The African Diaspora and Women's Struggles in Africa

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Amanda Coffie

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Abstract

Various scholars have documented the contribution of the African Diaspora toward the different struggles on the continent. However, the specific contributions of the African Diaspora toward women's struggles have not received much attention. The chapter presents a brief overview of the African Diaspora engagement with women's struggles in Africa. It importantly notes that the struggles of women in Africa are unique but also linked to the major continental struggles for independence, democratization, and sustainable livelihood as well as the continental struggles for women empowerment. The chapter argues that the engagement of the Diaspora with specific reference to women's struggles has been limited yet very dynamic and beneficial. The African Diaspora has implicitly and explicitly served as relevant sources of first-hand knowledge that support the information politics of the women organizations and individual women in Africa.

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Through linkages with women organizations and individuals in African countries, the African Diaspora has also engaged in the transfer of economic and social remittances toward the economic development, political processes, and the dismantling of structures that constrain the empowerment of women in Africa.

Keywords

African Diaspora · Women struggles · Women organizations · Remittances · Collective mobilization

Introduction

Throughout Africa's history, women have been at the center of the struggles toward the liberation, democratization, and development of the African continent. Also, the contributions of the African Diaspora toward these struggles on the continent and their continued efforts toward building a glorious Africa are well documented (Cochrane 2007; Brinkerhoff 2008; Horst and Gaas 2009; Ratha and Plaza 2011; Budabin 2014; Coffie 2018). However, the specific contributions of the African Diaspora toward the struggles of women in Africa are not highlighted.

The chapter highlights various struggles of African women, linked to the continental struggles of anti-colonialism, independence, democratization, and the development of Africa. Additionally, some specific contributions of African Diaspora (both men and women) toward the struggles of women within the African continent are outlined. The chapter presents various case studies across the continent, which is not in any attempt a comprehensive account of the struggles of African women and the participation of the African Diaspora. The women groups and individual women are vast and spread across the continent and can, therefore, not be complied within the limitations of a book chapter. Thus, the section is a cursory overview of cases to demonstrate the diversity in approaches and the groups involved.

The chapter conceptualizes the struggle of African women at the level of individual and group participation in the general African struggles against colonialism, for independence to liberate African countries from colonial rule, democratization, and regime change in various African countries, and toward the institutional and policy structures for women empowerment and sustainable livelihood. Furthermore, Diaspora's contribution is operationalized as the implicit and explicit support toward women (individuals and groups) engaged in various struggles across the continent. The chapter argues that the engagement of the Diaspora with specific reference to women's struggles has been limited yet very dynamic and beneficial.

The organization of the chapter is as follows: first, a brief overview of the concept of the African Diaspora. Subsequently, it discusses each of the above noted significant struggles of the continent, highlighting the role of women, followed by the Diaspora's spheres of engagement with individual women and specific women organizations in Africa and presents the chapter's conclusion.

The African Diaspora

The term "Diaspora broadly refers to the spread of migrant communities away from a real or imagined homeland" (Van Hear 2014, p. 2). Scholarship on Diaspora generally agrees on three distinct core features. These are the "dispersal from a homeland to two or more other territories; an enduring presence abroad and the flow or exchange of social, economic, political or cultural resources between the spatially separated populations" (Cohen 1997; Van Hear 1998; Akyeampong 2000; Zeleza 2008). Additionally, the Diaspora is not a homogeneous group in their composition primarily due to their various Diasporic formations, different socioeconomic positions, and political and cultural outlook shaped by variables such as age, gender, generation, policies and politics of new "home," as well as the perception of the old "home." Thus, their means and motivation for transnational relations or exchange activities vary across time and space.

According to Zeleza (2008), there are two major categories of African Diaspora. The first group refers to the African Diaspora created through forceful migration during the slavery activities, which shipped out millions from the continent to various destinations around the world. The second group is composed of individuals and groups linked to contemporary migration as a result of colonial rule, anti-colonial struggles, and the era of structural adjustment packages. Furthermore, he conceptualizes the African Diaspora as inclusive of trans-ethnic Diaspora, trans-national Diaspora, and the widely known one, trans-continental Diaspora (the first two occurs within the African continent, therefore is intra-African Diaspora). The creation of the Diaspora is, therefore, rooted in the various forms and phases of migration, and reproduced through the descendants of the migrants. It is important to note that while migration and dispersals serve as the bases for the formation of a Diaspora, not all dispersals result in a Diaspora (Quayson 2013).

