had common origins, they split after independence was achieved and never truly reconciled. According to Essof, when the South actively challenged the government through a series of uprisings, Mugabe launched Operation Gukurahundi (2009). Often called "Zimbabwe's silent civil war," government forces killed people in Ndebele regions suspected of supporting ZAPU. Until the Unity Accord in 1987 when ZANU and ZAPU combined to form the ZANU-PF Party, fear of political violence was widespread in Zimbabwe.

Political and economic trends worldwide only encouraged Zimbabwe's militaristic tendencies. Neoliberalism and privatization in the 1980s halted international funding of Zimbabwe's reconstruction and development programs and Zimbabwe was forced to enter political and economic structural adjustment programs (ESAP) to receive economic assistance. These programs, which maintain the hierarchy of West over East and keep Zimbabwe economy dependent on Western trade, reinforce hierarchal government structures by keeping power in the hands of the standing elite and pushing other citizens into poverty. Indeed, Zimbabwe's ESAP caused the loss of thousands of jobs. In the face of resulting strikes and discontent, the state consolidated and exerted its power over Zimbabwean citizens. The space to voice opposition to the state and its power rapidly shrunk.

Mainstream international feminism, too, was shifting in ways that left Zimbabwean women activists without aid. According to Essof, as the international discourse shifted from "women" to "gender," the movement began to assume that a rights-based agenda was the best approach to change (2009). This was not feasible in Zimbabwe, however. "Who are you asking for rights from?" Essof asked rhetorically. "A corrupt state structure? Your community? Society?" While international women's

groups called for cooperation with existing states, Zimbabwean women activists were leaving the state structure and going underground. The direct action group Women of Zimbabwe Arise was one of the few who remained, though they, too, were no longer interested in reform. “Economic recovery and political reform can only go so far in restoring the dignity of the people,” one report stated (WOZA “Counting the Costs,” 15). WOZA believed instead that they had to oppose the political injustice from a different place, one of love and humanitarianism.

WOZA’s Perception of the State of Zimbabwe

“Women are sacrificed, a country is sacrificed, and that sacrifice is being made on the alter of power—of male ego, political survival, posturing and self-interest” (Essof 2008, 130).

According to WOZA, “While Zimbabwe is not in a state of war, it is nonetheless in a state of conflict (WOZA “Defending Women,” 3). Calling their home a “failed state” with violence and severe economic decline in the place of an infrastructure and social capital, Women of Zimbabwe Arise determine that the people living there are not secure (WOZA “Declaring a Health Emergency,” 4). This insecurity is perpetuated by those employed to enforce “law” and “justice.” In a 2006 report on the political violence faced by women activists, WOZA stated that though the police force is given the function of “preserving internal security,” they were the most common perpetrators of violence against WOZA members (WOZA “Defending Women,” 6). The women are beaten and arrested by the state, which “has a responsibility to protect” (WOZA “Counting the Cost,” 14), and thus receive fear in place of security.

Despite the well documented abuses suffered by WOZA members, I chose not to code for these grievances. Women of Zimbabwe Arise uses the testimony of these injustices to frame their activism and recommendations for the future, but does not make them the focus of their work. Their sense of hope permeates their website and online materials, surfacing twenty-five times and in seventy-five

percent of all the publications I analyzed. One publication states, “WOZA members believe that it is better to light a single candle than to complain about the darkness” (WOZA “Zimbabwe’s Constitution Making Process”). Women of Zimbabwe Arise extends this hope to all Zimbabweans by using this discourse throughout their People’s Charter. “The time has come to put the past behind us,” it states, “and start building a better tomorrow.” Like the movement, I, too, focused on that envisioned future. Instead of coding past wrongs, I looked for how WOZA envisions their dream society, and the language and mobilization tactics they use to achieve it.

