

**“WOMEN, THE MISSING LINK IN CONFLICT  
RESOLUTION IN AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA  
AND LIBERIA.”**

By

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## DECLARATION

The work submitted in this Thesis is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. It has not already been accepted for any degree, and is also not being concurrently submitted for any other degree.



**Onsare Rose Moraa**

9<sup>th</sup> November 2011

Date

I endorse the declaration by the candidate.



**Amb. Professor Maria Nzomo.**

12<sup>th</sup> Nov 2011

## ABSTRACT

Conflict has been a part of the world from time immemorial. The need for not only conflict resolution but effective conflict resolution has been the preoccupation of the African continent and indeed the world at large. It has been argued that the world today is more in conflict than at peace even though the world has not experienced a major war.

Matters conflict resolution have overtime been left to men. This is due to the fact that many decision making roles have been handled by men in many communities. Even though men have been largely charged with conflict resolution, women have been stereotyped as peacemakers, thought of as being more pacific than men and often symbolized as paragons of goodness and tenderness owing to their natural nurturing role as caregivers. This stereotyping is reinforced through socialization patterns that promote women primarily as child bearers and good wives, caregivers, arbitrators of conflict and peace promoters in the family and community. The stereotyping has also been attributed to the entrenchment of patriarchy in the communities.

The literature on women's participation in conflict resolution and peace processes takes two approaches the first one being their representation and participation at high political levels and in decision-making mechanisms for conflict resolution and the second one being the disparate collection on women's grass-roots peacemaking initiatives.

This research therefore analyze the participation of women in the conflict and conflict resolution processes in Kenya and Liberia with a view to highlighting the absence of women as one of the main issues affecting the realization of effective conflict resolution.

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my father, Onsare Ondari, whose work ethic and resilience inspired me to remain focused on my goal towards the achievement of academic excellence.

This thesis is also dedicated to my mother, Hellen Onsare, who has supported me all through my life and taught me that even the largest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time.

This thesis is also dedicated to my late grandmother, Esther Bwana, who passed on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2011 in her sleep. She was a strong believer in women's participation in leadership roles at every level of the community structures.

Finally this thesis is dedicated to all the women who have lived through and participated in conflicts as well as conflict resolution processes in whatever form.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
AI	Amnesty International
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CREAW	Centre for Rights and Awareness
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DDRR	Disarmament, Demobilization, Reinsertion and Reconciliation
ECK	Electoral Commission of Kenya
ECOMIL	ECOWAS Mission in Liberia
ECOMOG	Economic Community Cease-Fire Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU EOM	European Union Electoral Observation Mission
FIDA KENYA	Federation of Women Lawyers – Kenya
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IFMC	Inter-Faith Mediation Committee
INPFL	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
IPPG	Inter-Parliamentary Parties Group
IR	International Relations
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KHRC	Kenya Human Rights Commission
KNHCR	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
LWI	Liberian Women Initiative



MARWOPNET	Mano River Women's Peace Network
NARA	National Accord and Reconciliation Act
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NDPL	National Democratic Party of Liberia
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NSC	National Security Committee
OAU	Organization of African Unity
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
ODM-Kenya	Orange Democratic Movement – Kenya
PRC	People's Redemption Council
PNU	Party of National Unity
SLDF	Sabaot Land Defence Force
SMC	Standing Mediation Committee
TWP	True Whig Party
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia
UN	United Nations
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNSCR 1325	United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security
WAFF	Women associated with fighting forces (WAFF)
WILL	Women in Liberian Liberty
WIPNET	Women in Peace Building Network
WPI	Women's Peace Initiative

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The support of my family, most notably my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Onsare, my sisters, Rispah and Jade, my brothers Joram, Areba and David, my aunties and uncles and grandparents has been a morale booster for me.

Lastly, I offer my regards and blessings to all those who supported me in any respect during the completion of the project.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

#### 1.1.1 Background

Conflict is a gendered activity: women and men have different access to resources, power and decision making before, during and after conflicts. The experience of women and men in situations of tension, war, and post-conflict reconstruction is significantly different. Approximately 80% of today's civilian casualties are women and 80% of all refugees and internally displaced people worldwide are women and children. As emphasized in the Platform for Action of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, "while entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex".<sup>1</sup>

In October 2000, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The Resolution specifically addresses the impact of war on women and women's contributions to conflict and sustainable peace. In July 2001 the Security Council re-affirmed this commitment by calling for the inclusion of a gender perspective in the implementation of peacekeeping mandates.<sup>2</sup>

First, conflicts brutally reveal the discrimination suffered by women and girls during peacetime, since the different types of abuse and violence against women in conflict situations simply reproduce and amplify what they experience in their communities. Secondly, conflicts destroy the social fabric, dislocate families and communities, increase

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<sup>1</sup> Assembly debate on 23 June 2004 (21st Sitting) (see Doc. 10117, "Report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men", rapporteur: Ms Cliveti). Text adopted by the Assembly on 23 June 2004 (21st Sitting).

<sup>2</sup> Amy Smythe, "Promoting the Role of Women in Peace Implementation: Observations from the MONUC", Published in *Challenges to Peace Implementation – The UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, A Joint Project of the Training for Peace and African Security Analysis Programmes at Pages 111-121.

material poverty, increase vulnerability to violence, and deconstruct the social codes and norms governing how to live together.<sup>3</sup>

However, there is a third way to look at the impact of conflict on women's roles, and it is inspired by women's contributions to peace and security initiatives. From this point of view, generally-accepted ideas about male and female roles are stood on their heads. This third approach takes into account the many ways women maintain the viability of refugee and displaced persons camps, ensure peaceful cohabitation, protect their families, recreate family and community ties, and somehow hold their communities together while the men are at the front, in exile or affected by the loss of traditional economic activities.<sup>4</sup>

The two countries which are the focus of this research have been selected because of the conflict they have experienced and more so because they are also both undergoing a truth justice and reconciliation process to ensure that they do not relapse into a conflict situation again. This research seeks to explore the participation of women in the conflict, the conflict resolution process as well as the truth justice and reconciliation process.

## **Kenya**

The violence that engulfed Kenya following the controversial 2007 presidential elections brought an end to the long held myth that Kenya is a peaceful and stable nation. The conflict revealed deep ethnic divisions that have potential to grow into a full fledged conflict.<sup>5</sup> Over 1300 lives were lost during the violence while an estimated 500 000 people were forcefully

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<sup>3</sup> [www.un.org/womenwatch/documents/Background\\_Paper\\_Africa](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/documents/Background_Paper_Africa).retrieved on4/9/11 at 12.00pm at page 17

<sup>4</sup> Ibid page 18

<sup>5</sup> Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) 2008, "On the Brink of precipice: A human rights account of Kenya's post-2007 elections violence" at page 8.

displaced.<sup>6</sup> The violence pitted ethnic communities against each other as the conflict took ethnic dimensions.

The most vulnerable groups within any conflict situations are women and children. Kenyan during the 2007/2008 post election crisis was no different. There were widespread human violations visited upon men, women and children but more so women and children. There was widespread rape in the city's informal settlements during the election violence. Women, men, boys, and girls were sexually assaulted as part of the unrest.

In a remarkable demonstration of rapid response diplomacy, the international community united behind an African-led mediation effort, which produced a power-sharing agreement between the presidential contenders and their political parties. Many Kenyan civil society groups mobilized to help contain and halt the violence in their communities, while calling for a political resolution to the crisis. The international diplomatic response to help broker a peace agreement, along with the grassroots peacemaking efforts that saved lives and helped push Kenya's leaders to the negotiating table, prevented what could have been more widespread violence or even the country's collapse into civil war.<sup>7</sup>

This research seeks to explore the various interventions that were put in place in Kenya to address the post election crisis, the level of participation if at all by women at all levels of decision making and conflict resolution strategies and further to interrogate the impact if at all of the participation of women or the lack thereof in the conflict resolution measures put in place.

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<sup>6</sup> Government of Kenya, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Post-Elections Violence" (Inquiry Commission) (2008) page 24

<sup>7</sup> Friends Committee on National Legislation, "Kenya: Temporary Cease fire or Lasting Peace?"; Policy Brief 2009, [www.fcnl.org](http://www.fcnl.org)

## Liberia

Liberia on the other hand is the classic portrait of a failed state.<sup>8</sup> Today, Liberia is one of the world's poorest countries. According to World Bank indicators, 46% of its population is below the poverty line compared to 37% for the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa; the population of Liberia is generally undereducated, with a literacy rate of 44.1%; and Liberia faces a debt that cannot be realistically repaid.<sup>9</sup> According to the United Nations 2010 Human Development Report, Liberia is ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in the list of least developed countries.

On December 24, 1989, Charles Taylor led the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) in an invasion of Liberia, thus beginning a civil war that would last more than seven years. After experiencing a decade of Doe's military regime and the failure of the 1985 elections to create real change, many Liberians supported Taylor's plan to oust Doe.<sup>10</sup> The brutality that followed the 1985 attempted coup, however, foreshadowed the civil unrest that would accompany Doe's ouster.<sup>11</sup>

In 1991, ECOWAS and the NPFL agreed to establish the interim government that brought Charles Taylor to power. But Taylor was never able to consolidate power nor did he respect the rule of law or the democratic rights of Liberians. Warring factions mushroomed. As a reflection of the high level of fragmentation, at the time of the Abuja Peace Accord of 1995, nine political groups signed the agreement with the government of Charles Taylor.<sup>12</sup>

Charles Taylor's rule came to an end in 2003 through international diplomatic efforts. Upon leaving power, Taylor was exiled in Nigeria. He was later indicted for war crimes by a United Nations tribunal in Sierra Leone. In March 2006, Nigerian authorities arrested Taylor

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<sup>8</sup> John-Peter Pham, "Liberia: Portrait of A Failed State." 224 (2004).