For this chapter, the African Diaspora refers to Africans and their offspring resettled outside the continent. Indeed, the chapter's conceptualization of the African Diaspora is not strictly a scholarly concept but also finds roots in policy discourse mainly as conceived by the African Union (AU). The AU Constitutive Act 2000 (Art 1) defined the African Diaspora as "consisting of people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality, and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union." The African Diaspora is a constituent of and the sixth Region of the AU.

African Women and Anti-colonial and Independence Struggles

Most African countries did not willingly accept colonialism, and across the continent, there are histories of states and societies that resisted their colonizations. Various approaches were adopted, including warfare, violent demonstrations, and other nonviolent approaches such as social protest and negotiations with the

colonizers. In some of these states and societies, women were at the forefront of the resistance (Falola and Paddock 2011).

In the Gold Coast, now Ghana, one of such women who led the resistance is Yaa Asantewaa, an Asante Queen mother. She significantly contributed both political and military leadership toward the success of the Asantes of Ghana during the Asante–British war of 1900, known as the Resistance War of 1900. A significant episode that reveals her leadership unfolded as follows. On March 28, 1900, when the Governor of the Gold Coast, Sir Frederick Hodgson, informed Asante rulers that British rule over the Asante has ceased as a temporary episode to an enduring ordeal, Nana Yaa Asantewaa was the only ruler who spoke up. She taunted her male counterparts, enquiring how they could sit there and listen to all that "nonsense," and ironically asked whether they had been turned into women or not (Brempong 2000). This provocative statement from the female ruler, therefore, sparked the spirit of resistance among the Asante rulers. Nana Yaa Asantewaa was chosen by the Asante rulers to lead the fight against the foreign rule of the British during the Resistance War of 1900.

Concerning the role of women in the liberation struggles, this chapter also highlights the cases of South Africa, Mozambique, and Algeria as they unfolded within the broader African liberation struggles. Kimble and Unterhalter (1982) note the prominent role played by South African women during the courageous struggle and sacrifices made by the oppressed people of South Africa. Here the activities of the Bantu Women's League (BWL) of African National Congress (ANC) are recognized for their role in women's emancipation and national liberation struggles in South Africa. The Bantu Women's League was started in 1913 by Charlotte Maxeke, a young South African teacher who had graduated from Wilberforce College in Ohio. Maxeke and other executives of the BWL believed that their intellectual abilities would enable them to convince the then Union government of South Africa about the need to enfranchise more Africans, remove the color bar, and repeal the prohibitions on land usage (Meer 2011). Their strategy, coupled with that of the other liberation movements, created the necessary environment for women to take the initiative in contributing to the broader struggle against apartheid legislation and the entire apartheid regime in South Africa. Other notable women organizations involved in the movement to end Apartheid included the "Durban and District Women's League," "Federation of South African Women," "Federation of Black Women," and ANC Women's League (ANCWL). Some noticeable women at the forefront during the independence struggle of South Africa included Albertina Sisulu, Helen Suzman, and a late entrant who subsequently became the icon for women in the ANC, Winnie Madikizela Mandela.

Still, in Southern Africa, this chapter narrates the role of Mozambican women as direct participants in the War of Independence against the Portuguese from 1964 to 1974. Some of the women who participated in the war included Jacinta Bakar, Basilica Musa, and Teresa Casiano (West 2000). Some members of the *Destacamento Feminino* (a women's detachment of the guerrilla army) described their contributions as not limited to freeing Mozambicans from colonial rule but also

liberated them from both colonial and "traditional" forms of oppression and exploitation against women.

The role of noncombatant Mozambican women is worth mentioning. The women cultivated the land and provided food for the liberation army, some transported goods and weapons on their heads to the guerrilla army. For example, "women travelled very long distances and stayed away from home for many days to meet the needs of the guerrilla army" (Arnfred 1988, p. 5).

In Algeria, thousands of women were actively involved in the Algerian War for Independence, with some taking initiatives on deadly missions to liberate the Algerian state from the colonial rule of France from 1954 to1962. During the war period, Algerian women played significant roles as "combatants, spies, fundraisers, couriers, nurses, launderers and cooks" and, as a result, contributed immensely to the independence of Algeria (Turshen 2002, p. 890). Some notable women who actively participated and were members of the *mujahidat* (women combatants) include Amrane Minne; Mme Houria Imache Rami; Une moudjahida; La moudjahida; Entretien; and Ighilahriz.

