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Edited by

Francis Machingura

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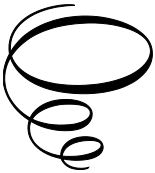

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INTRODUCTION

FRANCIS MACHINGURA

Religion, politics, gender, and sexuality are enmeshed tropes; they tend to pollinate and influence each other in acutely intractable fashion in both private and public spheres. It is not possible to separate the three (sex, religion, and politics) as they are entwined. Sex, religion, and politics are part of the menu of human life. They constitute the core of human life and behaviour. Religion socializes how people view sexuality, gender, peace, war, spirituality, politics, economics, and the environment. Religion also defines, characterises and assigns gender roles in society. The manifestations of religion have invited debates on the place and status of religion in society, where it has continued to declare its presence and visibility. In the case of Zimbabwe, it is difficult to separate religion from secularism because it manifests itself and mutates into the different forms in the lives of people. This is clearly shown in both private and public spaces where people interact as shown by the number of religious symbols and artefacts found all over; with Christianity playing the dominant role when compared to other religions such as African Traditional Religions, Judaism, and Islam. Unfortunately, what catches the eyes of several people are taboos derived from religious scriptures, traditions, and culture.

In most cases, women, persons with disabilities, and immigrants find themselves on the receiving end because of religious positions taken against women and politics. In most cases, culture has a great influence on people's customs, institutions, achievements, economy, politics, religion, education, behaviour, food, language, dress, and conduct. Critics have tried to separate religion from culture and have found it very difficult to separate the two. Kambarami (2006) and Okome (2003) note that:

> In the Shona culture, patriarchal practices shape and perpetuate gender inequality and strip women of any form of control over their sexuality because custom in Africa is stronger than domination, stronger than the law, and stronger than religion.

As a result, most African cultures have been accused of being an albatross on the necks of women when it comes to making decisions. Yet religion

and culture is unexpected to improve and emancipate people, including women, children, and PWDs. Unfortunately, culture's socialization process has continued to adversely differentiate the girl child from the boy child. Men are socialized to view themselves as breadwinners or domineering heads of families, while women are socialised to strive for or earn the qualities of being dependent, gentle, obedient, and submissive within the domestic purview of life. For Machingura and Machingura (2011), women are expected to fulfil their gendered roles as mothers and wives by taking care of the family and being submissive to their husbands. Society denigrates women's being and role in leadership positions. Idioms, proverbs, similes, and other different types of language are marshalled as ideological and symbolic tools to formalise the domestic role of women. As a result, the pressure of balancing family and politics makes women shun politics (Dima, 2022). Biblical texts indicate that submission is not only to their husbands but to men in general.

The situation is significantly acute for women in marriage and staying in rural villages. Working urban or city women have some semblance of freedom if they are not married or single. Feminists generally agree that the patriarchal culture imprisons women, leading to their subordination (to men) who have control over their dignity, sexuality, and womanhood. For Kambarami (2006), women are viewed as second-class citizens created as an afterthought and weaker sex (1 Peter 3:7; Genesis 3:16; Titus 2:3-5; Ephesians 5:22–33). Men have to keep women under constant supervision, lest they err. And in most cases, these claims are religiously buttressed. Men allegedly use patriarchy to appropriate all social roles and keep women in subordinate positions. The same situation is found in Christianity, and its various denominations which are patriarchal in nature. Men justify their actions using either the Bible or Christian claims to support their patriarchal actions against women.

The otherness of certain groups (women and persons with disabilities) in society since time immemorial, owing to religious beliefs and practices, has been surprisingly witnessed in politics, religions, communities, and businesses. Religions have rules that govern how people should conduct themselves in terms of values, practices, beliefs, and behaviours. Sadly to some extent, religion and culture have made life difficult and expensive for women. Even scriptures considered divine in most religions have portrayed women in a bad light, and this has made it worse for women in politics and business. Religious life is not a private affair in Zimbabwe but a public thing celebrated by the majority. New media technologies have popularized the rise and presence of religions such as Christianity in terms

of public awareness beyond the control of religious institutions (Nynas, 2012). The nexus between religion and media has both negative and positive results when it comes to promoting the participation of women in the political public sphere. Lived religion must be seen and appreciated in terms of how people tolerate, contribute to, and encourage the participation of women and persons with disabilities in politics (Ganzevoort and Sremac, 2017). Religions must promote inclusiveness, tolerance, peace, justice, and respect for life.