<sup>9</sup> World Bank, Liberia at a Glance (2004) at [http://worldbank.org/data/countrydata/aag/lbr\\_aag.pdf](http://worldbank.org/data/countrydata/aag/lbr_aag.pdf). (last visited March 7, 2005).

<sup>10</sup> Stephen Ellis, "The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War." 78-79 (1999).

<sup>11</sup> The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Liberia: A Promise Betrayed." 24-25 (1986).

<sup>12</sup> Mersie Ejigu, "Post Conflict Liberia: Environmental Security as a Strategy for Sustainable Peace and Development." Working Paper No. 3, 2006 at Page 5

and sent him to Sierra Leone where the former Liberian ruler was handed over to the UN. He was recently moved to The Hague for trial by the International War Crimes Tribunal. If the tribunal convicts Taylor, Britain has agreed to jail him.<sup>13</sup>

The destruction wrought by the war had indeed been immense. It killed tens of thousands of Liberians, and wounded or maimed hundreds of thousands more. About 1.8 million Liberians were displaced at several points during the war, mostly internally – this from an overall population of under 3 million. The death toll, in fact, has been estimated at representing six per cent of the population, while estimates of the displaced at peak periods accounted for more than 50 per cent of the population. Hundreds of villages and towns in Liberia were plundered and destroyed, and a third of all displaced women and under-aged girls were raped by the warring militias, with more than 50 per cent of these by at least two attackers.<sup>14</sup>

Women are looking to seize opportunities to educate and empower themselves laying the basis to challenge patriarchal decision-making structures that constrain their active participation in decision making in all spheres of life. At the grass roots level, they have always made major contributions, maintaining family networks and knitting communities together. They are also recognized as capable professionals in the world of business and science. In addition, women are prominent players in civil society, as activists they continue to have a decisive role in shaping the global human rights agenda.

### **1.1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Despite successful efforts to bring peace to conflict areas, women have not been active participants in the process. United Nations Resolution 1325<sup>15</sup> was properly hailed as a road

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid* 10

<sup>14</sup> Lansana Gberie, "Liberia: The 2011 elections and building peace in the fragile State", Institute for Security Studies, Situation Report, Date issued: 5 October 2010

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/sc/1325.html> - retrieved on 25th March 2011

map to promote, among other steps, women's full engagement in peace negotiations, gender balance in post-conflict governments, properly trained peacekeepers and local security forces, protection for displaced women and accountability for sexual violence.

The role of women in conflict resolution and peace building has been long neglected. In many conflict situations women's participation is conceived as an issue of equitable representation yet legitimate conflict resolution requires an inclusive and participatory process which is part of a reform process in which decision-making power is transferred to every citizen on the basis of equality.

Swanee Hunt of the Women Waging Peace program at Harvard University opines that common sense dictates that women should be central to peacemaking, where they can bring their experience in conflict resolution to bear.<sup>16</sup> As such, women are expected to articulate and negotiate favorable terms for women and gender equality based on their experiences as single heads of households, community leaders, humanitarian and social workers, and peace activists.

It is thus no accident that Resolution 1325 places a strong emphasis on the increased representation of women in peace-related functions. One-third of the eighteen-article resolution is devoted to measures that increase women's participation in peacemaking, peace negotiations, and peacekeeping operations, and as special representatives and envoys of the secretary-general.

What is, then, the exact nature and impact of "contributions" that women bring to the peace process? Is it the creation of a reconciliatory environment for negotiated settlements, or has it influenced the political processes in which peace agreements are implemented? And if

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<sup>16</sup> Swanee Hunt and Cristina Posa, "Women Waging Peace" 2001  
<http://www.orthodoxwomensnetwork.org/storydetail.cfm?ArticleID=19>– retrieved on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2010



evidence does support that women's participation in peace processes promotes social transformation, which entails gender equality and sustainable peace, what would be the mechanism of such change?<sup>17</sup> Therefore the problem of this study is the establishment of the role played by women in conflict resolution processes in Kenya and Liberia with a view to determining if it did impact on the successfulness of lack thereof of conflict resolution.

The particular research questions for the study are as follows:

1. How have the theories of war and peace treated the participation of women in conflict and conflict resolution processes?
2. What conflict resolution processes were employed in resolving the Kenya and Liberian conflicts?
3. To what extent have women participated in conflict resolution processes in Kenya and Liberia? What was the level of participation and impact?
4. What is the distinction between conflict resolution processes that are devoid of women's participation and those that include women?
5. What can be done to increase women's participation in conflict resolution processes in Africa?

### 1.1.3 Objectives of the study

The objective of the research is to establish the role that women have been playing in conflict resolution in Africa and more specifically in the Kenyan and Liberia both countries having come just recently come out of conflict situations.

Further the researcher seeks to prove that indeed women's participation in conflict resolution is the missing link to successful conflict resolution in Africa. This is the main reason behind the choice of the Kenyan and Liberian conflicts to be analyzed, as it provides an interesting

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<sup>17</sup> Nakaya, Sumie, "Women and gender equality in peace processes: from women at the negotiating table to postwar structural reforms in Guatemala and Somalia". Global Governance, October 01, 2003 - <http://www.accessmylibrary.com/article.../women-and-gender-equality.html> - retrieved on 25th March 2010

perspective of internal conflict and the interventions that came from far and wide seeking a resolution of crisis both in a timely manner and with a view to ensure the reduction of civilian casualties as much as possible. The researcher also seeks to explore what part women played in the resolution of the crisis and at what level this involvement was undertaken.

#### **1.1.4 Justification of the study**

Much has been written about conflict and conflict resolution. Much has also been written with respect to analysis of the effectiveness of conflict resolution processes the world over. The increase of conflicts in the world calls for more effective measures being taken to ensure that the resolution of conflict is not only successful but also long lasting.

The effectiveness of conflict resolution largely depends on the inclusiveness of the process in terms of ensuring that all concerned parties have been informed and consulted about their part in the conflict as well as their suggestions and opinions on resolution. This entails consultation of both genders even when it is largely known that men have from time immemorial been charged with and were responsible for all decision making in their communities.

This research seeks to prove that women's roles in conflict are more than being victims and combatants but also stretch to being considered for participation at the conflict resolution table. The researcher espouses throughout this research that women are equally deserving of participation in conflict resolution processes and the fact that they are missing from conflict resolution is indeed one of the major causal factors of the lack of effective resolution of conflicts. The research also seeks to highlight women's many roles in conflict resolution.

The functions of women in conflict resolution processes are complex, reflecting the multiple roles women have in society. Like women's lives, such functions must be viewed

holistically. Women are peace educators inside the family, in schools, in women's and mixed organizations, and elsewhere. Their networks and knowledge of local affairs make them effective early warning monitors, alert for rumours, increasing tensions, a sudden influx of weapons and others sign of potential conflict. Their sometimes extensive kinship links, social expectations and training can make women highly effective mediators. Their status as outsiders, the perception that they are not primary stakeholders in conflict, also reveals their role as negotiators and originators of new approaches to peace.<sup>18</sup>

The research herein will add to the body of knowledge in terms of the role of women in conflict resolution specifically in Kenya and Rwanda as well as analysing the impact women would have had in the conflict resolution process had they been included and or participated in cases where they were not. The theories explored in this research, which are largely feminist theories, argue that women have indeed from time immemorial participated in conflict resolution. The said theories highlight the fact that the struggle for equal rights was championed essentially by women, and is indicative of the peace-seeking struggle by women, as there could be no peace with one side so disadvantaged.

The need for research into the question of gender in conflict resolution cannot be assumed and/or ignored. Indeed the research questions in this research will not only result in adding to the texts exploring the participation of women in conflict resolution but will also explain the need for development and enactment policies and legislation to direct action by governments and states in addressing this question. The fact that governments and state action in ensuring effective conflict resolution must have due regard to the representation of gender is but a must and cannot be wished away.

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<sup>18</sup> [www.gppac.net/documents/pbp/4/2\\_intro.htm](http://www.gppac.net/documents/pbp/4/2_intro.htm) retrieved on 11/9/11 at 12.45pm

The time has come to analyze the participation of women in conflict resolution and to determine if their inclusion has served to increase the chances of long lasting solution to conflicts.

### 1.1.5 Scope of the Study

This research will cover two countries being, Kenya and Liberia. The main reason for the selection of these two countries is mainly attributable to the fact that the two countries have come out of conflicts of varying degrees and their women had roles to play both in the conflict as well as the resolution process.

In Kenya, owing to the limited time that the researcher has to undertake the research will be focused in Kibera within Nairobi district. Kibera is an informal settlement within the outskirts of the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi. Kibera is arguably the largest slum in Africa and possibly the world. The slum is made up of members of some of Kenya's largest tribes including the Kikuyu, the Luo, the Kamba, the Luhya and the Kisii among others.

The slum has always been, during every election year, a violence hot spot. This has overtime been attributable to the extremely poor and low standards of living, the lack of the bare necessities of life as well as intricate ethnic divisions between the inhabitants of Kibera. The 2007 general election in Kenya was arguably the most viciously fought in the country's history. The election saw the eruption and escalation of violence beyond what the country has seen in any election year. The study will therefore focus on the activities in Kibera during the election and after the election and more specifically the activities in Kibera when the post election violence erupted.