The significant contributions of Algerian women to the independence struggle was formally recognized in 1974 by the Algerian government. The government reported that 11,000 Algerian women had fought for the liberation of their country. The numbers are contested and some leading women combatants note that "11,000 is a severe underestimation of women participants in the Algerian War" (Turshen 2002, p. 891). Notwithstanding the disagreement over the numbers, the state's recognition of the role of women in Algeria's independence war is an important step to remedy the historical silence of the Algerian woman as an active participant and a capable freedom fighter.

The African Diaspora and African Women Struggles for Independence

Very little is known about the African Diaspora and their contribution toward resistance to colonialism on the continent. The existing literature suggests that the Diaspora's engagement directly with the struggles on the continent began with the independence struggles. Here research notes the significant contributions of the African Diaspora toward the liberation of the continent from European colonial rule (Gwekwerere 2014). The continental struggles for freedom manifested itself in the form of armed liberation movements in Kenya, Mozambique, Angola, Algeria, Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, and mass protests in countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, Malawi, Congo, Tanzania, Zambia, and others. The African Diaspora provided various interventions to liberation movements in African countries, which, both directly and indirectly, benefited individual women and women organizations either engaged in their liberation from colonial or traditional oppression.

The composition of the African Diaspora that participated in the liberation struggles reflects what Zeleza (2008) describes as the first group. They originated

through forced displacement, especially during the Atlantic slave trade into the Americas. The descendants of these Africans forced out of the continent subsequently formed the first group of what is today known as African Diasporas. They were also primarily located in the United States and the Caribbean. The members of the first group of Diasporas that engaged in the struggles for liberation can be traced to the history of Pan-Africanism, which originated among the African Diaspora (Campbell 1994; Reddock 2007; Killingray 2009). Pan-Africanism is "understood as an insurrectionary discourse that emerged in direct opposition to European capitalism, manifest in the worst forms of human exploitation, and occupation" (Abbas and Mama 2015, pp. 3–4).

The histories of Pan-Africanism were, however, written without examining the extensive contribution of individual women and social movement led by women (Campbell 1994, p. 286). Diaspora Women were significant and contributed to the starting of Pan-Africanism. For example, the Diasporic connections between Mrs. E. V. Kinloch, a South African woman, and Henry Sylvestre Williams, an Afro-Trinidadian lawyer, resulted in the formation of the African Association in London in 1889 by Williams, who first coined the term "Pan-African" in the early 1900s (Reddock 2007, p.257). Williams, therefore, attributed his Pan-African consciousness to Mrs. Kinloch, whom he heard speak in Britain on the abuses of Africans in South African mines.

Further, some of the specific contributions from the African Diaspora to support the struggles of women related to independence in some African countries are highlighted here. For example, Madie Hall, an African American, is one of the African Diasporas who personally contributed toward the development of women's organizations in South Africa and supported South African women's roles leading to the independence of South Africa (Berger 2001). Born in 1894 to African American parents in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Madie Hall arrived in South Africa in 1940 to marry Dr. A. B. Xuma, a highly respected physician who became President of the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa. Madie Hall stayed in South Africa from 1940 until the death of her husband in 1963. Hall made two significant contributions to the struggles of women in South Africa. First, she helped to revitalize the declining Women's League of the African National Congress. Secondly, she started the Zenzele clubs, a robust network of women's organizations that provided South African women with new opportunities for leadership and service (Berger 2001).

When Hall arrived in South Africa, she was surprised to find out that the ANC had no women's affiliate and that women could not be official members of the organization (Berger 2001). Hall therefore organized and became the ANC Women League's first President in 1943 and was elected to a second term in 1946. As President, she encouraged women to organize within the framework of the ANC, which was then engaged in efforts to build up local branches around South Africa. In the 1950s, when black South African women clashed with the then South African government over its intention to force them to carry passes, the ANC Women's League became the leading force in organizing mass protests among women against such racial discrimination against the blacks (Berger 2001, p. 15).

Madie Hall is fondly remembered in South Africa for leading two women organizations that have had a long-lasting widespread influence. The training of a new generation of women leaders and creating the space for black women to assume control of community organizations long dominated by white volunteers and social workers (Wilson 1992). In memory of Hall's remarkable contributions toward the women and women groups in South Africa, the Zenzele administration building in South Africa currently bears the name of Madie Hall.