Redefining the State and Citizenship Through Direct Language

The discourse of Women of Zimbabwe Arise’s publications directly challenged accepted conceptions of leadership and citizenship and imagined them in new ways. Though I coded for discussions of “New Leadership” and “New Citizenship” in the discourse separately, it is clear that WOZA perceives them as going hand in hand. Their connected nature is best expressed in a quote found in a 2008 report. “The type of evil that has become an integral part of government behavior in Zimbabwe must be eradicated and the mindset of power hunger and disrespect for other human beings overcome. It can only happen through the actions of a government with a strong will to correct wrongs and ensure that the rights of all Zimbabweans be respected” (WOZA “Counting the Cost,” 15). Thus, I discuss them together here.

Imaginations of new leadership and new citizenship are important concepts for WOZA. Their discussion totaled thirty-nine times throughout the discourse. WOZA enumerates a number of practical rights to which citizens are entitled—equal access to resources and education, the chance to earn a living, access to healthcare, housing, and food (WOZA “Building Democracy,” 3). However, they also believe that citizenship means that “everyone feels that the law protects them” (WOZA “Building Democracy,” 7). The idea that each person is entitled to security as they imagine it is transformative

because it acknowledges that those practical rights which make up human security still may not make everyone feel secure. The state will be expected not just to provide human security, but will have to maintain a deep connection with the people of the nation to ensure their security needs are met at all times. This, of course, speaks to the necessary leadership qualities for the future. A new Zimbabwean leader will believe in the need to “dismantle the structures of violence and oppression” to ensure that livable peace and a more secure future is achieved (WOZA “Counting the Costs,” 15).

By asking that a new leader not only be committed to equality and security, but dismantle structures of violence and the militaristic state, WOZA asks that the hierarchal state be transformed to “a society that values individuals, imagination, and creativity rather than conformity and obedience” (WOZA “Looking Back to Look Forward,” 6). In this way, the state becomes reciprocal, requiring the input of the people in a more integral way. According to WOZA, the people are invested in building their society, and they want to ensure that it is one “free of violence, fear, intimidation...and founded on justice, fairness, open transparency, dignity, and equality (WOZA “Hearts Starve as well as Bodies,” 1). Thus, leadership requires a commitment to the people’s imaginings of state and security, and citizenship necessitates that people continue to provide that input.

Redefining the State and Citizenship Through Proxy Language

The concept of reciprocal citizenship is important because it dismantles the hierarchal state and requires that people work together to create a home of their nation. This came through further in what I call “proxy language,” discourse that represents the shift from valuing power to valuing community, but does not call directly for new conceptions of masculinity, leadership, or citizenship. For WOZA, this was expressed most often in the value they placed on notions of “community” and being a collective “people.” The idea that a community should come together, share together, and act together was reflected twenty-three times total and in sixty-seven percent of the documents analyzed.

WOZA's value of a Zimbabwean people is seen in their commitment to working for everyone's needs. Rather than "giving a voice" to Zimbabweans, WOZA seeks to amplify the ideas that agent citizens voice. In 2006, Women of Zimbabwe Arise members went into the community, held 284 meetings, talked to 10,000 people, and wrote down their concerns. The result was a document called the "People's Charter," which people are asked to sign if they agree with what is written, and suggest amendments if they did not (WOZA "People's Charter"). The emphasis placed on listening to those around them and working together to achieve goals is not just a policy WOZA pursues internally; it is one they use to create a state that will not undermine the people's voices (WOZA "Hearts Starve as well as Bodies," 2). Just as WOZA ensures that it hears and values their all voices, the state should value and hear the peoples' individual and collective voice.

Strategies for Linking Language with Practice

Some movements with ambitious discourse are unable to live out their theories of change in their organizational structures and mobilization tactics. However, WOZA's link between theory and practice is often clear. For example, just as Women of Zimbabwe Arise values people's unified voice in the state, they place a high significance on unity and solidarity with one another in their action. "United we can make [our dreams] a reality," is a phrase repeated at the end of the People's Charter, and a total of thirty-one times throughout ten of twelve examined publications. Unity is something that gives people "the strength to do things they are too afraid to do alone" (Women of Zimbabwe Arise). This emphasis on solidarity is enumerated five separate times in a one page sisterhood bond. To become a WOZA sister, women must promise to struggle "hand in hand" for peace and justice, be a shoulder of support because "a problem shared is a problem halved," and to be in solidarity with like minded women since "an injury to one is an injury to all" (WOZA, "Sisterhood Bond").