With respect to Liberia the researcher will look at literature on the conflict in the country and ascertain the hot spots of the violence. A lot of the activities in resolving the Liberian conflict

were centered in Monrovia, the outskirts of Monrovia as well as the peace processes in Accra Ghana when the intervention of West African states took the peace negotiations to the West African nation. Ghana was selected owing to its long held and accepted reputation that the nation is a haven of peace.

## **1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1.2.1 Introduction**

This literature review looks at some academic researches done on the links between gender and conflict resolution. It is not an exhaustive study of the literature but rather, this literature review focuses on works primarily from peace and conflict studies books and journals and reports from human rights watch dogs.

### **1.2.2 Review of various literature**

A lot has been written on conflict resolution and indeed the causes of conflicts. It is however clear that as much as there has been attention focused on the conflict resolution in Africa, being the region with arguably the most number of conflicts in the world, little has been written on women as active participants in the conflict resolution process. A lot of the literature has focused on women more as victims of the conflicts rather than active participants in the conflict resolution process.

*Is Violence Inevitable in Africa*<sup>19</sup> offers a survey of perspectives on collective violence and conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. The volume covers many subjects, such as ethnic conflict, decentralization, power-sharing, and peace-building. Political science is the primary disciplinary touchstone, but the chapters include anthropological, economic, and sociological perspectives.

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.goliath.ecnext.com/.../Is-Violence-Inevitable-in-Africa.html> - retrieved on 25th March 2010

Mary Anne Fitzgerald<sup>20</sup> not only explores the problems faced by Southern Sudanese Women on a daily basis but also provides a stage from which their voices can be heard. Fitzgerald notes that women and children in Southern Sudan suffer the combined impact of underdevelopment and war more than any other segment of the population. Eighty per cent of all war-related deaths have been unarmed civilians, and most of these casualties were women and children. At Chapter 3, Fitzgerald discusses the status of women in the Sudanese society. She notes that all Sudanese cultures are vigorously patriarchal and polygamous, which leads to a marked disparity between males and females.

While some men are supportive of the promotion of women's issues, many are resistant to the idea that men and women should have greater equality. Negative attitudes are known to have undermined women's ability to pursue promotion within their field. There are instances of women turning down appointed or elected posts because they feel they have neither the energy nor the inclination to handle gender prejudices on a daily basis. The division of labour directly affects women's vulnerability in times of conflict. The women's role forces them to go far beyond the safety of their homestead in search of sustenance, including relief rations from emergency feeding centres. This exposes them to physical risk from rape and assault by hostile parties.

At Chapter five, Fitzgerald notes while discussing women's role as decision-makers that the women believing that their men are threatened by their empowerment chose to focus on practical issues such as water, food and education. The writer notes in the chapter that women who have access to a functioning support system and to information technology have proved that they can organize effectively. A good example is when a Nairobi-based refugee group lobbied, successfully, to halt the importation of Sudanese oil into Kenya. The author

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<sup>20</sup> Mary Anne Fitzgerald, "Throwing the Stick forward, the impact of war on Southern Sudanese Women", African Women for Peace Series (UNIFEM & UNICEF) 2002

concludes this chapter by noting that living in war conditions has had mixed effects on women's ability to enter the mainstream of existing power structures.

Chapter six analyzes the impact of war on women and girls. The author makes special mention of sexual violence which women face even in peace time but is usually augmented during wartime. The implications of sexual violence are also some of the main culprits that have resulted in the increase in HIV/AIDS infections. An analysis of the chapter reveals the fact that women are more or less left to fend for themselves during war as the conflict induced shortage of men affects them even after their husband have died. The vulnerability of women is more glaring because they are not only fending for themselves but they are also fending for their children.

The literature on sexual violence in armed conflict indicates that rape and violence against women and girls prior to, during and after conflict is extensive in scope and magnitude throughout the world. Sexual violence is defined by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee<sup>21</sup> (IASC) Task Force on Gender and Humanitarian Assistance as "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic a person's sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm or physical force, by any person regardless of relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work".

Sexual violence, particularly rape, is often used as a weapon of war to destabilize families, groups and communities; to carry out ethnic cleansing and genocide; to instill fear in populations in order to dampen resistance and/or incite flight; as a form of punishment and torture; and to affirm aggression. The destabilization of families and communities can contribute to other forms of violence, including domestic violence. Sexual exploitation, trafficking and sexual slavery tend to increase in armed conflict.

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.ochaonline.un.org/InterAgencyStandingCommittee/Default.aspx> - retrieved on 24th March 2010

Women and girls who are recruited, often by abduction, into combat are in many cases forced to provide sexual services and/or are subjected to forced marriages. Refugee and internally displaced women and girls, separated from family members and traditional support mechanisms, are also particularly vulnerable. Government officials, civilian authorities, peacekeepers and aid workers have been reported to demand sexual favours in exchange for necessities - safe passage, food and shelter. Limited monitoring of camp security also renders women and girls vulnerable to sexual violence and forced combat. Security issues hinder women and girl's access to services as well. When schools are destroyed for example, and children have to travel long distances, girls are more likely to stay at home in order to avoid the increased risk of abduction, sexual violence and exploitation.<sup>22</sup>

The literature on sexual violence in armed conflict indicates that rape and violence against women and girls prior to, during and after conflict seem to be extensive in scope and magnitude throughout the world – with reported incidents in conflicts in Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Whilst there is limited comparative analysis and understanding about where sexual violence may be more or less prevalent and why, it is widely recognized that sexual violence against women in conflict is usually reflective of pre existing patterns in society. Generally speaking, rape and violence against women is a good proxy indicator of rising tensions and incipient conflict. Much of the literature also emphasizes the persistence of violence and exploitation in the 'post'-conflict, reconstruction phase.<sup>23</sup>

At Chapter seven, Fitzgerald delves into the issues of conflict resolution. She starts by noting that by stereotyping women as peace makers is misleading just as it would be wrong to say that all men want to pursue war. The writer also points out that women are valuable

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<sup>22</sup> Mary Anne Fitzgerald, "Throwing the Stick forward, the impact of war on Southern Sudanese Women", African Women for Peace Series (UNIFEM & UNICEF) 2002

<sup>23</sup> GSDRC, 2009, "Conflict and Sexual and Domestic Violence against Women", Helpdesk Research Report, Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, Birmingham



mediators in disputes between different lineages because of their dual affiliation through marriage. Women are enthusiastic participants in peace movements and conferences as well as because in many ways war exacts a higher toll from women than men.

The author rightfully points out that it is not enough that women have a voice in conflict resolution but that they must be part of its implementation. Though there has been progress in the inclusion of women in peace talks, the author notes that there is quite a long way to go. The United Nations paved the way in recognizing women's input in peace processes by adopting resolution 1325 in October 2000 which as the author rightfully notes was the first real tangible step towards linking women to issues concerning peace and security.

The inclusion of women in peace processes is essential as their participation contributes to the fulfillment of human rights norms of equal participation; allows for the articulation of different experiences and needs of women in conflict; and results in women as active agents in post-conflict recovery processes. There are a few examples of women's involvement in formal processes and its positive impact.

In Somalia, for example, women activists formed a 'Sixth Clan' (comprised of the five main clans involved in negotiations) and were successful in gaining access to the negotiating table. Their representation and advocacy at the table in turn led to the inclusion of quotas for women in new governance structures. In Afghanistan, the participation of women at the Bonn negotiations had a profound impact on the post-conflict environment – with the inclusion of women's rights in the Constitution and the inclusion of women in political decision-making roles.

Women have managed to play a critical role in informal negotiation processes as well – often preparing the ground for negotiations and bridging divides. Women's organizations and other international organizations and donors have also implemented training and capacity building workshops for women – to impart conflict mediation and resolution skills; and the skills

necessary for political participation. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that these are exceptions and women are still largely marginalized in peace processes and as international mediators.<sup>24</sup>

Fitzgerald's work is precise in its allusion to the fact that women through not necessarily more committed than men to the greater good of their communities or less susceptible to partisan agendas, have experiences that are unique enough to provide a different perspective to peace keeping. This is attributable that most of the women have first hand experience of the brutal consequences of conflict.

My perspective of Fitzgerald's work is that it is insightful as it provides a rather clear insight into the conflict in the Sudan and further brings out women's experiences during the war and their aspirations and desires for peace which they are interested in getting involved in achieving. The work highlights the interest and clamour for peace that the women of Sudan have even in the face of great adversity that they face. That where they have participated in seeking an end to conflict for example, in Wunlit<sup>25</sup> they were able to spearhead preaching peace, tracing abducted children and returning them to their families among other initiatives which were successful. However, an understanding of women in conflict should include more than just an understanding of women as victims.

Throughout history, women have been shapers of conflict as well. They have both contributed to conflict and been very effective at resolving it. There is a tendency to view women as peaceful because they are less likely than men to initiate or participate in violence. However, they do often fill supporting roles that prolong or escalate intractable conflict.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.gsdrc.org/index.cfm?objectid=31348DF8-14C2-620A...> – retrieved on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Joshua Goldstein<sup>26</sup> argues that masculine war roles depend on feminine roles in the war system, including mothers, wives, and sweethearts. Examples of this occur throughout the first and second world wars. In World War I, more than 25,000 US women served, nursing the wounded, providing food and other supplies to the military, serving as telephone operators, entertaining troops, and working as journalists.

Mary Borden<sup>27</sup> who set up a hospital unit at the war front from 1914 to 1918 wrote “just as you send your clothes to the laundry and mend them when they come back, so we send our men to the trenches and mend them when they come back again. You send your socks ... again and again just as many times as they will stand it. And then you throw them away. And we send our men to the war again and again ... just until they are dead.”<sup>28</sup>

However, there are also extremely compelling examples of women successfully working towards lasting peace and reconciliation.