Boogaert and Douglas (2006) have noted the unfettered influence of religion on sex, gender, and politics. In fact, religion dictates rules that govern people's sexual behaviour, political governance, and gender. What is interesting is that some of the rules and prescriptions make it very difficult for women to participate in public or to engage in civic activities (1 Corinthians 14:33b–36; 1 Timothy 2:12). Women have been socialized by religious institutions and traditions to accept mixed messages that speak negatively about women. There are common misinterpretations, misconceptions, and misteachings derived from scripture and culture that negatively affect women's deportment, dress code, sexuality, dignity, and self-esteem. Misconceptions include taking women as weaker or lesser than men or women as not having voices to stand for themselves let alone taking the lead.

The gendered environment leaves women at the mercy of a brutal patriarchal society, religion, and culture. Though religious scriptures portray God as 'all-merciful, loving, powerful, all-knowing, all-merciful, all-righteous, all-gracious, all-holy, all-mighty', this has not been translated to the lived religion of women. As a result, religions give the impression that they are not meant for women but for men. Razavi and Jenichen (2010) aver,

> Religious authorities commonly insist on regulating relationships in both the private and public domain, which include sexuality, gender, biological and social reproduction, marriage, gender, roles, and what constitutes a proper family. The politicisation of religion and its entanglement with various other disadvantages and discriminations make it hard, if not impossible, to advocate for women's rights without feeding into other struggles and identity conflicts.

Men continue to socially, psychologically, politically, and economically control women through religion and culture. In some instances, it has resulted in violence, that is, both public or domestic violence. Most societies are patriarchal and have a negative attitude towards women

which makes it very difficult for women to enter politics. The tyrannical and retrogressive socio-political, economic, and cultural structures only displace women (Sinnerbrink, 2012). Machingura and Machingura (2011) postulate that,

> Patriarchal society and its age-old masculine mentality hinder women from fully participating in politics as well as developing the nation, even though women constitute the majority of the world's population.

Generally, women have found it difficult to enter most spheres and be accepted as equal players or partners in politics. We have certain positions where women lead without problems, for example, as singers, dancers, cooks, and guest entertainers (Kambarami, 2006). In most cases, women play the supportive act, not the leading act. Yet religion and scriptures must be there to empower as well as promote social justice and the emancipation of women and to challenge oppressive political structures and all forms of violence that negatively affect women.

Religion and culture can generate a crisis or risk against political empowerment. There is a need to relevantly read scriptures from the perspective or lens of women, the poor, the marginalized, and persons with disabilities for the sake of social transformation and critical emancipation research. Proper emancipation cannot take place without the empowerment of every member of society. Women must never be left behind. The Critical Emancipatory Research paradigm and philosophical entry point calls for vigilance and resilience against every danger that threatens peace, unity, inclusivity, tolerance, multi-culture, justice, equality, people's freedoms, and hope in the case of women (Dube and Nkoane, 2018; West, 1998; Mahlomaholo and Netshandama, 2010; Ryan, 1998; Drezgic, 2010). Empowerment liberates people from suppressive social-ideological factors such as poverty, traditions, inequality, religious grandiloquence, and political gimmicks or situations that have become barriers to women's quality participation in politics and decision-making. The presence of religion in the political arena has made it very difficult for women to participate on an equal footing with men. We envisage an empowerment model that awakens consciousness against all forms of social injustice by encouraging inclusiveness, self-empowerment, social transformation, and holistic national development. Empowerment will guard against the sexualisation, re-traditionalisation, de-privatization, re-patriachalisation, and genderisation of religion, economy, culture, and politics against women.

Ivan Marowa in **Chapter 1**, critically explores the sexuality of women and body politics during the liberation struggle. The writer notes that most researchers on the liberation of Zimbabwe have not emphasised female sexuality and their empowerment. Though women get celebrated for being combatants and chimbwidos (helpers or informants) during the struggle, nothing or less is said about the endurance faced by women through sexual harassment, emotional stress and violence. Ivan Marowa thinks that women played a more unique role than men because of what they went through. Besides being victims of patriarchy, culture, and tradition; women were active players in the liberation struggle. And their struggles are still ongoing. Marowa further argues that war politics ill-treated women, and those with guns partly controlled their identity and sexuality. Liberation struggle narratives of how women were culturally treated and sexually perceived are scarce and there is limited literature. His case study of Rengwe in Hurungwe District is on the interaction between women, sexuality, and the liberation war. During the course of gathering data for his research, he interviewed women who proferred narratives about how they endured sexual harassment at the hands of the 'men with guns', where a number of them have built a wall so as not to talk about sexual harassment to strangers or researchers as a result of the socio-political environment that was in the country. Women fought several barriers that men could not, for example, oppressive tendencies from the white settler regime and their black brothers. He further brings to the fore the pertinent finding that issues of sexuality and gender are creatures of culture and society, and both play a central role in maintaining hegemonic power relations in our societies.' Marowa documents the experiences of women during the liberation struggle and shows that war politics, knowingly or unknowingly, ill-treated women to the extent of controlling their sexuality. In most cases, women are sexually objectified and treated as objects.