African Women and the Struggles Toward Democratization and Regime Change

About 15 years after independence, some of Africa's liberation leaders had become authoritarian or were removed from office through military coups, thereby suspending the freedoms attained by Africans during the liberation struggles (Oquaye 1995; Tripp 2004). This situation will set Africans again on a cause to demand liberation, but this time from tyrannical African rulers. These struggles in some countries resulted in civil wars lasting several years and, in some instances, protest from civil society organizations, and external supports including the Diaspora led to such regimes conducting elections during a period referred to as the "Third Wave of democratisation on the continent" (Schraeder 1994, 1995). The role of women within these struggles is not uniform and varies from time and across space as well as the nature of the struggles (Lyons 2004; Moran and Pitcher 2004). They were involved either as direct participants as members/leaders of rebel groups or peacemakers demanding for the end of the wars. Below is the narrative of one such instance that unfolded in Liberia, in West Africa.

The Liberian civil war began with the core objective of removing Samuel Doe, who came to power through a military coup and was accused of stifling democracy. The war, which lasted for 14 years and led to the election of Africa's first elected female president, had women playing various roles. The first rebel group, National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) formed by Charles Taylor, which began the war had female combatants, commanders of some groups who served as agents of destruction during the Liberian civil war. Some of the women, including Grace Minor and Raffel Victoria, were elevated to positions of authority in the NPFL during the war based on their active participation and hard work (Badmus 2009).

Also, some women within and outside Liberia contributed finances and resources to maintain and sustain the rebel groups. Notably, former President Johnson Sirleaf is cited in the Truth and Reconciliation Report of Liberia, 2009 as a significant donor, financier, and supporter of the NPFL. She later denounced Charles Taylor, though, stating that he had not stayed true to the cause of regime change toward the democratization of Liberia.

Other groups of women, including former supporters and active participants of the war, were at the forefront of the peace process. The women organized themselves into the various women organizations, and one of the most famous of them was the Liberian Women Initiative (LWI) led by Mrs. Etweda Cooper. The LWI organized

"street protests, rallies, and demonstrations during these periods to persuade the combatants to stop the bloodshed and surrender their guns in return for gainful employment" (Prasch 2015). Another women organization in Liberia known as the Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) was formed during the period of the war to mobilize and organize marches and sit-ins in Monrovia in front of the Government House and House of Parliament.

During the signing of the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Accord in Ghana to end the war, Liberian Women were still there demanding the men in the room sign the peace agreement before they exit the room. For example, The Mano Women's Peace Network, with support from WIPNET directly took part in the negotiations, and other women activists including Leymah Gbowee, leader of the Liberian Mass Action for Peace (LMAP), surrounded the building demanding the negotiators sign the peace agreement (Prasch 2015).

The role of the women organizations in ending the war is also credited for Johnson Sirleaf's win over George Weah in the 2005 elections. The activities of women organizations in favor of the female candidate were instrumental and stable between the election and even run-off periods, as compared to the actions of standard civil society groups which dropped from 70% to 37% between the election and the run-offs period (Bauer 2009, p. 2). Similar varied roles played by women in the struggles for regime change and demand for democratization has been observed in the cases of Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast (Hudson 2009; Medie 2013).

In Kenya, the repeal of Section 2A of the Kenyan Constitution in December 1991 paved the way for the return of multiparty politics. It opened the gates for popular participation of different interests and pressure groups in the democratization process of Kenya (Nzomo 1993). Kenyan women, therefore, took advantage of the repeal to form pressure groups and interest groups to participate in the country's democratization process. These women interest and pressure groups strongly demanded that their voices be heard, specifically, for equal participation in the process of democratization in Kenya. According to Nzomo (1993), the demands of the women were not limited to the political space but to the cultural and social spaces that were considered too oppressive and discriminatory which they noted had spilt over into the political arena as well.

From the onset of the struggle for the equal participation of women in the democratization processes, the Kenyan women organizations were faced with a general resistance from the male-dominated Kenyan society to gender-based changes. Their primary strategy was to demand of the Kenyan government to fulfill their obligations under the various international conventions on the rights of women and their participation in civil lives. These included the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Covenant on Human Rights (1976), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), and the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies (1985). Additionally, they insisted on the design of policies and manifestos from political parties that reflected gender-based concerns.

A significant outcome of these demands and struggles by the women organizations was the nomination and participation of Professor Wangari Maathai and

Charity Ngilu as Kenya's first female presidential candidates in the 1997 election. Another reputable woman whose activities popularized the cause of participation for women in the political process of Kenya is Wambui Otieno (House-Midamba 1996).

During this same period, Ugandan women opted for a united front to enable them to participate and demand their rightful place in the struggles to democratize their country. They formed national organizations resulting in a formidable Ugandan women's movement. The movement is considered one of the most coordinated and active social movements in Uganda, and one of the most effective women's movements in Africa (Tripp 2001).