One example of women reacting to intractable conflict is the women of Rwanda. Pro-Femmes Twese Hamwe<sup>29</sup> (women together for women) is an example of a successful and innovative Rwandan women's group. Their peace action campaign is designed to give women the resources to create a more peaceful society. Their efforts include constructing houses, creating local women's dialogue clubs and training and educating women. One of the organizers, Suzanne Ruboneka<sup>30</sup> said, “The Minister gave us the field, and we are going to plant seedlings and then we will harvest the results.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Goldstein, Joshua S., “War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa”, Cambridge University Press, September 2001

<sup>27</sup> [http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/womenww1\\_one.htm](http://www.firstworldwar.com/features/womenww1_one.htm) - retrieved on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010

<sup>28</sup> Opcit

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.peacebuildingportal.org/index.asp?pgid=9&org...> – retrieved on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.aaw.cc/PDF\\_files/Rwandas%20Women2.pdf](http://www.aaw.cc/PDF_files/Rwandas%20Women2.pdf)– retrieved on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010

<sup>31</sup> Hamilton, Heather B., “Rwanda's Women: the key to reconstruction, The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance.” retrieved from <http://www.jha.ac/greatlakes/b001.htm> May 10, 2000 - on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Many conflict resolution researchers and practitioners are calling for women to take an even more active role in peacemaking. Cheryl Benard<sup>32</sup>, research director at the Boltzmann Institute and a consultant with the RAND Corporation said "the discussion concerning women's roles in war and peace also tends to focus largely on the issue of how war affects women and on the role they can play after the termination of wars and conflicts. One issue that should receive greater prominence is women's potential role in preventing wars and avoiding rifts, social inequities and mismanagement. Assuming women are more peace-oriented, more risk-aware and better at communication, women's increased participation in politics and in decision making should have a salutary effect and should be given more weight."

Elise Boulding<sup>33</sup> however takes a different view. She argues that women's traditionally marginalized role has given them the space to be creative and inventive, especially in the field of peacemaking. But, she also argues that their contributions have often been overlooked. In addition to individual women, Boulding writes about international networks of women. Boulding points out that the constraining effects on women, notably of their relegation to the household and the private spaces of society have been overstated.

What tends to be ignored is the historical reality that women's work of feeding, rearing, and healing humans, building and rebuilding communities under conditions of constant change, including war, environmental catastrophe, plague, and continual push-pull migrations, has produced resources and skills within women's cultures that have been critical not only to human survival but to human development. Indeed, perhaps because women tend to be victimized by intractable conflicts more than men, and gain less from their continuation than

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<sup>32</sup> Benard, Cheryl, "Assessing the Truths and Myths of Women in War and Peace." The United States Institute of Peace Conference Perspectives on Grassroots Peacebuilding: The Roles of Women in War and Peace, September 14, 1999.

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.tc.edu/centers/epe/.../MorrisonElise%20Boulding\\_22feb08.doc](http://www.tc.edu/centers/epe/.../MorrisonElise%20Boulding_22feb08.doc) –retrieved on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010

do men (who gain jobs, prestige, honor, challenge, excitement, travel, in addition, of course, to mortal risk), women may be in a particularly strong position to work for peace.

While there are many positive results of women's work for peace in informal peace processes, they are seldom included in formal peace processes. Women are usually not represented among decision-makers and military leaders, the usual participants in these processes. As well, formal peace processes fail to take gender perspectives into account. Questions relating to differential impacts on women and men, the voices that are listened to, and the gathering of sex-disaggregated statistics are rarely part of these initiatives.

Women have also been involved in regional and international peace efforts. The Women's Peacemaker Programme of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation provides regional consultations that bring together women from different sides of conflicts for dialogue to deepen their understanding of conflict resolution and peace.<sup>34</sup> The African Women's Committee on Peace and Development, launched in 1999, and Femmes Africa Solidarité have focused on promoting conflict resolution in a number of African countries.

Women in Black, a women's peace network that started in Israel has inspired similar peace activities around the world, for example, in Cyprus and the former Yugoslavia. The tactic in all cases remains the same: women – usually from both Women, Peace and Security sides of a conflict – stand together in silent vigil as a way to proclaim to State and military leaders “you are not doing this in my name”.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> United Nations Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) Working Group on Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration, “Harnessing institutional capacities in support of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants” - 2000.

<sup>35</sup> United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration - ochaonline.un.org/OchaLinkClick.aspx?link=ocha&docId=1154389 – retrieved on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Donna Pankhurst<sup>36</sup> writes that for many years, women's roles in war and other types of violent conflict were quite invisible throughout the world. Accounts of war, through news reporting, government propaganda, novels, the cinema etc, tended to cast men as the 'doers' and women as passive, innocent, victims. In poor countries wars were not portrayed in quite the same way, but stories of the courage and bravery of men as fighters have also tended to eclipse the active roles which women have played. Pankhurst also opines that a whole range of different women's experiences have made it clear that there are many different ways in which women live through wars: as fighters, community leaders, social organizers, workers, farmers, traders, welfare workers, and in many other roles.

It is also Pankhurst's considered opinion that the relative minority who joined actual armies (as nurses, administrators, or even fighters), were even sometimes able to persuade their political movements to take seriously the demands of women for improved rights, and to accept women's political representation and other forms of rights in the post conflict situation. Pankhurst gives an example of the allocation of places for women on the local Resistance Committees in post-1986 Uganda as a good example, with the establishment of a Ministry for Women also being a common occurrence in many post conflict situations.

Further in Chapter 3 while discussing women and war, the author opines that in the postwar peace women have often suffered a backlash from government and society against their newfound freedoms, and they have been forced 'back' to kitchens and fields, as in Zimbabwe, Namibia, Eritrea and Mozambique, for instance.<sup>37</sup>

It is also the author's considered opinion that the challenge to gender relations often becomes too great for patriarchal societies to maintain in times of peace, and women find their

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<sup>36</sup> Donna Pankhurst, "Women, Gender and Peace building", August 2000 published in the Centre for Conflict Resolution Working Paper 5 by the Department of Peace Studies at the University of Bradford's Department of Peace Studies

<sup>37</sup> *Op cit* at Page 6

historical contribution marginalized in both official and popular accounts of war, and their freedoms in peacetime restricted or removed.

The author also makes reference to the concept of gendered peace which she discusses extensively in her 1997<sup>38</sup> publication. The author notes that this peace settlement is one where governments and / or warring parties establish new constitutions or peace processes which marginalize the needs of women (perhaps by neglect) or effectively limit or restrict the rights of women (in some cases explicitly through the legal system).

At Page 7, the author points out that the nature of warfare has changed over the years such that it has become even less possible for women to have a *choice*, in any sense, about whether they are innocent victims or courageous participants. According to the author, women often find that they have to actively participate, even in violence, or suffer dire consequences, including death. Where there is no front line, as conflict is fought out in people's homes, with light weapons, and where the reason for fighting is the very existence, or at least presence, of people with a differently defined identity (usually ethnic), women have been placed on one side or another whether they actively choose this or not. Women who are seen to 'break out' of the ethnic identity ascribed to them, by having mixed marriages, or being members of human rights organizations for instance, are often targeted for particular censure, if not actual violence (as has happened in several parts of former Yugoslavia).

In many wars or conflicts women are not normally leaders or directly responsible for violence as men, yet they suffer high rates of injury and death (although not usually as high as for men) and the particularly brutal war injury of rape (always with much higher frequency than men). Rapes committed during war have received more attention in recent years, but also seem to be on the increase. The proliferation of light weapons has also

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<sup>38</sup> Pankhurst, Donna and Pearce, Jenny, "Engendering the Analysis of Conflict: Perspectives from the South", in Afshar, Haleh (ed), *Women and Empowerment*, Routledge, 1997.

increased the threat of rape for women, as it is harder to resist male violence when faced with a gun<sup>39</sup>. Common effects for women, in addition to the direct suffering caused by the rapes themselves include: social stigmatization<sup>40</sup>; physical and mental injury, as many war rapes are multiple and accompanied by other forms of violence; illness (from sexually-transmitted diseases, usually with negative impacts on reproductive health); as well as death itself (from HIV/AIDS, or assault because of the stigma attached to rape survivors<sup>41</sup>).

In her continued analysis of the subject of war and gender, the author states clearly that during and after conflicts, women tend to bear a much greater burden than men for the care of survivors, and always for children. This is evident in most conflict and post conflict scenarios as the women are often left to carry the main burden for ensuring the provision of food and other tasks of caring for children and the wounded whilst also taking on a heavy burden of keeping social and political activities going where men are taken to fight in armies away from their homes. The realities of many communities in which conflicts occur, from remote rural villages in which most of the food has to be grown and/or gathered, to big cities where all kinds of resourceful innovations are developed are that women have to ensure that their families have food, and to some degree also care for them when they are sick.

In the concluding section of this chapter, the author points out that perhaps the most difficult question which faces those concerned with gender issues in post conflict situations, is not the ways to assess the extent of women's suffering, but how women fit into the complex picture of innocence and guilt, and what this means for post conflict peace building. According to the author, this is a profoundly difficult question to ask with regard to men, and there are

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<sup>39</sup> Turshen, Meredith, 'Women's War Stories', in Turshen, Meredith and Twagiramariya, Clotilde (eds), *What Women Do in Wartime*, Zed Press, 1998: 7; Abdel Halim, Asma, 'Attack with a Friendly Weapon', In Turshen, Meredith and Twagiramariya, Clotilde (eds), *What Women Do in Wartime*, Zed Press, 1998: 85- 100.