In **Chapter 2**, **Reggemore Marongedze** analyses the relational dynamics in the religionised collusion between former first lady Grace Mugabe and the youths in Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (henceforth ZANU-PF), intra-party politics as evoked by Born Free Crew and Soul Jah Love, aka Soul Musaka, in the songs Mai Mugabe (Mother Mugabe) and Kuna Amai (To the Mother), respectively, to create a political demigoddess. He shows that Grace Mugabe's oscillation between the religionised duplex of 'wife power' and 'mother power' discourses present the former first lady, at the time, as a grand matriarchy in ZANU-PF, exposing the façade of presidential patriarchy. He shows how women can shine or try to outwit men whenever they get the opportunity to cut their teeth in the entangled domain of politics. The cited songs are within

the purview of the ZANU-PF's intra-party politics if one looks at the lyrics' content, the historical epoch from which the lyrics respond, and the ideological influences embedded therein. He notes that the lack of regulations that legally specify the duties and obligations of the first lady ambiguously leaves it for each president and his wife´s rendition, which, if not monitored, can be a real threat to democratic ideals of merit-based, electorally driven governance". It then becomes an authority or parallel structure outside the constitutional mandate of the elected president. Such structures lead to a constitutional or leadership crisis.

Makomborero Allen Bowa in **Chapter 3**, probes the phenomenon of poverty from a multidimensional perspective. He argues that it affects both men and women in different ways, for example, persons with disabilities. Bowa notes that women with disabilities are more marginalised on account of their disability and their gender and are thus more susceptible to poverty and social exclusion than their male counterparts. He cites the relationship between disability and poverty as a result of fostered discriminatory perspectives on disability in broader society. He further avers, and in a crisp fashion the pertinent fact that religion and gender are important aspects to consider in any initiative geared toward eradicating poverty among people with disabilities. For Makomborero Allen Bowa, poverty and gender intersect in a way that increases the barriers so that the majority of women with disabilities do not live fulfilling lives as they are marginalised as well as not economically empowered. They suffer double discrimination on account of their gender and disability. Religious and socio-cultural beliefs cement discrimination against women with disabilities. Makomborero Allen Bowa believes that the institution of the Church is a stakeholder in eradicating poverty among persons with disabilities without leaving behind the constituency of women with disabilities.

Wilson Zivave in **Chapter 4** focuses on the feminist critical juxtaposition of Amos' metaphor and selected Shona metaphors found in the contemporary Zimbabwean milieu with the intent of ascertaining the relationship between the Bible and the indigenous knowledge system reservoirs. He proposes an end to a biased gender perception and metaphors that justify patriarchy and the negative twist of women's role in contemporary society. Wilson Zivave calls for a transformative understanding of the biblical metaphors and Shona metaphors as promotion of gender equality, social justice, and empowerment of women, serving as drivers and propellers of sustainable development. The metaphors perpetuate gender discrimination, social injustice, and the impoverishment of women.

The metaphors are detrimental to human development. Most patriarchal societies in Zimbabwe, Africa, and the world use some metaphors to justify the patriarchal hegemony that seems to favour the masculine folk vis-à-vis the feminine folk.

Francis Machingura and **Samuel Kalizi** analysed the issue of homosexuality in **Chapter 5** by focusing on the interplay between religion, homosexuality, and politics in post-independent Zimbabwe. They acknowledge that homosexuality tends to raise moral and ethical questions. Francis Machingura and Samuel Kalizi note that, the discourse on homosexuality cannot be complete without religion and politics. **Matinhira Beullah** looks at the concept of Ubuntu ethics in light of sexually related cyber victimisation against women in **Chapter 6**. She notes that sexually related cyber victimisation has become a global problem for women. Matinhira Beullah notes that women are much more vulnerable because historical stereotypes such as religious, social, economic, and political systems have always played significant roles in the marginalisation of women and girls. The inculcation of the values of Hunhu/Ubuntu can provide an antidote to the global challenge of online-triggered violence against women and girls by allowing society to develop altruistic tendencies of love and empathy toward women rather than the legal and judicial systems. The values have failed to provide justice for the female victims. As a result, negativity towards women has not spared Churches.