The idea that an injury to one is an injury to all is one put into practice at WOZA demonstrations. According to a study that examined the effects of trauma on WOZA women, when one woman is arrested, the rest hand themselves in as a gesture of solidarity. “Thus, a network of caring and support sustains and builds the strength of the women as a group” (WOZA “Counting the Cost,” 12). The report found that despite experiencing and witnessing an enormous amount of abuse, relatively few women experienced psychological trauma. The study concluded that, “It is probably that the network of understanding, support, and preparedness created by WOZA among its members enables them to cope more effectively psychologically with the kinds of treatment they have experienced” (WOZA “Counting the Cost,” 12). In valuing and protecting one another, WOZA presents not only a template for an effective movement, but an alternative form of societal organization, one based on support and community. Their successful use of this tactic also proves that such a society can be just as “strong” as one that derives power from a militarism.

The unified network that WOZA women create amongst each other and work to create among the people of Zimbabwe is made of something that they perceive as the strongest tool of all—love. A “discourse of love” permeated the WOZA website and the documents within it, framed as both a strategy for creating a new state and the new state itself. In nine of twelve documents and on nineteen separate occasions, Women of Zimbabwe Arise frames the current insecure state as “hateful,” uses love to dismantle that it, and lays a groundwork of “love” for the better tomorrow they envision.

Though traditional conceptions of power frame a discourse of love as feminine and therefore, weak, WOZA sees it as part of their foundation. In fact, “WOZA was *formed* to be a litmus test proving that the power of love can conquer the love of power” (Women of Zimbabwe Arise, emphasis mine). Love is an inspiration, but also a mobilization tactic. The website continues, “Tough love is our secret weapon of mass mobilization...Tough love is a people power tool that any community can use to press for better governance and social justice.” The power of the statement is two-fold. In the language they

use, WOZA frames love as powerful. It is a weapon; it has the ability to conquer. In other words, “love” replaces the military institution as valued entity. Moreover, “weapons” and “conquering” are re-defined as positive, and no longer mean death and destruction. They, along with the “security” they normally provide, are reconstructed. Love becomes necessary if security is going to be attained. This is best enumerated in the title of a publication outlining people’s needs in 2010. “Hearts Starve as well as Bodies,” the title proclaimed. “Give us Bread, but give us Roses too!” Roses are WOZA’s visual symbol for love, and the hallmark of their annual demonstration. Every year on Valentines Day, WOZA hands out roses (love) to those around them, stating that the flowers represent “a symbol of love to counteract the government’s hate” (WOZA “Defending Women,” 3).

WOZA women suffer the hate they try to counteract when they advocate for love. The reports “Defending Women, Defending the Rights of a Nation,” “The Effects of Fighting Repression with Love,” and “Counting the Costs of Courage” all document police brutality against women activists. However, it is WOZA’s policy to meet whatever treatment they receive with love. “WOZA women learn to treat police officers that mistreat them as human beings who also have feelings. They take it as a challenge to try and win respect from the police officers, and to help them also understand the reasons for their protests” (WOZA “Counting the Cost,” 12). WOZA believes that people can invoke love to eliminate fear (WOZA “Sisterhood Bond”), but that they should not forget love’s importance when they achieve the state and security they seek. The policy of such a state would be that all people are entitled to give and receive love. “When considering the need to deal with Zimbabweans’ traumatic experiences of the past 40 years, it will be necessary not to forget the need for healing the perpetrators as well as the victims,” states “Counting the Cost of Courage,” reiterating that all people and their imaginations of security will be respected in a new society where love is something that is valued (WOZA, 13).