The women's movement in Uganda was highly successful in influencing the democratization process in Uganda, mainly because the movement was autonomous and could set a far-reaching agenda and freely select its leaders (Asiimwe-Mwesige 2006). Such capacity set them apart from other women organizations on the continent that were engaged in the democratization processes. Some of these other organizations were linked to political parties within their countries. They included the 31st December Women's Movement in Ghana (affiliated with the National Democratic Congress); the Tanzania Women's Union, Umoja wa Wanawake wa Tanzania (UWT) (affiliated with Chama Cha Mapinduzi [CCM]); and the Women's League of Zambia (affiliated with the United National Independence Party). Although some notable members of the Ugandan women's movement including Winnie Byanyima, Margaret Sekaggya, Julie Sebutinde, Joyce Mpanga, and Sarah Kiyingi Namusoke were linked with President Museveni, they maintained autonomy from the government political party (Tripp 2001, pp. 18–21).

Two outstanding achievements of the women's movement in Uganda include their role in getting Ugandans to accept and vote for the multiparty system as opposed to Museveni's one-party system. Secondly, through extensive research, they shamed political parties that were considered gender insensitive from the level of their constitutive documents such as manifestoes and party constitutions to programmer documents and party activities.

The African Diaspora and Women Struggles for Peaceful and Democratic Societies

The events that led to Africans' struggle for democratization and post-conflict peacebuilding caused changes in the composition of the African Diaspora. First was the expansion of the membership to now include those who fled into asylum from authoritarian rule and from violent conflicts and others that migrated outside of the continent in search of greener pastures as a result of the bad economic policies, violent conflicts, and state-sponsored human rights abuses. Secondly, there was a shift in the traditional location of the African Diaspora as in the Caribbean, the United States, and the former colonial European states. Their new sites included cities in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and some scattered across the African continent. Finally, the majority of the African Diaspora were direct victims or had

experienced the causes of their dispersal, unlike the first group that were mostly descendants of victims/survivors.

These changes notwithstanding their interest and engagement in the struggles of the continent did not change. Indeed, the new African Diaspora as described by Zeleza (2008), Horst (2008), Brinkerhoff (2008), Shindo (2012), Turner (2013), and Coffie (2018) have been at the forefront of the struggles for democracy and post-conflict peacebuilding of states and demand for governments that respect the rights of the people. Below is a summary of three cases of how the African Diaspora has supported African organizations and attempted to make African interests a priority in their respective countries, which in turn has contributed some successes in the women's struggles for more peaceful and democratic societies in Africa.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Congolese Diasporas (mainly in the UK and Belgium) contributed significantly toward the democratic struggles of women and youth organizations in Congo (Garbin and Godin 2013). Specifically, the Congolese Diaspora support of Congolese women is noted to have led to the increasing involvement of Congolese women in the field of women's rights advocacy in DRC, and this opened up new paths of political action for the women. From 2011 to 2012, for instance, many Congolese Diaspora (in UK, USA, Canada, France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, and other countries) mobilized themselves to protest against the government of Joseph Kabila. These protests took the form of public demonstrations which were often accompanied by "pickets in front of Congolese embassies or iconic sites of power such as 10 Downing Street and the Stock Exchange in London, the White House in Washington DC or the International Criminal Court in the Hague" (Garbin and Godin 2013). Also, on the days of the protests, young British Congolese were handing out leaflets to passers-by, explaining the violence against women and the injustice meted out to women in the deadly conflict in the eastern part of the DRC. Some of these leaflets (and placards) showed very graphic images of dead or wounded bodies of civilians, and, in particular, women victims of rape and sexual violence. The most dramatic of these Congolese Diasporas protest took place on 14 December, 2011 in London which ended with a visit to the British Prime Minister's Office.

Some of the women organizations established by the Congolese Diasporas to support the struggles of domestic Congolese women include the Collectif des Femmes Congolaises pour la Paix et la Justice (Collective of Congolese Women for Peace and Justice (CCWD) and Forum Interrégional des femmes Congolaises (the Interregional Forum of Congolese Women for Development) (FIREFEC). They also formed an umbrella group known as "All together for the cause of Congolese women" (which connected Congolese female activists, non-Congolese feminist organizations, NGOs, and trade unions to fight for the liberation of women in Congo). The significant involvement of Congolese Diaspora women in the field of women's advocacy in Congo opened up new paths of political action. It gave a voice to Congolese women, resident in Congo, to demand their rights in the society. A significant representation of this engagement was the 2010 "World March of Women" in Bukavu (DRC) attended by 20,000 Congolese women activists from the UK, Belgium, other European countries, and women living in the DRC.