<sup>40</sup> Twagiramariya, Clotilde and Turshen, Meredith, 'Favours' to Give and 'Consenting' Victims. The Sexual Politics of Survival in Rwanda'. in Turshen, Meredith and Twagiramariya, Clotilde (eds), *What Women Do in Wartime*, Zed Press, 1998: 101-117: 104

<sup>41</sup> Twagiramariya and Turshen, op cit: 110-111



great contrasts in the extent to which this involves outsiders. Nonetheless, where peace building is to take gender seriously, it also has to have an analysis of the *variety* of women's roles in conflict. The author also opines that the danger in ignoring women's active participation, as well as their collusion, in organized violence is that false assumptions might be made about the potential role of women in peace and thereby resulting in ineffective resolution of conflict.

At chapter 4 on women, gender and peace building, the author writes that the common association of women, and the female gender, with peace, suggests that policies to work with women ought to be fundamental to peace building for the process to be effective. It is notable that assumptions are always made that women have special qualities which equip them better than men for peace, and better for peace than for war. There are many examples of instances where women have courageously intervened in battles to force peace and this includes in Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. Women have also taken up opportunities for peacemaking between groups of warring men<sup>42</sup>. Under such circumstances they sometimes call on and express values, behaviour and codes which are explicitly associated with their gender.

The author also notes in the said chapter 4 that there is need to include women in politics by way of gender mainstreaming in all policy contexts associated with post-conflict rehabilitation, development and peace building. At its simplest, a gender-aware analysis requires the question 'Does this policy affect women and men differently?' to be asked of all policies and, if the answer is affirmative, to explore what can be done to prevent or correct women's disadvantage. Asking this question in the author's opinion may lead to a complete re-think in the way a policy is developed and implemented, or may only require a minor adjustment<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Berhane-Selassie, Tsehai, 'African Women in Conflict Resolution', Center Focus, 120, March 1994

<sup>43</sup> Op cit 40 above at Page

### 1.2.3 Theoretical Framework

#### a) Feminist theory<sup>44</sup>

The Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical, or philosophical discourse, it aims to understand the nature of gender equality. It examines women's social roles and lived experience, and feminist politics in a variety of fields, such as anthropology and sociology, psychoanalysis, economics, literary criticism and philosophy. While generally providing a critique of social relations, much of feminist theory also focuses on analyzing gender inequality and the promotion of women's rights, interests, and issues.

Themes explored in feminism include art history and aesthetics, discrimination, stereotyping, objectification (especially sexual objectification), oppression and patriarchy. This theory will be relevant in this study as it will be instrumental in helping the researcher to analyze the stereotypical assignments that society has given women with the result of excluding them from conflict resolution.

The feminist theory espouses that women should be included in all decision making and therefore the nexus between women and conflict and the feminist theory is indeed the role that women can play in resolving conflicts which they have also from time to time participated in as active combatants and/or victims. War and conflict are in the analysis of conflicts and renowned scholars gendered activities. The exclusion of women from conflict resolution literature is a thorn in the flesh of many a feminist who feel that this is an outright denial and neglect to acknowledge the roles played by women in conflict resolution.

The feminist theory will in this research be used to explain why women should and must be accorded their rightful place in conflict resolution literature. Further it is the ultimate goal of

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<sup>44</sup><http://www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/> – retrieved on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2010

this research is to prove that indeed the feminist theory is on point in terms of how the effectiveness of conflict resolution has been attributable to the inclusion and active participation of women in the process. The feminist theory therefore is key in proving that the involvement of women in conflict resolution is indeed already occurring and in fact has been key in evaluating the participation of women in conflict and women's role.

In understanding this theory we need to define two key terms -- 'gender' and 'patriarchy' -- that are central to feminist discussion. 'Gender' is not a synonym for the term 'sex', or the biological difference between men and women, but instead "refers to the complex social construction of men's and women's identities...[and] behaviors...in relation to each other."<sup>45</sup> Fundamental in the discourse on gender is the notion of power and power dynamics between genders."<sup>46</sup>

Simply put, using the concept of gender, feminists analyze relations of power involving men and women, how that power is exerted, and how that interaction has been habitually, historically, and socially implemented over time (though not as a result of inherent or biological differences of either sex).

Lorraine Code<sup>47</sup> helps us to understand the second term critical to feminist theory, 'patriarchy', which she defines as a system in which females are subordinate to men, in terms of power and status, and which is based on the belief that "it is right and proper for men to command and women to obey."

Patriarchal roots, she notes, can be found as far back as Aristotle's assertion that women's biological inferiority is akin to her reasoning capabilities; later such systems became

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<sup>45</sup> Tricia Ruiz, "Feminist Theory and International Relations: The Feminist Challenge to Realism and Liberalism", Page 3

<sup>46</sup> Diana Thorburn, "Feminism Meets International Relations." SAIS Review V20, I2 (Summer-Fall 2000): 2. Expanded Academic ASAP, Infotrac (15 November 2003).

<sup>47</sup> Lorraine Code, "Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories". (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), Page Net library/eBook Collection (29 November 2003).

perpetuated by “the Judaeo-Christian world as under most other world religions.” The Feminist theory says that most of the key players in most fields including IR, such as diplomats, policymakers, heads of government, and academic professionals, have been, and still are, males who come from patriarchal social and political backgrounds. Thus, discussions within IR remain largely constrained by those who lack consideration of women’s roles in world politics (because they have not been trained to value and include the perspective of women).

Feminists also apply the terms ‘gender’ and ‘patriarchy’ when analyzing how situations have been shaped to exclude women from the international political arena. For example, Eric M. Blanchard<sup>48</sup> refers to a ‘catch-22’ situation, in which a candidate seeking political office will highly depend on past military service as qualification for the position, putting women at a disadvantage since they generally have less military experience. From this example alone, we can understand how the areas of domestic politics, the military, and even the topic of education are issues with respect to which feminists would argue that gender and patriarchy do not allow women equal access to power positions in world politics.

Feminist scholarship might suggest, for instance, that when men dominate the field of study the general tendency is for the theoretical frameworks used to make sense of the world to be rooted in masculine conceptions of what works and when. Women, who have traditionally been relegated to a more minor role in the power struggles of both national and international politics, do not figure prominently in the models by which our understanding of world politics revolves. In the norm the way we conceptualize, operationalize, and test our hunches, therefore, reflect this traditional masculine view of the discipline.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Eric M. Blanchard, “Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security Theory.” *Signs* v28, i4 (Summer 2003): 1289. Expanded Academic ASAP, Infotrac (15 November 2003).

<sup>49</sup> Patrick M. Regan and Aida Paskeviciute, “Feminism, Social Constructions and the Democratic Peace: Women’s Access to Politics and Peaceful States”

One way to think about our models and evidence in the field of international relations is that they reflect our social construction of our referent world. One can infer from this line of reasoning that if these mainstream, traditional male cadres in the study of international interactions could take into consideration the views of women then the theoretical frameworks, the operational tests, and the policy implications would differ from contemporary standards and would more accurately reflect conditions obtaining in the world. Essentially, it is the masculine social constructions that are driving not only our research, but, by extension, our results and the policy recommendations and implementation that might derive from them.<sup>50</sup> This type of constructionist argument — that is often adopted in feminist scholarship — presents a theoretical challenge to contemporary models of the democratic peace in that the explanatory models, which are subject to considerable debate, may simply reflect a male dominated sub-discipline.

What the core of international relations scholars sees as the dominant form of power relationships that drive international interactions is thus a function of the common social orientation of those 'doing IR'. In a sense, white men have constructed a version of the referent world that is deemed important to understanding outcomes in foreign policy, and they have left out non-white and women's perspectives.<sup>51</sup> Empirical research, it follows, cannot help but fall prey to the social constructions at the heart of the questions asked, the understanding of the causal mechanisms, the methods used to test hypotheses, and the inferences that result.

The feminist use of the social construction critique is specific and penetrating, focusing not only on the general notion of social constructions in determining research agendas but also pointing to an explanation for the uniformity in mainstream study of international relations.

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<sup>50</sup> Unger, Rhonda A., 1989. 'Introduction'. in Rhonda A. Unger, ed., *Representations: Social Constructions of Gender*, Amityville, NY: Baywood Publishing.

<sup>51</sup> Henderson, Errol Anthony, "*Afrocentrism and World Politics: A New Paradigm*", 1995, Westport, CN: Praeger.

This, at its core, is a philosophy of science issue that challenges us to think more closely about the creative stages of our theoretical development, and to develop alternative explanations for observable outcomes.<sup>52</sup>

This challenge, it seems, goes well beyond the notion that all things are social constructions and therefore knowledge is subjective, to argue rather persuasively that at the most basic level knowledge generated without due attention to the breadth of our social environment is at best incomplete. These two different ways to think about the world — a feminist and a traditional male — moreover, would therefore give different explanations for observable behavior and different prescriptions about alternative forms of policy and how they are arrived at.

Many feminists charge that the power structures in society are dominated by men, that the role of women is marginalized and that it is necessary to direct scholarly attention to explain why this is so.<sup>53</sup> Here the implication is that if the perspectives of feminist and gender theories were more carefully integrated into the discipline we would know different things about the world of international relations, politics and how they influence the world, and presumably we would therefore articulate and implement different policies.