African feminist scholars note that transformation requires an examination of both masculinity and femininity (see Clarke 2008 and McFadden 2008). Not only does WOZA unpack and dismantle

dominant masculine values, such as power and hierarchy, but they re-value the traditionally feminine values of love and community. In doing so, they begin a process by which society recognizes and values women. WOZA documents value WOZA women's public actions directly by praising their courage and strength. The discourse also values women in their traditional capacities as mothers and sisters. However, because they demand a state that cares for and nurtures its people, women will not be limited by these roles as they are in some security discourses. They will instead be valued because of them. This is exemplified in the pamphlet entitled "Building Democracy with WOZA: A Guide Created by Women of Zimbabwe Arise," which outlines the importance of a community focused government. In a drawing next to a description of the ideal relationship between a government and its people, the government is presented as a woman with her arms spread wide, sheltering her people as a mother shelters her children (10). As WOZA's state model of care and love becomes valued, a hierarchical state is dismantled.

Women's Bodies Challenging the State

I feel that the number of reports WOZA produced about assaults on women's bodies, coupled with WOZA's use of the body during demonstrations, warrant a discussion of the politics of body protest. According to a study of the protesting body in a movements in Israel, "the role of the acting body in protest is crucial to understanding the cultural outcomes and consequences of social movements" (Levy and Rapoport 2003, 379). Though the Israeli¹⁴ and Zimbabwean contexts are undeniably different in many ways, the authors lay important theoretical groundwork about the body as a protest instrument and an agent of change in itself. They argue that because the body often reflects cultural and societal values, a protesting body can contest these values. According to the authors,

¹⁴ This article, "Body, Gender, and Knowledge in Protest Movements: The Israeli Case" follows Women in Black, a women's protest movement against the Palestinian occupation.

“When a protest is expressed through the body, especially the female body, it is more difficult to tolerate because it challenges the existing order” (Levy and Rapoport 2003, 395).

The idea that the body in public space alone can challenge an existing state of society is both a reasonable and powerful suggestion. By engaging a body in physical protest, movements are able to “occupy” state territory, forcing the state to address issues it would rather ignore. Thus, by engaging in non-violent protest as a symbol of love, WOZA women force the state to address the system of hierarchy and power that is failing Zimbabwe. The state is forced, too, to discipline the women as traitors for refusing to align with dominant values of power. However, by “disciplining women’s bodies,” the state assaults what those bodies represent (Levy and Rapoport 2003, 396). In WOZA’s case, the women’s protest forces the hateful state to assault the love their bodies bring to the public sphere.

Levy and Rapoport argue that the body protest has become an integral part of challenging state structures. If we continue to demand human security through reforms, dominant ideas of masculinity will remain in place and will continue inform citizenship. Because dominant masculinity shapes the state, it, too, will remain hierarchal (2003, 398-9). Body protests, especially by women, however, shatter these hierarchies. They are transformative because they challenge the state and its dominant values by placing the body and its values at the center of the public sphere and forcing the dominant state to act.

Like Women Writing Africa, WOZA challenges what makes a nation. Rather than construct a gendered history, though, they focus on a gendered future. This allows the qualities that the state has historically de-valued, such as love and community, to become visible. WOZA’s action strives to make them also valued.

Gender 10 (G10)

A Brief Contextual History

The Gender 10 is a women's action coalition located in Kenya. Kenya is a Presidential Representative Democratic Republic, meaning that the President is the head of state and government. The judicial branch operates independently of the state to ensure fairness. In 2002, President Mwai Kibaki was elected in what local and international observers determined to be free and fair elections. With his victory, political power transferred from the longstanding ruling party, the Kenya African Union (KANU) to the National Rainbow Coalition (Narc), a coalition of political parties that promised economic growth, a new constitution, and an end to government corruption.