The immense contribution of the Rwandan Diaspora toward peacebuilding, democratization process, and Rwanda's achievement as the country with the highest numbers of female members of Parliament is well documented (Burnet 2008a, b; Shindo 2012; Turner 2013; Hunt 2014). The leadership of Rwandan women in politics and civil society are not confined but spread throughout the state "from the smallest village council to the highest echelons of the national government" (Hunt 2014, p. 154). Rwanda's post-genocide ruling party, the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) and President Kagame are primarily credited with the achievements in the area of women empowerment. However, a confluence of factors contributed to the rapid progression of female representation in Rwanda and the subsequent passage of women-focused legislation. The factors include the distorted gender ratio resulting from the genocide, the implementation of the gender quota system, and a governmental system that both appoints and supports high-level female officials. The role of the Diaspora is also considered a significant factor in Rwanda's success in rebuilding, democratization and high-level female participation in all facets of governance.

It is important to note that the RPF as a liberation movement birthed in the Diaspora enjoyed support from members of the Diaspora during the war and post-war periods. Similar to the case of Liberia, members of the Rwandan Diaspora, mainly young people, travelled around the world to raise funds and seek international support for the RPF (Hunt 2014; Turner 2013). While the Rwandan Diaspora has not specifically identified women organizations for support, their contribution in the form of social and economic remittances toward the needs of the people and propelling the country in achieving high levels of female empowerment is remarkable. For example, in 2008, on the 15th Anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide, the Rwandan Diaspora launched the "one-dollar campaign" (NYT 2008) aimed at raising funds to provide shelter for genocide survivors in different parts of Rwanda. According to the data, the majority of the survivors of the Rwandan Genocide were women (HRW 1996), and so were significant beneficiaries of projects and programs aimed at reintegrating and rebuilding the lives of survivors.

Finally, this section reviews the role of the Somali Diaspora in the creation of a stable and democratic regime in the Somaliland region. In May 1991, General Mohamed Siad Barre's government fell, and, amidst the chaos in Somalia, Somaliland declared itself independent. Although not internationally recognized as an independent state, Somaliland is relatively peaceful and has built basic democratic institutions, whereas the rest of Somalia continues to experience violence and lacks stability.

Somalis in the Diaspora have been major actors in the reported success case of Somaliland. They have engaged in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Somaliland for several decades (Menkhaus 2007; Kleist and Hansen 2007; Kleist 2008; Horst 2008). The initial resistance to the Siad Barre regime was organized in the Diaspora, with the Somali National Movement (SNM) created in London, UK, and Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in the early 1980s (Hammond et al. 2011). The Somaliland community in the UK organized demonstrations at the Somali embassy in London and informed the wider western public about the atrocities being committed by the

Somali regime. Moreover, members of the Diaspora remitted funds to SNM, equipment, and medicine and lobbied western governments to end their political and financial support for the Barre regime.

In the early 1990s, the Somali Diaspora mostly focused on contributing to post-conflict peacebuilding, and on securing international recognition for Somaliland. During outbreaks of violence, for example, the "Airport War" 1994–1995, the Diaspora tried to mediate between the opposing subclans, primarily by working through women's clan affiliations, thereby countering the substantial importance of paternal clan loyalties (Hammond et al. 2011).

The Diaspora continues to influences politics in Somaliland in many ways. They are engaged in efforts at attaining statehood for Somaliland. Also, the engagement of the Diaspora is evident in the high number of politicians and ministers who are from the Diaspora. Some studies estimate about half of MPs are from the Diaspora, and the current president Muse Bin Abid is a UK Citizen. Members of the Somali Diaspora have also targeted and engaged women heads of local NGOs to challenge traditional gender roles in Somaliland. The women leaders within civil society groups use their position to lobby the political establishment and the international development community about the rights and opportunities of women in Somaliland society. However, as reported by Hammond et al. (2011), "despite women's involvement in civil society, they have not yet been a significant presence in formal politics. Only a few women have served as cabinet ministers, and very few have served in Parliament or on local councils."

From the discussion above, it should be noted that besides bringing services and "development," the Diaspora also believes that by engaging with and strengthening civil society, they play an important role in challenging and keeping an eye on the political establishment and monitors that the government stays on the path of democratization and respect for human rights.