As with many theories, “feminist theory” reflects a wide range of perspectives generating many internal debates concerning how it should be represented. The one clear and undisputed issue that surfaces out of the analysis of the feminist debate and conflict is that just as international relations discourse has over the years ignored the input of women and non-whites, so has the studies on conflict and the input women have in the conflicts themselves as well as working at resolving them.

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<sup>52</sup> McGuire, William J., “The Yin and Yan of Progress in Social Psychology: Seven Koan”, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 26 (December), 1973, 446-456.

<sup>53</sup> Sylvester, Christine, “Feminist Theory And International Relations in a Postmodern Era”, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

## b) Feminist Legal Theory<sup>54</sup>

Feminist legal theory is one of the most important movements in legal scholarship today. Following the birth of the women's movement in the late 1960's and early 1970's, feminist litigators and scholars trained their focus on the application of legal doctrine to issues affecting women. The field of feminist legal theory was formulated in the early 1980's when feminist law professors broadened the scope of courses that were formerly called "Women and the Law," and "Sex-Based Discrimination."

Feminist legal theory is an analysis and critique of women's position in patriarchal society (i.e., an examination of the nature and extent of women's subordination). Feminist legal theory essentially has two elements. The first is an exploration and critique of theoretical issues about the interaction between law and gender. The second is the application of a feminist perspective to areas of law such as reproduction, battering, pornography, prostitution, rape, employment. The theme of the course is the relationship between law, gender, and equality.

Feminist legal theory, therefore, is necessary to expose the masculine nature of jurisprudential theory and practice which will in itself illustrate the difficulty in achieving gender justice in the absence of legal and institutional reform.<sup>55</sup> This notwithstanding, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has been significant in spearheading strides towards transforming the law to recognise and incorporate the specificity of the female subject. Nevertheless, this is still not enough as there still stands

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<sup>54</sup> <http://www.harrysnews.com/FeministLegalTheory.htm> - retrieved on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2010

<sup>55</sup> Natalie Renée Beulah Persadie, "A Critical Analysis Of The Efficacy Of Law As A Tool To Achieve Gender Equality And To Address The Problem Of Domestic Violence: The Case Of Trinidad And Tobago", A thesis submitted to The University of Birmingham for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

for consideration, the need to not only consider the female subject but also to incorporate the views of the female subjects as well.

Combining feminist legal theory, which exposes the male bias of law, with feminist critical theory, which offers a space from which women can “emancipate” themselves, allows a comprehensive process of reflection and emancipation. Proponents of this school of thought espouse that idea of rights, as currently obtains, is fundamentally conceptually flawed, as its concept presupposes ‘man’ as its subject, thereby completely bypassing women and other marginalised groups and perpetuating violence and exclusion of women from important discourse that includes dispute resolution, discrimination and subordination of these ‘others’.

Feminist legal theory is therefore based on the belief that the law has been instrumental in women’s historical subordination which has extended to the positions power and the deliberate exclusion of women from their occupation on the basis of gender discrimination. The project of feminist legal theory is twofold. First, feminist jurisprudence seeks to explain ways in which the law played a role in women's former subordinate status. Second, feminist legal theory is dedicated to changing women's status through a reworking of the law and its approach to gender.

This theory will be especially useful in analysing the ongoing truth justice and reconciliation process in Kenya, which is entrenched in the law, and establishing to what extent that women have been incorporated.

### c) **Critical Theory**<sup>56</sup>

This school of thought emerged from the work of German theorists collectively known as The Frankfurt School. The roots of Critical Theory are directly centred in the creation of The

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<sup>56</sup> [http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical\\_theory](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Critical_theory) - retrieved on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2010



Institute for Social Research and the social thinkers who promoted the Idealism of Karl Marx.<sup>57</sup>

Critical theory therefore is the examination and critique of society and culture, drawing from knowledge across the social sciences and humanities. The term has two different meanings with different origins and histories; one originating in sociology and the other in literary criticism. This has led to the very literal use of 'critical theory' as an umbrella term to describe theoretical critique.

Critical Theory has made an important contribution in terms of analysing political struggles and examining the various conditions of oppression and cultural transformation. Beginning with the early Frankfurt School thinkers to Marcuse in the 1960s and Habermas in more recent times, updated approaches today across diverse grounds— feminism, race theory, and globalization, among others. However, despite the fact that technology has indeed been a fundamental medium of culture and politics and many discussions touch upon the topic, the link between a robust critical political theory and technology has been a relatively unexplored territory<sup>58</sup>.

Marcuse produced a rather dystopian account of technocracy in the 1960s, but with the exception Andrew Feenberg who has most consistently worked on this theme, a positive connection between Critical Theory and technology is still largely missing from the literature today.<sup>59</sup> Yet, to the extent that any concrete theory of political agency and identity would have to address their material conditions, and if these conditions are thoroughly mediated by

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<sup>57</sup> Jessica Studer, Kari Carlson, and Chris Logan, "Critical Theory" retrieved from [www.soc.iastate.edu/sapp/Critical.ppt](http://www.soc.iastate.edu/sapp/Critical.ppt) on 28th April 2011 at 4.12pm

<sup>58</sup> J. Paris and W. Wilkinson, "Women Carrying Water: At the Crossroads of Technology and Critical Theory". Forthcoming in: *New Critical Theory*, eds. Rowman and Littlefield, New York: 2001 – page 1

<sup>59</sup> Lorenzo Simpson (1995), "Technology, Time, and the Conversations of Modernity", New York: Routledge.

technology, then such a theory cannot evade the issue of the politics and cultural meaning inherent in technology.

The Critical theory is a social theory oriented toward critiquing and changing society as a whole, in contrast to traditional theory oriented only to understanding or explaining it. In studying conflict and women's participation in conflict resolution processes, this theory will offer the insight needed to understand the stereotypes that African cultures have attached to women participating in conflict resolution.

#### **1.2.4 Hypotheses**

This research endeavors to prove the following hypotheses;

- Inclusion of women in conflict resolution is necessary so as to ensure fruitful resolution processes;
- That women have a long history of being peace makers and that they are the missing link in effective conflict resolution in Africa;
- That women have an equal right as men to participate in conflict resolution processes;

#### **1.2.5 Organization of Variables**

In the research, the role of women in conflict resolution as the missing link to achievement of effective conflict resolution will be explored and demonstrated by experiences, examples and mechanisms involving two variable one being independent and one dependent. The independent variable is the women while the dependent variables are the various conflict resolution processes, the cultural diversity of the people and the environment prevailing.

I hypothesize that the level of women's participation has an effect on the success rate of effectiveness of the conflict resolution processes. Women are an independent variable because they remain a constant while modes of dispute resolution change from time to time. Further I hypothesize that with increased participation by women in the conflict resolution processes, women relying on their experiences in conflict situations will bring help and hence spearhead the conflict resolution process.

The conflict resolution processes on the other hand are dependent variables because depending on other variables like the environment in which the conflict occurs, the people concerned, the cultures at play as well as other social concerns will vary and hence the reason that they are dependent on the independent variable being the women.

### **1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **1.3.1 Introduction**

This chapter covers the research methodology that will be employed in this study. It includes the unit of analysis, research methodology, research design, data collection, as well as analysis method used.

#### **1.3.2 Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis in Kenya will be the women who reside in areas that were seriously affected by the post election violence. This is primarily in the informal settlements of Nairobi.

#### **1.3.3 Sampling Procedure**

The researcher will take a small quantity of the targeted group of women in these informal settlement areas. They will be accessed through community based organizations working in the areas as well as religious organizations which were instrumental in aiding people during the conflict and after the post election crisis in Kenya.

With respect to Liberia, the researcher will rely solely on secondary data that can be found in articles, journals and researches done on the Liberian conflict. This information will aid the researcher in ascertaining how many women actually participated in the conflict resolution following the conflict in Liberia as well as during the conflict itself.

#### **1.3.4. Data Collection**

This study will make use of both primary and secondary data.

##### **a) Primary Data**

It will be collected through questionnaires distributed to women in major areas that were severely affected by the post election violence in Nairobi notably the slum areas and the areas surrounding the Central business District of Nairobi City. Questionnaires will mainly be used to gauge the level of participation of the women in conflict resolution and all the peace processes that were initiated thereafter.

Further, the questionnaire will also seek to uncover the inherent strengths and weaknesses of the conflict resolution mechanisms that are already in place. Data will also be collected through interviews with personnel from organizations in Kenya which were involved in the humanitarian efforts during the conflict and the peace efforts after the conflict.

This will help the researcher collect views on the level of women's participation as well as the way forward. The researcher will also conduct these interviews with individuals identified. While the interviews will not be formal or structured, the kinds of questions that will be asked will start off with broad questions and then there will be a follow up on the interviewee's responses, to capture her or his meanings and to avoid imposing the researcher's meanings on the interviewee.

##### **i) Population**

As explained under the scope of study section, this study is a case study of Kenya and Liberia as these two countries have had interesting but yet different responses from the international

community following the conflict with Kenya's being probably the interesting case study swiftest. It therefore my intention to study the process that followed the interventions in Kenya and Liberia so as to determine the level of participation of women and therefore prove my hypothesis that indeed it is important to include women in the conflict resolution processes.

## **ii) Questionnaire Design**

The questionnaire will be designed to meet the objectives of the study. A short questionnaire with simple and concise statements will be used as this will be easy to use for both the respondent and the researcher. The questionnaire will encompass a series of questions presented in Appendix A. The questionnaire was developed through the following processes to ensure the accuracy:

- a) Reviewing the related academic literature, articles, and as well previous relevant researches to identify pertinent variables to the study;
- b) Drafting questionnaire by basing on identified variables;
- c) Pre-testing the translated questionnaire to ensure that the questionnaire is understandable to the respondents.