Ngoni Chikwanha takes the discourse further in **Chapter 7** by looking at how women in the AFM in Zimbabwe get trapped between tradition, culture, religion, and the power politics of governance. He highlights the relegation of women in the Church's patriarchal tradition, power struggles, and the relegation of women in the governance system of the Apostolic Faith Mission in Zimbabwe (AFMZ). However, Ngoni Chikwanha feels that the AFMZ has made relative progress in integrating women into its governance system though it has lost track with the latest relegation of women following the adoption of the 2018 Draft Constitution. Ngoni Chikwanha advocates for a win-win dialogue between men and women in the AFMZ.

Blazio M. Manobo in **Chapter 8**, focuses on religion, gender, and political patronage in Zimbabwe's political arena, which has not been favourable to female political aspirants despite efforts by various women's institutions to try and empower women. He challenges the long-held religious tradition of gendered leadership deification that has kept women

at the margins of politics and subjected them to the whims of their male counterparts. The divine right of kings' theory takes states as established by an ordinance of God, and leaders are taken as divinely ordained. As a result, the king was not accountable to the will of anyone, even the people, aristocrats, or the Church, save to his God as his only king. A king could not be deposed, killed, contradicted, or criticised. It is considered disrespectful towards something considered sacred (sacrilegious) and contrary to God's will. The perspective has grown over time and during periods. The divine right of kings has lost relevance and acceptance through time, as political leadership is a democratic contract between the leader and the people through an election.

In **Chapter 9**, **John Chawarika** laments how homosexuality has become a thorn in the flesh in post-independent Zimbabwe. Opinions regarding the well-being of lesbians and gays tend to be judgmental and negative. He notes that Christianity in post-independent Zimbabwe is broadly to blame for this negativity against lesbians and gays; they have suffered isolation, condemnation, and victimisation from their families and communities in Zimbabwe. The Church, regarded as a home to all people, seems to have failed to give shelter to people who are not heterosexual. Homosexuals have sought refuge from the Church, and the Church has distanced itself. The Church has used selected biblical texts against homosexuality. John Chawarika employed the anthropological and integrative approach built on an existing African traditional cultural philosophy of Ubuntu to help lesbians and gays regain their sense of belonging, transformation, reconciliation, and acceptance. Society finds it difficult to accept and appreciate.

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CHAPTER 1

WOMEN, SEXUALITY AND THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY OF RENGWE, HURUNGWE DISTRICT, C1976-1979

IVAN MAROWA

Abstract

War nationalism in rural Zimbabwe is the central trope of this chapter. Researchers on the liberation of Zimbabwe have emphasised voluntary peasant support, coercion, the centrality of spirit mediums, and the construction of the sell-out identity, while scant attention has been given to female sexuality and how it was appropriated and abused in Zimbabwe's war of liberation. Women regarded as combatants and *chimbwidos* (helpers or informants) during the struggle endured sexual harassment, emotional stress due to the demise of their loved ones, violence, and cooking and other domestic services they rendered for for comrades. This chapter critically argues that war and politics ill-treated women, and those with guns partly controlled their sexuality. Narratives of how women were culturally treated and sexually perceived are scarce or limited in the literature on the liberation struggle and thus this book chapter is aimed at scripting this important component of the liberation studies into the corpus on liberation struggles in Africa, especially in Zimbabwe. The chapter uses the case study of Rengwe in Hurungwe District to analyse the interaction between women, sexuality, and the liberation war to develop its argument. Two belligerent forces operated in Rengwe, the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and Pfumo reVanhu (PRV). The chapter relied on data gathered between 2011 and 2014 and published literature to achieve its objective.

Keywords: Culture, Gender, Memories, Nationalism, Sexuality, Violence, Women

Introduction

In 2006, I interviewed a female research participant called Musarurwa to gather her memories of the liberation struggle in Rengwe. A narrative emerged about how women endured sexual harassment at the hands of 'men with guns.' On my return, two years later (February 2008), to conduct research specifically dealing with the experiences of women during the liberation struggle, I was confronted with a wall built around that narrative about sexual harassment. Musarurwa could not be drawn to talk about the abuse of women during the liberation struggle. She insisted that there was no need to continue talking about the past or what happened during the liberation war especially after the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) had united to form the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) following the 1987 Unity Accord. The interview was short and very difficult to conduct. I quickly refocused and reflected on what had happened subsequent to my first visit and interview. In 2006, Musarurwa had been the first to narrate her experiences of the liberation struggle between 1978 and 1979. Indeed, it was the first time I encountered revealing accounts/stories concerning female sexuality and its nexus to the war of liberation in Zimbabwe. Questions that came to mind included, 'What had changed between 2006 and 2008? Why was the narrative of the harassment of women being concealed or swept under the carpet? What new narrative(s) was the participant telling by silencing or muzzling her earlier memories?' These and many other questions are answered by looking at the socio-political environment that prevailed in Zimbabwe in 2008 and beyond. A closer look at the earlier narrative and subsequent change revealed that the issues of sexuality and gender were central in the interactions between the 'men with guns' and rural populations in general. Tamale (2015: 16) has argued that 'sexuality and gender are creatures of culture and society and both play a central, crucial role in maintaining power relations in our societies.' She added that 'researching human sexuality without looking at gender is like cooking pepper soup without pepper' (Tamale 2015: 16). The sexual abuse of women and wartime interactions revealed perceptions about human sexuality, gender, and power dynamics especially in times of war.