African Women and the Struggles for Sustainable Livelihoods in Africa

In Africa, the interaction of traditional restrictions on women property rights, weak governance, and violent civil conflict have perpetuated gender discrimination and women poverty in those countries. Thus, the struggle for economic development and sustainable livelihoods has manifested as collective mobilization of women against any forms of oppression and the pursuit of more equitable gender relations. This section, therefore, highlights the women's movement of the Delta State of Nigeria and the affirmative responses by both Corporations and the Nigerian government.

For 2 years, the Niger Delta Women for Justice (NDWJ) protested against activities of the Federal Government of Nigeria and Multinational oil giants Shell and Chevron-Texaco. They organized and participated in protest marches and occupied oil terminals and flow stations in Nigeria. The protests first started between July 2002 and February 2003 when the women occupied Chevron/Texaco's export terminal and several flow-stations in Nigeria, portraying themselves naked as their

weapons. From July to September 2003, some women again seized oil facilities which led to a shutdown of the oil companies during the period of the women's protest. The protest by the women finally ended through a combination of Nigerian and US military intervention upon the insistent demands of the oil companies (Turner and Brownhill 2004).

At the beginning of the protest, there were about 600 Itsekiri women, part of a community located in the Delta State of Nigeria (Turner and Brownhill 2004, p. 5). Subsequently, the composition of the protest expanded to include women from three different ethnicities: the Ijaw, Itsekiri, and Ilaje. The ages of the women ranged from 30 to 90 (Okon 2002). They joined forces against what they termed as corporate irresponsibility of multinational oil companies in the Niger Delta.

Some policy responses included the negotiation of 26 demands with corporate management. These included a demand that the government and oil companies meet with rural women and establish a permanent tripartite body (multinationals, state, and women) for the resolution of problems related to oil operations. They signed a memorandum of understanding committing Chevron/Texaco to the following policies: the upgrading of 15 members of the communities who are contract staff to permanent staff status; the employment of one person from each of the five Ugborodo villages every year; the building of one house each for the elders – the Oloja Ore and the Eghare-Aja – in the communities; provision of vital infrastructure; a monthly allowance of at least N50,000 (U.S.$375; 1 Naira = U.S.$0.0075) for the elderly aged 60 years and above; and the establishment of income-generating schemes" (Turner and Brownhill 2004, p. 67).

Collective women mobilization against oppression and subordination has a long history in Nigeria. Famous among them is the Abeokuta Women's Union, with key players such as Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, who mobilized to oust an oppressive *Alake* (chief) in 1948. The post-independence era also recorded women's collective action, particularly against military dictatorship (Mama 1995). The women's protests of the Niger Delta were unprecedented because never have women numbering in their thousands taken on Multinational Corporations in Nigeria. Their demand was for justice to right the wrongs against the people, particularly women of the oil-producing communities, eliminate poverty, and halt the destruction of the environment to ensure a sustained livelihood for themselves and generations to come. Similar to other collective mobilization, the Niger Delta women's 2-years movement yielded affirmative responses such as employment quotas aimed at remedying past discriminations against the communities.

The African Diaspora and African Women Collective Actions for Sustainable Livelihood

One of the main challenges to a sustainable livelihood, particularly for African women, is structures that facilitate practices of economic inequalities. These include issues of access to land for women, issues of equal employment opportunities, access to education, and access to capital. As noted above, collective women mobilizations

and the resultant affirmative actions are essential to overcome structural challenges that have implications on sustainable livelihood of the community.

Thus, this section highlights the sharing of information, ideas, and knowledge, also known as social remittances (Levitt 1998; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves 2011; Coffie 2018), between the Diaspora and African women organizations/individuals as well as activities that have contributed to the struggles against patriarchy and ideological biases. These exchanges have resulted in creating spaces for developing the advocacy capacities of women organizations/individuals, providing platforms for amplifying the struggles for women across the continent and in the Diaspora. This section discusses two main avenues where such exchanges have occurred. They are the Pan African Women Organization (PAWO) and the noninstitutionalized exchanges among African woman and Diaspora scholars.

PAWO is a major organization in African women's struggle for empowerment and advocacy for affirmative actions for addressing gender discrimination and women subordination. PAWO, formally known as the Conference of African Women (CAW), is Africa's first and oldest women's organization founded in 1962. It was designated the AU's Specialized Agency dedicated to gender equality and women's empowerment in 2019. PAWO contributed to the liberation struggles from colonialism, apartheid and demanded spaces for women in the continental integration agenda of the OAU and AU. POWA's approaches include creating awareness of the positive contributions of women in the struggle for national liberation and national development. PAWO successfully advocated for the AU's institutionalization of July 31st as the day of the Pan African Woman.