## **b) Secondary Data**

It will include data obtained from human rights reports from various national and international bodies who have reported on the conflicts and the effect they have had on women as well as the input women had had in terms of resolution of the conflict as well as fuelling the conflict. This will also provide a comparative analysis of the processes in Kenya and Liberia with a view to see how the countries have included women in the conflict resolution processes and what the results, if any, of that inclusion have been. This secondary data will largely be retrieved from the internet and various reports from organizations like the

Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International as well as various scholarly articles written by scholars in the field.

### 1.3.5 Data Analysis Methods

The data will be analyzed using an inductive approach allowing the prevailing pattern, themes and categories of the research findings to emerge from the data rather than be controlled by factors predetermined prior to their collection and analysis<sup>60</sup>. For this research, the source of data which will be analyzed inductively is the data from the interviews.

The analysis of the questionnaires will comprise of labeling the data, creating a data index, sorting the content of the data into meaningful categories, and determining a list of themes. The constant comparative method will be used in conducting the analysis. It requires the researcher to take one piece of data (e.g. one interview, one statement or one theme) and compare it to all other pieces of data that are either similar or different. During this process, the researcher begins to look at what makes this piece of data different and/or similar to other pieces of data.

This method of analysis is inductive, as the researcher begins to examine data critically and draw new meaning from the data (rather than a deductive approach which defines at the outset what will be found).<sup>61</sup> This method is a continuous process in which inductive category coding is simultaneously merged with a comparison of observed phenomena. In constant comparative analysis, data is recorded, categorized and compared across categories. Patton describes the process of categorization as one of constantly revisiting the logical explanation and the concrete data whilst looking for significant relationships.

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<sup>60</sup> Patton, M.Q, "How to use qualitative methods in evaluation", Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1987.

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.rangahau.co.nz/analysis/83/> - retrieved on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2010

## **CHAPTER 2: THE CONFLICTS**

### **2.1 THE LIBERIAN CRISIS**

#### **2.1.1 Introduction**

Liberia is a West African with the dubious history of having endured a series of wars throughout the 1980s and the 1990s. The country has been ravaged by years of war that have seen the country's development index plummet and all advances geared towards improving human life decline steadily. The genesis of the civil strife in Liberia has revolved around ethnic concerns with various ethnic groups struggling to wrestle control from the other.

#### **2.1.2 History of Liberia's Civil Wars**

Liberia covers an area of 111 370 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 15 050 km<sup>2</sup> is water and the remaining 96 320 km<sup>2</sup> land. It is bordered to the south by the North Atlantic Ocean, Côte d'Ivoire to the east, Sierra Leone to the northwest and Guinea to the northeast. The capital, Monrovia, is the country's largest city. Other important cities are Buchanan and Harper, situated on the coast, and the inland trade centre of Yekepa, near the border with Guinea. Administratively, Liberia is divided into 15 counties.<sup>62</sup>

Liberia represents a case where brutally violent ethnic conflict characterized the onset of the wars. During the first war (1989- 1990), the violence committed by Samuel Doe's Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) against the Gio and Mano ethnic groups and Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) against the Mandingo and Krahn ethnic groups was exceedingly vicious, evoking claims of genocide from some in the international community.<sup>63</sup> The NPFL managed to survive the successive wars of 1992-1993 and 1994-1996 and Charles Taylor was popularly and overwhelmingly elected as president in 1997.

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<sup>62</sup> UNEP, "Desk Study on the Environment in Liberia", 2004.

<sup>63</sup> Andrew T. Young, "Costly Discrimination and Ethnic Conflict: The Case of the Liberian Civil Wars", Department of Economics, University of Mississippi, February 2008.

Charles Taylor's rule was not notable in terms of overt ethnic favoritism and/or violent conflict. Apparently circumstances made profitable, for Taylor, a permanent abandonment of ethnicity as a margin along which to gain/maintain power. Glaeser<sup>64</sup> observes that, "The history of hatred suggests that when people are willing to listen, political entrepreneurs can create hatred" and "[b]y telling tales of past and future crimes, people can become convinced that some out-group is dangerous." The tales may or may not be true. Considering the fact that the verification of such tales is costly, then political entrepreneurs can exploit this fact towards their own selfish ends.

Why was ethnicity initially a profitable margin for Taylor to exploit and then subsequently unprofitable?

As with all conflicts, the biggest tragedy in the Liberian Conflict has been the suffering and misery of the civilians. Scores have been injured, maimed and killed. Yet many more have been left with varying degrees of disabilities owing to the brutalities visited upon them. The conflict in the country resulted in the displacement of scores of Liberians from their homes and many of them found refuge in the neighbouring countries. As in a typical conflict scenario, Liberians were unable to enjoy their basic human rights.

The genesis of the first conflict in Liberia was the entrance of Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe into the Executive Mansion in the Liberian capital, Monrovia, with a small group of armed officers from the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and their subsequent overthrowing of the regime of William Tolbert in dramatic fashion and butchering Tolbert in his own bed. Samuel Doe's said group of soldiers then declared themselves the People's Redemption Council (PRC) and Samuel Doe declared himself chairman and head of state.

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<sup>64</sup> Glaeser, Edward L. 2005. "The Political Economy of Hatred" *O.J.E.* 120, February 2005, pages 45-86.



Doe's PRC heavily recruited his government and military from his own ethnic group, the Krahn, representing only 5 percent of Liberians<sup>65</sup>. The PRC also fostered a large patronage network tied to Mandingo commercial interests<sup>66</sup> and the Konneh. The Mandingo people are a Muslim group with extensive trade networks who began to settle in the Liberian territory in the early 19th century from Guinea but are to date still widely-viewed as foreigners. They are also among the smallest of Liberia's ethnic groups.

Doe held elections in October of 1985 as an attempt to lend legitimacy to his military rule under a new constitution. Despite limiting the media coverage of some and the outright banning of other political parties other than Doe's own National Democratic Party of Liberia (NDPL), along with the confiscation of ballot boxes and subsequent opaque counting processes, Doe was elected president by an official margin of 50.9 percent of the vote<sup>67</sup>.

During the drafting of the constitution and the lead-up to elections, the increasingly solidified ethnic-bases of Doe's regime alienated elements of the PRC and AFL. Their allegiance was predicated on the PRC's initial lip service to overthrowing the oppressive, Americo-Liberian-based TWP of Tolbert. Americo-Liberians are the descendants of relocated African-Americans who established the country in 1847. From 1878 until Tolbert's fall, the TWP entrenched political and economic power in Americo-Liberian hands.

The commanding general of the AFL, Thomas Quiwonkpa, who was a member of the Gio ethnic group, was informed by Doe of his intent to demote or retire. Quiwonkpa recognized the writing on the wall and fled into exile in 1983. Several other individuals fled around the same time including Prince Johnson (a Gio) and Charles Taylor. Supporters of Quiwonkpa subsequently launched raids on government offices in Nimba County and Pham.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Harris, David, 1999, "From 'Warlord' to 'Democratic' President: How Charles Taylor Won the 1997 Liberian Elections," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 37 (3), 1999, pg. 433.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid 70 above

<sup>67</sup> Liebenow, J. Gus, 1987, "The Quest for Democracy", Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 280-296

<sup>68</sup> Pham, John-Peter, 2004, "Liberia: Portrait of a Failed State", New York: Reed Press, pp. 84-85

Fearing the someday-threat from the exiles, in particular, the popularity of Quiwonkpa, Doe ordered the AFL into the Nimba County, which was populated predominantly by Gios and individuals of the Mano ethnic group. Krahn-dominated AFL units looted and burned villages to the ground, committed a myriad of atrocities along the way further complicating the lives of millions of Liberians.

Following the October 1985 election, in November Quiwonkpa reentered Liberia via Sierra Leone and attempted a military coup in Monrovia. The coup failed and sparked a vicious response by Doe's AFL including "parading Quiwonkpa's mutilated corpse around the city [with] some of Doe's troops hacking off bits to keep as souvenirs and even eating pieces of the body". Doe proceeded to take revenge on people accused of supporting the Quiwonkpa coup and anybody considered to have celebrated [his] short-lived success during the hours when he appeared to have succeeded in taking power [including] a purge of Nimba county which resulted in an official figure of 600 dead and a probable number of closer to 1,500 people killed.<sup>69</sup>

Subsequently, the Gio and Mano people were purged from the armed forces and became subject to discrimination in employment, to extortion, to looting and killing by agents of the Doe regime.<sup>70</sup> To add insult to injury, Doe explicitly proceeded to officially recognize the often marginalized Mandingos as an official ethnic group of Liberia and rewarded them with high-profile government positions. The lines of ethnicity were drawn with the Krahn and Mandingo serving as Doe's in groups while the Mano and Gio were the persecuted out-groups.

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<sup>69</sup> Ellis, Stephen, 2007, "The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War." (2nd ed.) New York: New York University Press, p. 70

<sup>70</sup> Outram, Quentin, 1997, "It's Terminal Either Way: An Analysis of Armed Conflict". 1989-1996." Review of African Political Economy, 73 (September), p. 360.

The larger of the two in-groups (the Krahn) may have represented 5 percent of the population by the end of the Doe regime in 1989. The Gio and the Mano were probably 8 to 9 percent of the population each.<sup>71</sup>

The participants in the failed 1985 coup, led by Thomas Quiwonkpa, labeled themselves the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Quiwonkpa's ethnic background and home county of Nimba, combined with the brutal raids on Nimba County by the AFL, left the former commanding general with the image of a martyr for the Gio and Mano peoples. It is no surprise, then, that Charles Taylor named his band of Libyan-trained, Liberian exiles the NPFL. The move would prove exceedingly effective in gaining popular support and facilitating recruitment.