An election scandal in the 2007 Presidential election, however, shattered the optimism that there would be a new kind of administration. Raila Odinga of the Orange Democratic Party challenged President Kibaki in the Presidential contest. His candidacy threatened to upset Kenya's delicate ethnic balance. Odinga, a member of the Luo tribe, promised to end ethnic favoritism, while Kibaki, a Kikuyu, struggled to hold on to the presidency (Elkins 2008). Though Odinga was leading throughout the election, Kibaki suddenly received a surge in votes, overtaking him to win. International observers declared the election below standard, and election protests broke out throughout the country. These escalated to political violence along ethnic lines, and Kofi Annan and the United Nations had to mediate a compromise. In 2008, Kibaki and Odinga formed a coalition government—the Grand Coalition. As part of the agreement, Odinga became a second Prime Minister to Kenya, and members of both parties were appointed to the cabinet.

G10's Perception of the State of Kenya

Frustrated by the Grand Coalition's inability to deliver on their promises due to partisan bickering, the Gender 10 took action.¹⁵ The group's leaders called for a one week sex strike, "In a bid to oblige President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga to settle their differences once and for all and begin to effectively serve the nation they represent" (Gender 10). The G10, though, saw the leaders' lack of cooperation as more than an annoyance, instead calling it an expression of "contempt" for Kenyan people and a security threat. Their press release stated, "This country cannot continue to hang on the brink of paralysis, uncertainty, indeciveness, bad leadership, and decisions conceived to preserve an insecure presidency instead of upholding the safety and security of a whole nation" (Gender 10).

Stating that the women of Kenya would not allow the country to go to its death bed, the Gender 10 issued a list of demands. Kibaki and Odinga would respect the people enough to "end the power games that undermine the dignity, safety, and democratic spaces of our country" (Gender 10). They also stated that the good of the people should trump individual ambition, that the spirit of reconciliation should be respected, that the interests of the nation should be placed at the forefront, and that all necessary reforms should be implemented quickly (Gender 10). The strategies and discourse used to achieve these demands, as well as the language of the demands themselves, are analyzed here.

Strategies for Mobilization and Change

Gender 10's decision to use sex as a strategy to enact political change raised both eyebrows and voices in Kenya and internationally. In fact, though the G10 mentioned their use of a sex boycott only once in their press release, many bloggers and news outlets made the tactic the focus of the story. Because it was mentioned forty-one times in the material I examined, making "the use of the female

¹⁵ Because it is the discourse to which I have access, I will focus on the Gender 10's best know campaign, the April 2009 sex strike, for my discourse analysis.

body as power” the most discussed theme, it is only appropriate that I begin my discussion of Gender 10 here.

Like WOZA’s street protests, the G10 sex strike uses the body as a protest instrument. “Extra ordinary situations call for extraordinary measures,” the Gender 10 statement read. “The G10 call upon the women of Kenya to go on a sex boycott in order to protest against poor and wolly leadership” (Gender 10). An article in *The Standard* conformed that Ida Odinga, who participated in the strike, agreed. “The boycott is not a punishment,” she was quoted as saying. “[It is] an action to draw attention to the issue” (Anyangu). However, the sex strike drew attention to the issue of sex, rather than the political issues at hand. Nderitu Njoka, Chairman of Maendeleo Ya wunaume, a male lobby group, called the strike a tool the women were using to “molest” men (Bangre) . One man even filed a lawsuit against four of the Gender 10 leaders, claiming that he experienced anxiety, back pains, lack of sleep, and lack of concentration because of his wife’s refusal to have sex with him (Bangre). Some women’s groups, too, were unhappy with the G10 strike, stating that they had legitimized the idea that women were sex objects. “A theme begins to resonate: that a woman’s power lies only in her sexuality,” one woman stated (Opoti in Kinoti). However, others took note of the attention the boycott was getting. One blogger stated, “We have done nothing but laugh at it. In fact, we see it as the only stupid idea in town. And because we are blind, we have failed to recognize its power. Now it becomes a virus” (Nguni). Another noted that although the strike began as a joke, the debate it had evolved into was worth noting (Muli).