Membership of PAWO extends to women of the African Diaspora, and the organization engages with issues concerning African women in the Diaspora as well. To formalize the organization's engagement with the Diaspora, it changed its name from CAW to PAWO at its annual congress in Dakar 1974 and designated the 31st of July as the Pan-African Woman's Day. Similar to the Pan-African movement, PAWO recognizes unity between women in Africa and the Diaspora as an effective strategy to overcome marginalization and the exclusion of women from history and for the recognition of their role in society. In 2013, to mark its 50th Anniversary, PAWO and UNESCO launched the "Women in African History: An E-Learning Tool" project for promoting gender equality by highlighting women of significance in the history of Africa and its Diaspora. The inclusion of Diaspora women and highlighting their contribution to struggles against women's marginalization in Africa and in the Diaspora is significant. For example, the document includes Amy Ashwood Garvey, who pushed for the inclusion of women in the Pan African Movement. She was one of the only two females at the famous 1945 Manchester meeting of the movement; however, most historical accounts of Pan-Africanism are silent on her role (Reddock 2014; Rasoanaivo-Randriamamonjy and Serbin 2015).

The exchange of ideas between the Diaspora and Africans was instrumental and contributed to the (O)AU's transformation into a promoter of gender equality on the continent. These include the adoption and institutionalization of the AU Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2004) also known as the *Maputo Protocol* to enhance women's human rights

across Africa (Reddock 2007; Byanyiam 2008; Haastrup 2013). Specifically, the Diaspora's contributions to the adoption and implementation of the AU Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa is linked to scholarship by Diaspora and their collaborative efforts with feminist scholars on the continent. Many feminists scholars, both in the Diaspora and their partners on the continent use publication mediums such as the journal, *Feminist Africa*, as an essential voice in support of feminists' actions in African countries. Through such publications, these scholars also propagated advocacy for the enhancement of issues concerning the promotion of African women's rights and brought these to the attention of the international community.

Following the discussion, the section notes both PAWO and scholars' engagement with the Diaspora have provided relevant sources of knowledge that support the information politics of the women movement and individual women in Africa. Together they contributed toward raising awareness about the marginalization and exclusion of African women and to the development of continental and regional Conventions and Protocols for advancing women/gender empowerment. The chapter notes that African women's organizations and individual women use such conventions and protocols as the bases for the demand of their states and communities for gender affirmative actions (Ikpeze 2011) and challenge the patriarchal biases of the political and economic structures affecting their livelihoods.

Conclusion

There is significant scholarship on the contributions of the African Diaspora toward development in African countries. Still, specific studies on the participation of the African Diaspora toward the struggles of women in Africa are however minimal. Meanwhile, the limited literature available reveals that the African Diaspora has been a supportive ally of African women in their quest for political, social, and economic rights in their respective societies.

The African Diaspora has, through various spheres, contributed to the general struggles for independence, democratization and good governance, and sustainable livelihood in Africa. Through summaries of the specific involvement of African women in these general struggles on the continent, the chapter highlighted the varied contributions of the African Diaspora toward these causes. Generally, the Diaspora has implicitly and explicitly served as relevant sources of legitimacy and first-hand knowledge that support the information politics of the women organizations and NGOs. Through linkages and exchanges with women organizations and individuals in African countries, the African Diaspora has engaged in economic and social remittances toward political processes and the dismantling of structures that constrain the empowerment of women in Africa.

Finally, as revealed in the selected cases of women's struggles, variations exist in the strategies they used in these struggles. Similarly, the contribution from the African Diaspora toward the efforts of women on the continent is varied. The African Diaspora, as broadly conceived in this chapter is neither homogenous nor

static. Thus, the engagement of the African Diaspora with the struggles on the African continent, particularly those related to women struggles, cannot be isolated from the general struggles of economic and political independence and as well as a quest for respect for rights of people on the continent. The chapter, therefore, attempted a brief overview of the specific instances of the African Diaspora's contribution toward the struggles of women within the continent. Most importantly, this chapter was not about revealing a linear and comprehensive history of the formation of the African Diaspora or their engagement with women's struggles on the continent. Instead, the focus is to identify some specific cases of Diaspora involvement with women's organizations/individuals struggles against domination, discrimination, subordination, and for political and socioeconomic liberties.

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