The change of narrative by Musarurwa could be explained within the context of the March 29, 2008, harmonised elections that pitted the late former President Robert Mugabe and his Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party against the late Morgan Tsvangirai and his Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai party (MDC-T). ZANU-PF tried to realign its party by creating cohesion that left no room for dissenting voices within its structures. It was within this web of power dynamics and power cajoling that Musarurwa was caught. She had to respect the dictates of the party rather than narrating issues of sexuality that would expose a dark side to the liberation story that ZANU-PF was using to mobilise support. Presumably, the silences that were created around such narratives grew out of the polarisation and political violence which followed the harmonised elections of 29 March 2008. Consequently, walls were built around memories and narratives about the liberation struggle that had a damaging effect on ZANU-PF's campaign for re-election. There was a new drive to show unity of purpose and oneness in the ruling party, ZANU-PF, following calls by some disgruntled former members of ZAPU that the 1987 Unity Accord was as good as dead. It was against this grain or background that some narratives and memories of the liberation struggle in Rengwe were revised, scaffolded and reconstructed according to the socio-political environment. From this research experience, this chapter was developed to try and analyse matters of female sexuality during Zimbabwe's liberation struggle.

This chapter attempts to document and rescript women's experiences within the mainstream scholarship corpus of women, war and sexuality during the liberation struggle as it occurred in Rengwe. It argues that war politics, knowingly or inadvertently, ill-treated women to the extent of controlling their sexuality. The discussion focuses on women, sexuality, and the liberation struggle. Data collected between 2008 and 2013 during various research visits gathered memories about forced removal, the liberation struggle, and changes to people's lives and livelihoods. Research participants, both men and women, young and old, were interviewed. Among those interviewed were two former auxiliary soldiers of Muzorewa's Pfumo reVanhu (PRV), two business persons, former employees of different departments of the Rhodesian government, and many rural dwellers who acted as chimbwidos and mujibhas between 1978 and 1979. The chapter uses the objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997 cited in Szymanski et al. 2011) that 'provides a framework for understanding the experience of being female in a socio-cultural context that sexually objectifies the female body' (Szymanski et al. 2011). This theory postulates that 'women are sexually objectified and treated as

objects valued for use by others' (Szymanski et al. 2011). Thus, by looking at women's sexuality issues and experiences between 1978 and 1980, the discussion examines the objectification of females by looking at culture, values, beliefs, and historical social constructs (Bass 2016; Tamale 2015).

The chapter has four sections and assumes the following structure. The first section discusses debates in the literature about the liberation of Zimbabwe. The discussion allows the present study to ground and theoretically positions its contribution to the knowledge of the struggle. The second section gives a general background on Rengwe and how the Second Chimurenga entered the area. The chapter emphasises women's stories about how the war started and their subsequent interactions with the war. The third narrates the experiences of women during the war period. It uses the most popular memories in the area to develop its argument regarding how guns became instruments to control women's sexuality. The last section analyses the memories of women's undocumented experiences. By doing this, the chapter is not discrediting the sacrifices of those who fought for the liberation of Zimbabwe. The chapter creates alternative epistemological avenues for socio-emotional healing and shows the other side of the untold story.

Debates in Literature on Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle

Early literature adopted a nationalist interpretation that celebrated and emphasised the voluntary peasant support that drove the war to completion (Ranger, 1985; Manungo, 1991). Such literature reiterated the Zimbabwe African National Union's (ZANU) and its military wing, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army's (ZANLA) Maoist approach that was premised in the socialist ideology captured in the maxim and philosophy 'the people are the water and the guerrillas are the fish.' Other scholars have examined how spirit mediums became central in giving moral direction to the guerrillas (Lan, 1985). Kriger (1992), using the case of Mutoko, discussed the use of coercion and obtaining support, with some non-combatants taking advantage of their association with guerrillas to exert revenge on their enemies. The historiography of the liberation struggles shifted attention from support to examining memories and violence that overflowed into the years of civil conflict. Werbner (1991) recovered memories that made sense of the Lupondo's outrage against their violation and painful disillusionment with the government, while Alexander (2000) emphasised violence, memory, silence, and exclusion, which were rooted 'in the language of everyday political discourse and

local interpretations of history.' Marowa (2009) examines the construction of the sell-out identity, and Mazarire (2011) looks at the aspects of discipline and punishment within ZANLA ranks. Marowa (2014) used the landscape to discuss other aspects of the liberation war, relations between the belligerent forces, and how the general populace perceived them.