While many bloggers had something to say about the sex strike, Wandia Njoya made an especially interesting connection. Njoya said she began to understand the purpose of the strike after hearing radio comments from men, declaring they would beat their wives if they refused them their conjugal rights. “Some Kenyan men view sex as an assertion of dominance rather than mutual emotional and physical exchange,” she stated. She goes on to say that a man whose spouse relates to

him out of fear and lack of options is “a slave master” who is “no better than the Southern plantation slave master.” Njoya concludes that sex in Kenya, like masculinity and politics, is about power. An assertion of power in the bedroom has become conflated with an assertion of state power over the people. She notes,

The Kenyan leaders have no respect for the wananchi or Kenya. They rape us the citizens, destroy our environment, our public coffers, our food reserves, our dignity and our intellect, leaving millions of Kenyans killing each other or dying from hunger. But instead of men who oppose the G10 offering an alternative model of manhood and leadership in Kenya, they are now asserting their right to behave like the dictators Baila and Kibaki are within their compounds and their bedrooms (Njoya).

Njoya connects with the words of African feminist scholars when she acknowledges a flawed masculinity and links it with a problematic state. Njoya notes that both Kenyan manhood and politics have been reduced to “penises;” flawed masculinity has become ingrained in state structure and “[has] corrupted our sense of national identity and threatens to destroy our country” (Njoya). Gender 10 was partly able to make that connection through their protest of the body. While the idea of a sex strike to achieve political goals challenged state power, the implications of the strike challenged dominant masculinity in the private sphere as well. As Njoya’s comments importantly point out, the strike also linked the political and the private spheres.

Despite their leadership consisting of the heads of women’s organizations, Gender 10 focuses both in action and discourse on the collective strength of their movement. A sex strike is, by nature, a collective strength initiative; a large number of people must engage in the conversation about the strike, whether they participate or not, for it to be effective. However, the theme of collective strength and a people driven movement is mentioned apart from the sex strike five separate times by Gender 10 in their two page press release. Indeed, their demands call for “a people driven leadership...for the greater good of the nation.” By driving a people-centered politics, G10 promotes the dismantling of the hierarchal state and the creation of a community-centered government.

Online media, too, has picked up the idea of unity Gender 10 promotes; nineteen news stories and blogs posts mentioned it a total of twenty-six. “[The women] are banding together in record numbers to increase public awareness and advocate for change,” stated an article co-authored by one of the G10 leaders (Njogu and McHardy 2009, 33). However, perhaps more interesting were the blogger’s comments on how Gender 10’s value of collective strength affected the structure of their organization. As one blogger first criticized, “G10 is stupid because it does not have a leader. It does not have a strong woman...to push its agenda. It is just a coalition of simple mothers and their daughters.” However, after noting a Luo proverb that states that if you want to go far in the world, you must go with others, his tune changed. “If maintained, the collective and diverse leadership of the G10 will take them far. Because they have no leader, they are formless. To the rigid mind, a formless movement is stupid. But in realpolitik, it is powerful and scary.... As long as we cannot understand its formless, leaderless structure, the movement will grow” (Ngunyi). By valuing a movement of the people both within their organization and for their state, Gender 10 shifts the valued state from one based on power to one of community.

Redefining the State and Citizenship Through Language

Like Women Writing Africa and WOZA, Gender 10 uses discourse in addition to mobilization tactics to effect change. Several important themes emerged in the press release and, importantly, these themes were picked up by bloggers and news media, proving that the discourse is becoming public. Because they are so connected, both G10’s discourse and online media discourse is discussed here.

Gender 10’s April 2009 press release stated, “The G10 is driven by a society where women wield political power, and its mission seeks to connect women’s voices and actions to leverage an expanded and redefined political space.” Seeking not just to expand political space with laws and reforms, but to *redefine* it, is an important and distinct mission because it acknowledges the need to problematize and

dismantle current systems. Ann Njogu, one of the G10 leaders stated, “In a country like Kenya, we need to dismantle barriers that make it impossible for women to develop their own nation...We need to ask ourselves how we can dismantle the current system and create policies that are truly people centered” (in Spadacini).