The other literature on Zimbabwe's war of liberation includes narratives by women combatants (Nhongo-Simbanegavi, 2000), Staunton's *Mothers of the Revolution* (1990), biographies (Manda, 2011; Chung, 2006) and Sibanda's (2005) discussion of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) operations. Except for Nhongo-Simbanegavi and Staunton who focus on women during the liberation war there is significantly a dearth of scholarship enmeshing women's narratives, war and the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. There is a lack of literature on the experiences of women and memories of the struggle. No biography or autobiography is associated with known women combatants such as Joice Mujuru, Margaret Dongo, Sally Mugabe, Victoria Chitepo, Ruth Chinamano, Joanna Nkomo and many others. Yet combatants and non-combatants were instrumental in various ways during Zimbabwe's liberation struggle. Undoubtedly, women seem forgotten or appear as an appendix in the literature that analyses liberation struggles in countries that fought for national liberation like Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique, South Africa, and Angola in Southern Africa. In Zimbabwe, women (particularly Charwe possessed by the spirit of Mbuya Nehanda) get praised for their incredible role in the liberation struggle at national events such as the Independence and Heroes Day celebrations. The common adage is 'these women fought with their cooking sticks.' Women bury their unpopular experiences and feel uncomfortable and shy to share and re-live memories that hurt or make them cultural misfits.

Women and the Liberation Struggle in Rengwe

The colonial government used the name Rengwe to refer to the territory it had created for Chief Goremusandu Dandawa and his people upon their removal from the Zambezi Valley in 1958. (S2827/2/2/6/1, 1958). Rengwe is 100 kilometres south-west of Karoi Town. The area was known as the Rengwe Special Native Area (SNA) or Rengwe Tribal Trust Land (TTL), and identified as the Rengwe Valley. The Rengwe Valley section holds the Rengwe, Fuleche, Chiedza, and Magororo areas. Marowa (2014; 2009) discussed how this part of the Dandawa Chiefdom west of the Musukwe River, known as Zambia, was the liberated zone outside the jurisdiction of

Rhodesia. The section to the east of Musukwe was referred to as Rhodesia due to the presence of Rhodesian-aligned auxiliary forces at Chidamoyo Mission Hospital. It is in this Rengwe where most of the operations by the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) and military engagements against the Rhodesian auxiliary force of Pfumo reVanhu (PRV), also known as Pfumo neBadza (Nyoka and Chipungu) from Abel Muzorewa's United African National Congress (UANC), took place.

Several encounters with the guerrilla fighters and Rhodesian soldiers took place before the inhabitants of Rengwe came to interact with them and realise that the liberation struggle had finally reached their territory. Marowa (2009, 2014, and 2015) observes that one cannot pin a particular date for the beginning of the liberation struggle in Rengwe. Participants referred to personal encounters and hearsay to narrate how the war had encroached on their territory. In a focus group discussion (FGD), the Rhodesian soldiers [these could have been district assistants] congregated with villagers, informing them about the arrival of freedom fighters whom they called 'terrorists' (FDG, 2011). Mai Kenani postulates,

> The white soldiers came first and asked the village heads to assemble all the villagers to show them what war does when it comes and what they should do when they are in it. We gathered at the school by the hill site-Chisora, Manzungu, Mudzongachiso, and other villages. They referred to the freedom fighters as terrorists, not guerrillas. They asked if we knew the terrorists. We told them that we didn't know them. They then demonstrated to us how to use guns, what we should do when firing guns, and how they came to know about the war (Mai Kenani, 2011).

Most participants' responses to questions about how they knew about the war rushed to narrate about the guerrillas. Some participants stated that towards the beginning of the liberation struggle in Rengwe, rumours circulated about guerrilla fighters seen in the area. Machiya observes,

> The news about the war started as rumours and hearsay that spread around until a group of five guerrillas who came via Nyamhunga's territory arrived at our place. We greeted them. They were wearing green uniforms. They asked if we had recognised them. We replied that we hadn't recognised them. They told us they were guerrillas (*vakomana vemusango).* Then they said, Mother, let's go into the shop. They each picked what they wanted. From that moment, we built a good relationship (Machiya, 2011)

Mai Kenani's description of their first-ever knowledge about the looming war was the visit they received from the white soldiers before the arrival of the freedom fighters. It was not clear whether these were the Rhodesian

Security Forces (RSF) or those known as District Assistants (DAs). However, what is clear is that there was nothing dramatic in the early days of the arrival of guerrilla fighters in Rengwe.