This discourse moves the political space away from a public-private dichotomy that values the public space over the private. By valuing women’s experiences—women are referred to by the G10 as “equal shareholders of Kenya” on numerous occasions—Gender 10 links the events of the state with the reality of the home. At times, this is stated more simply. Speaking of the sex strike, Patricia Nyaundi, Executive Director of the Federation of Women Lawyers and a G10 member noted, “Great decisions are made during pillow talk. At that intimate moment, she [Ida Odinga] can ask her husband: ‘Darling, can you do something for Kenya?’” (*Afrik.com*).

Some bloggers found this redefinition of political space to be the point of the sex strike action. Martin Mull writes that because all people were now participating in a discussion of the strike and its purpose, the political sphere was automatically widened because all citizens were now engaged in political debate. Matahi Ngunyi comments on his own reaction to the redefined political space. Ngunyi watched one of the Gender 10 members break down at a conference and thought they were “raw and weak.” However, he soon found himself persuaded by their sincerity, defining it as “seductive and powerful.”

By redefining political space, Kenyan women are able to use the strength of their emotions to achieve political change. Their emotional reaction to their experience is re-valued as an expression of power. Love and respect, also values integral to their identities as women, become a focal point of their activism. The concepts appear twice in the press release. Gender 10 calls for an end of the value of power out of “respect for the people and nation of Kenya.” Moreover, they ask that the values of

partnership and reconciliation that were expressed in the Unity Accord continue to be respected as Kenya moves forward (Gender 10).

Interesting, too, is the way a lack of unity, which can also be framed as lack of community, is perceived as disrespectful to Kenyan people and to women. While Gender 10 discussed this in the press release when they stated that Kenyan leaders had shown contempt for Kenyans with their bickering, news media outlets and bloggers illuminated the theme twenty-eight times in the analyzed discourse. However, what they expressed more often than disappointment with the Kenyan state was hope that the women of the G10 would offer a true solution. Ngunyi noted that many people claim that women don't understand politics in Kenya because they are always trying to "mix tribes that don't mix." However, he goes on to say, "Maybe the unity of our nation will be achieved by our women. I say so because the people who are crazy enough to think they will change the world are the ones who actually do it. These women are crazy enough to think they will unify us. And maybe they will." The idea of unity is not necessarily transformational. Indeed, it is sought in many countries and contexts. However, the idea that the government must unify with the people out of respect and love for them redefines the way the state is envisioned not as a hierarchal entity, but one that maintains a reciprocal relationship with the people.

Gender 10 perceives this unity to be a matter of security for women on Kenya. Because all of their discussions of security center around the gender based violence that results from the lack of a unified state, security is redefined from the protection of state borders to a community that cares for one another. This discourse, too, was discussed by the online media a total of twenty-eight times in nineteen articles and blogs. According to Gender 10, government bickering causes instability for women "through the sexual violence meted against them, among other ills [such as] displacement and death." Thus, women pay the highest price for disharmony (Gender 10). News articles and bloggers enumerate

instances of women's insecurity, noting that marital rape is accepted as the norm and that women are "beaten and dehumanized in their own homes" (Esther Mwaura Muiru of GROOTS in Spadacini).

By pushing for an end to gender based violence in order for women to achieve true security, Gender 10 links the dismantling of the value of power in the state and home. Because gender based violence is an expression of power, it can be likened to using police brutality to keep order in a state or military violence to maintain control in a region. Thus, because of the dangerous values it promotes, violence against women threatens both women's security and the security of the nation. Blogger Wandia Njoya sums up the solution the Gender 10's sex strike made clear to her. "A man would be more of a man," she said, "if his spouse was able to relate to him out of respect and love and if he is able to love his spouse and family." Though she is speaking of a man in the home, Gender 10's demonstration of the interconnectedness of masculinity and the state leads to the conclusion that the state and the people can achieve a true security and transformed state only when they relate to one another out of respect and love.