There had not been any serious nationalist activities in Rengwe except for a few individuals known to be involved in the nationalist movement. The few had contact with the African National Congress (ANC) before they moved from Sipolilo (now Guruve) to Rengwe in 1957. One person thought to be either a supporter or sympathizer of nationalist politics was headman Mushoshoma. In 1958, the Native Commissioner (NC) of Hurungwe raised concerns about Headman Mushoshoma regarding his involvement in Congress politics. He believed that, if he was not a member, he was close to being a supporter of Congress [African National Congress] politics (S2827/2/2/6, 1958). The story of Headman Mushoshoma was one of the references made by a colonial official regarding nationalist politics in Rengwe. Headman Mushoshoma returned to Guruve in the early 1960s, claiming to have been duped by the colonial government. His movement to Rengwe was under the pretext that he would continue exercising his traditional position. However, upon arrival, he found the territory was under Chief Dandawa, and he had to submit to him. That angered Mushoshoma, to which he protested until he was allowed to return to Guruve, but not every one of his followers joined him.

Whether one takes Mai Kenani's version or Machiya's version of how they joined the journey of the liberation struggle in Rengwe, it is clear that the two narratives indicate that there were activities that turned them into an expecting or waiting mode. What they did not know during that waiting period was the extent of the liberation war and the change it would affect their lives, livelihoods, social relations, and day-to-day activities. The territory of Chief Dandawa had three forces that operated: ZIPRA guerrillas, PRV, and the RSFs, or DAs. It was not clear from interviews whether the white soldiers belonged to the RSFs or DAs. An interview with a former PRV soldier who operated in Dandawa's chiefdom revealed that their deployment to Chidamoyo Mission Hospital in 1979 was to protect it. It was after the DAs stationed at Kenyungo Mountain were withdrawn. Indeed, there were times when the RSF came to Rengwe with military jets from Karoi and engaged in battles with the ZIPRA guerrilla fighters. A closer look at the narratives and memories from Rengwe shows that the area did not experience the liberation war for some period. It was a short and painful experience when they interacted with the war when it reached its peak around 1978–1980. According to Mujere (2017: 89), the last period of the liberation struggle was 'the most violent phase of the

war, marked by a rapid increase in civilian deaths (inside the country and at guerrilla and refugee camps) in Zambia and Mozambique.'

Apart from the known forces of RSF, ZIPRA, and the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), there were also what Mujere (2017) described as ‘rag-tag’ armies of ‘auxiliaries forces’ run by Muzorewa and Sithole. The 'rag-tag' armies included the PRV, which acted their nationalism against the ZIPRA guerrilla fighters in Rengwe. No matter how people perceived the auxiliaries, they contributed immensely to the story of the liberation struggle. Unlike other places like Dande (Lan, 1985), where traditional religion played a central role in the execution of the liberation war, this was not the case in Rengwe. No participant recalled ZIPRA guerrillas insinuating anything relating to traditional religion or Christianity. Not even pungwes (night vigils) were held in the area. Participants mentioned the unplanned one-night vigil done by PRV at Chidamoyo Mission Hospital, and some participants narrated that they were taken from Rengwe to Chidamoyo by the PRV, where they sang the whole night. A former PRV argued that it was not a pungwe of any sort. These were people who were running away from the demands and atrocities of the ZIPRA guerrillas to get protection from them while they waited to go to the Tangwena settlement in Karoi. The Tangwena had become a settlement for those deserting their rural villages due to war. Thus, this chapter is focused on the period 1978–1980 to discuss issues of war, religion, and sexuality during the liberation struggle of Zimbabwe.

Women's Sexuality: Experiences during the Liberation Struggle

Female sexuality is often a subject treated with silence and is underpinned by undercurrencies of muzzled silences and half-truths. Society does not openly talk about sexuality because it has certain cultural connotations that can cause a person to lose their dignity. For this reason, narratives and memories about ill-treatment or the sexual abuse of women remained silenced to protect one's societal standing. At the national level, we have begun to see former liberation war combatants opening up and talking about issues of sexuality in guerrilla camps. The reason behind this development requires further investigation. Sexuality is not equal to prostitution or questionable morals. Instead, it is about gender identity, sexual knowledge, beliefs, values, attitudes, the human body, sexual orientation, power, violence, and personal and interpersonal sexual relations (Tamale, 2015). Female sexuality is not only about sex and

intimacy but also about the change in power relations between men and women over time (Bass, 2016). Chimhete (2019) has observed in his study of Gudyanga that asymmetrical power relations between rural communities and guerrilla fighters [including the Rhodesian auxiliary forces] caused them to engage with the guerrillas in forms that were discursive such as in songs and nicknames. Thus, in discussing the sexuality of women matters as experienced during the liberation struggle period, the chapter intends not to necessarily accuse the perpetrators of rape and sexual harassment but to analyse the power relations and dynamics between men and women.