Conclusions and Final Thoughts

Are the Movements Transformative?

An analysis of the discourse and mobilization semantics of the Women Writing Africa Project, Women of Zimbabwe Arise, and Gender 10 demonstrates that the movements are, indeed, challenging structures of power and hierarchy and conceiving of the state and security in new and transformative ways. The women's discourse and activism in all three groups challenged dominant notions of masculinity and the political simultaneously. Thus, they were able to demonstrate the interconnectedness of the home and the government and deconstruct power in both the traditionally private and traditionally public spheres. By shattering the false public-private dichotomy that values the (male) political world over the (feminine) a-political world, the women were able to both re-value

traditional “feminine” concepts of love and community and introduce them into state. In the women’s discourse and strategies, the state was reconceived as an entity that cared for and nurtured its people, rather than governed and ruled them. Security, too, was re-imagined. A state that values community and care will provide security as each citizen envisions it using the power of love and respect instead of weapons and violence.

Are Security and State Paradigms Being Transformed?

One might argue that it makes little difference if movements seek to transform rather than reform state and security paradigms if little is being achieved. However, evidence demonstrates that the Women Writing Africa Project, Women of Zimbabwe Arise, and Gender 10 are beginning to see results in their efforts to dismantle societal structures of power and hierarchy.

The Women Writing Africa Project, the most academic and least traditional of the examined movements, uses women’s voices to challenge dominant social institutions. By placing women’s voices at the center of experience, Women Writing Africa re-defines history so that it centers around women’s worlds rather than a chronological war and law. The project demonstrates that shifting understandings of history can indeed lead to new imaginings of what the present and future should look like. According to a feature article on the project in a 2001 issue of *Agenda*, the “excitement and energy radiating from the project is creating alliances and sparking new projects” between those interested in transformative security in Africa (Rasebotsa, *et al* 2001, 107). Though Women Writing Africa explores women’s experiences in the past, activists are taking hold of these experiences in order to create something new.

Women of Zimbabwe Arise took a more direct approach to their efforts to effect change in Zimbabwe. By re-valuing the feminine qualities of love and community, WOZA conceives of leadership and citizenship in ways that denounce violent and hierarchal structures. WOZA is infusing love into the Zimbabwean state, even if they are doing so one person at a time. A 2008 report found that some

police officers would rather lose their jobs than physically assault WOZA activists (WOZA “The Effects of Fighting Repression,” 17). Some activists reported that the officers apologized to the women for arresting them and encouraged them to be brave and stay strong in the work they are doing (WOZA, “Counting the Cost,” 12). When state actors that traditionally embody violent masculinities begin to problematize the effects of a militaristic system, it proves that, at least for some, that the power of love can rise above the love of power.

The discourse surrounding the Gender 10 sex strike demonstrated the connection between the insecurity caused by a militarized state and violent masculinities. By making such a link, Gender 10 redefines the political sphere to encompass the home. Thus, private (feminine) values become connected to conceptions of the state. Online news media and Kenyan bloggers, demonstrate that Gender 10 is beginning to initiate change. Many authors who covered the April 2009 sex strike not only used the Gender 10 discourse about respect and redefinition of political space, but noted how powerful the action was because it illuminated the insecurities maintained by a state that values power and hierarchy rather than community.

Because transformative movements seek to challenge and re-imagine systems of power, their successes cannot be measured in reformed laws. Rather, their power is measured in the number of people in a community that begin to value the state and security as they have been re-imagined. Women Writing Africa, Women of Zimbabwe Arise, and Gender 10 have demonstrated here that not only do their discourse and semantics of mobilization suggest a transformed conception of the political, but that their transformative conceptions are spreading to those around them. As more and more people begin to value love and community over power and hierarchy, state structures and the security they provide to their citizens will face increasing pressure to embrace a transformation.

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