The 1978 and 1979 phases of the struggle also witnessed changes in the conduct of the war and the *modus operandi* it took. One such involved the way the 'men with guns' related to and interacted with the rural populations. The experiences documented here represent the perceptions, feelings, and memories of the men and women participants. In earlier studies by Marowa (2009, 2014, 2015), the discourse was on sell-outs and landscape narratives to interpret interactions between ZIPRA guerrilla fighters and PRV soldiers. This chapter contributes to the knowledge about the liberation struggle in general and the encounter with the war by the women in Rengwe, in particular. There is still much to know and inquire about that historical period in different districts and regions of Zimbabwe. The indiscipline that characterised the combatants (Mazarire, 2011) was not only happening at guerrilla and refugee camps in Zambia and Mozambique. Mujere (2017) noted that guerrilla indiscipline contributed to the increased death toll in the ‘liberated zones’ inside Zimbabwe. Chimhete (2019) explained why the brutalities and ill-treatment of civilians by guerrilla fighters have been more pronounced compared to that of the RSFs. According to him, 'guerrilla fighters intervened in community conflicts [and in building interpersonal relations] more than [what] government [Rhodesian] soldiers did' (Chimhete, 2019). This indiscipline went beyond brutal killings and beatings to include flirting, sexual misuse, and sexual harassment.

Not every one of the 'men with guns' should be painted with the same brush because some were mature while others were overzealous, young, and immature. From the oral accounts he gathered in Gudyanga, Chimhete (2019) concluded that the first crops of guerrillas were mature men who probably had left behind families. Most of those they led were young men and ill-disciplined. The perception was raised in narratives from Rengwe about ZIPRA guerrillas. Robert Munuwa (2011) nicknamed '*Chigutsa*' joined the ZIPRA guerrillas and narrated that, the first and second ZIPRA groups were much more disciplined. The third group was composed of

recruits from the war front; those were undisciplined. Still, they didn't do that here but elsewhere.' Chigutsa was himself a recruit trained on the war front. What he said partly explains what participants accused him of doing in his locality. Chipungu also weighed on the issue of the discipline of the 'men with guns' saying that:

> I witnessed my sister-in-law, a grown-up girl at that time, enduring some acts of sexual harassment and misuse. Some of the ZIPRA guerrillas were unmarried and as human beings, they had feelings too. They would take girls and spend nights with them. No one knew or could question whatever happened there. However, such actions were not good because sometimes the girls were forced to be intimate with two or three comrades. The girls were few. Other girls were taken to the war front by the ZIPRAs and would be combatants upon their return. But they complained of sexual harassment by different guerrillas. Married women were not spared from this sexual harassment. They used the strength and advantage of the gun (Chipungu, 2011).

Coercion was not only supporting the guerilla fighters or settling local scores (as Kriger (1992) found in Mutoko. It was also subtly and strategically used or abused to manipulate women into sexual relations with powerful men - either the ‘men with guns’ or those who associated with the combatants. A good example was that of Chigutsa (named above) who was believed to have rebelled from ZIPRA regiments to form his own group that terrorised and abused the people of Manyembere and Nyamahwe villages. There was a possibility that consensual intimacy happened. However, where it involved two or three soldiers, the female body was being manipulated in the guise that it was supposed to perform a culturally and gender-constructed duty of satisfying the sexual needs of males.

The use of coercion or force only pointed to unequal power relations terrain in which the 'men with guns' were powerful against the rural populations that were at their weakest because their male figureheads had abrogated their responsibility to defend their families against the threat. Despite being under siege by the powerful, that did not remove the people's agency against such indiscipline and culturally unacceptable actions. In Gudyanga, Elisineyi, a girl, managed to repel sexual harassment by a guerrilla fighter by behaving like a possessed person. She spoke like her brother who died in the 1960s and that sent shivers and fears into the concerned guerrilla who then let her go (Chimhete, 2019). In Rengwe, ZIPRA guerrillas did not have operational bases like the case with their ZANLA counterparts. They were of no fixed abode. It was not clear why