The first people targeted by the NPFL were government officials and soldiers, as well as some Mandingo individuals who were accused of being informants to the Doe regime<sup>72</sup>. Taylor, on New Year's Eve, was broadcast on BBC radio claiming the NPFL's responsibility for the insurgency and stating that NPFL forces had entered Monrovia. Doe responded with typical brutality. This was the start of a steady stream of murders marked by the appearance of headless corpses in the morning. More systematically, the AFL, in the next two months rounded up hundreds of Gio and Mano civilians in Monrovia, suspecting them by reason of ethnic origin alone of being potential [NPFL] collaborators<sup>73</sup>. Doe's scorched-earth tactics resulted in over 300,000 refugees<sup>74</sup>.

Doe was unwittingly playing to the advantage of Taylor and his initially small band of soldiers. Taylor won support from the disaffected Mano and Gio ethnic groups, who were discriminated against under the Doe regime. Gio citizens of Nimba in particular were joining

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid* 75 above at p. 358

<sup>72</sup> *Opcit* 75 above at p. 360

<sup>73</sup> *Opcit* 74 above at pp. 75-76

<sup>74</sup> Adedoke, Ademola. 1995, "The Politics and Diplomacy of Peacekeeping in West Africa: The ECOWAS Operation in Liberia", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 33 (4): 569-593.

the NPFL in large numbers and attacking the Krahn, whom they regarded, no matter how unjustly, collectively responsible for the brutality of Doe, and the Mandingo, who made themselves unpopular by profiting from Doe's rule and by acquiring land in Nimba, where they were not considered to have hereditary rights.

After the initial invasion of Nimba County, Taylor's forces swelled to 10,000 strong by the time he reached Monrovia<sup>75</sup>. Atrocities on the part of both the NPFL and the AFL became commonplace during 1990. In July, the NPFL moved into Lofa County and reportedly slaughtered hundreds of Mandingos. In retaliation, the AFL invaded the St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Monrovia in late July and reportedly killed 600 displaced citizens of war of mainly Gio and Mano ethnicity. The NPFL was noted for testing people for the ability to speak Gio or Mano dialects failure to speak the said languages resulted in death on the spot.

In August 1990 a joint military intervention force, the Economic Community Cease-Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), was launched by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) under Nigerian leadership.<sup>76</sup> Although ECOMOG forces made an effort to impose a cease-fire and initiate peace negotiations, its intervention and objectivity during the armed conflict was controversial as Human Rights Watch reported in 1993:

*Since the NPFL attack on Monrovia in October 1992, ECOMOG has unofficially aligned itself with two of the warring factions, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) and the United Liberation Movement for Democracy in Liberia (ULIMO), which are themselves responsible for serious human rights abuses. This has raised questions*

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<sup>75</sup> Gershoni, Yekutiel, 1997, "War without End and an End to a War: Prolonged Wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone", *African Studies Review*, 40 (3): 55-76.

<sup>76</sup> "Profile: Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)" to be found at: <http://www.africaunion.org/Recs/ECOWASProfile.pdf> accessed on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2011 at 1.55pm

*about ECOMOG's commitment to human rights as well as its ability to act as a neutral arbiter of the conflict.*<sup>77</sup>

The following thirteen years were characterized by attempts to broker peace, followed by a return to conflict. Charles Taylor was the critical player throughout this period. He maintained military control of the vast majority of Liberian territory, even when temporary governments of national unity were theoretically installed in Monrovia. His de facto control of Liberia was eventually legitimized through elections facilitated by the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia in July 1997. Indeed, the UN Secretary-General declared free and fair the vote that resulted in Taylor's election as President.

The expectations that the Taylor's regime would result in lasting peace were quashed when the country was again embroiled in civil war. This time round the conflict was between the Taylor government and two new rebel groups being the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). These groups slowly gained territory over the next six years, until Taylor and his forces were restricted to Monrovia.

In early to mid-2003, the rebels gained control of the main port areas and held Monrovia under siege. A game of diplomatic catch-22 ensued. The rebels declared their siege would last until Taylor left office. Taylor said he would leave Liberia once an international peacekeeping force arrived to maintain stability in Liberia. US President Bush said that he was prepared to support the deployment of UN peacekeepers, but only after Taylor had left Liberia.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Human Rights Watch "Waging War to Keep the Peace: The ECOMOG Intervention and Human Rights", Volume 5, Issue No. 6 June 1993

<sup>78</sup> Jeremy Farrall, "Building Democracy and Justice after Conflict", Working Paper No. 6, The Liberian Transitional Peace Process, 2003-2006 March 2010

A deal was struck in which an ECOWAS force which was the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL) would be deployed immediately. The plan of action was that Taylor would then go into exile in the ECOWAS powerhouse of Nigeria, and within three months ECOMIL would be succeeded by a UN peacekeeping operation – UNMIL. Most, if not all of the ECOMIL troops would remain in Liberia, but they would wear the UN blue helmets. This manoeuvre has contributed a new term of art to the English language – the unwieldy ‘blue-helming’. ECOMIL was thus ‘blue-helmeted’, spinning off into UNMIL.

In September 2003 the United Nations Security Council deployed a multidimensional peacekeeping operation to Liberia. UNMIL was conceived as a peacekeeping operation whose primary goal was to provide the security and stability necessary to enable the full implementation of the Liberian peace agreement.

The ‘Comprehensive Peace Agreement’ (CPA) was signed on 18 August 2003 in Accra, Ghana, by the parties to Liberia’s most recent conflict, the former government of Liberia and the two rebel groups that had unseated that government, the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). The conflict ended when former Liberian President Charles Taylor departed into voluntary exile in Nigeria.

### **2.1.3 Conflict Resolution Strategies employed in the Liberian Conflict**

The conflict in Liberia saw a lot of interventions employed by various parties, some with vested interests and others intervened for fear of the conflict spreading to their own countries. The interventions were largely military as the conflict had escalated to the level of losses of scores of lives. After the military interventions which were solely meant to result in a cessation of atrocities, other interventions were employed to help reconcile the warring communities and this largely took the form of peace building initiatives.

**a) Military interventions**

The reality of the calamity that was the Liberian war peaked during the civil war and more so the 2003 War which saw thousands of Liberians being victims of killings, rape and sexual assault, abduction, torture, forced labor, forced recruitment into fighting forces and displacement and other violations by warring factions, including the government of Liberia under Charles Taylor, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL).

The ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) was established in May 1975 as an organization to promote the development of the sub-region. ECOWAS members mainly restricted their interactions to purely economic matters and left the political matters to states to deal with each other as they wished in furtherance of their own goals. The events that ensued in Liberia in 1989 resulted in a change of this tradition in the 1990s when ECOWAS decided to move away from its traditional area of operation, being economic activities, to accommodate its need to intervene in the Liberian civil war. It became clear that from its previous operations nothing in the history of ECOWAS prepared it to take on the military intervention role as it lacked the institutions and procedures, which could provide the framework for the operation in Liberia.

The spread of the Liberian crisis resulted from the failure of the ECOWAS to recognize the need to alter the security arrangements established under the protocols of Mutual Assistance on Non-Aggression and Defence endorsed in 1978 and 1981 respectively, towards the one focused on intrastate conflicts. The problem with this arrangement was that when a conflict remains purely internal, there was no plan of action taken by the ECOWAS community.

For ECOWAS to change its focus towards building mechanisms dealing strictly with intrastate conflict implied that members' states were to be encouraged to use most of their non-existence resources in launching peacemaking intervention, thus opening themselves up

for future intervention because the lid of non-intervention principles would have opened. Only the states with a significant resource power base as well as non-fearing attitude for a particular state in the sub-region would have welcomed such initiatives. Therefore, in light of this observation it seems the security arrangement for getting involved in the intrastate conflict was left to Nigeria as a hegemon in the sub-region.

Under the auspices of the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) which Nigerian leader, General Ibrahim Babangida proposed at the Banjul summit of ECOWAS in May 1990, ECOMOG was sent to Liberia on August 1990.<sup>79</sup>

The intervention lasted until the end of 1997 when the civil war formally came to an end. About 200,000 died and 1.2 million people were displaced out of a pre-war population of only 2.5 million. In October 1999 there was the final withdrawal from Liberia of ECOMOG force. Multiparty democratic elections were held in Liberia and Charles Taylor was formally inaugurated as the President. However, the conflict itself exhibited all the manifestations of post cold-war intra-state conflict: state collapse; ethnic conflict; political fragmentation; warlordism; and a late and inadequate response from the UN.<sup>80</sup>

The decision to launch a peacemaking military force by Nigeria while seeking support from the other states in the ECOWAS community did not follow a smooth path for the hegemon. As expected, the proposal to form SMC was met with vehement resistance from Cote D'Ivoire and Burkina Faso. These two Francophone states were not only in the forefront of opposing the SMC formation and ECOMOG creation, but the primary supporters of Charles Taylor. However, their opposition to the Nigerian initiative was not sufficient to thwart its

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<sup>79</sup> Tuck, Christopher, "Every Car or Moving Object Gone: The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia" *African Studies Quarterly*, 4 (1), 2000 [<http://web.africa.uci.edu/asq/v4/v4i1a1.htm>], 1/28/ 2003, p 1

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid* p.1



implementation because ECOWAS realized that the resources possessed by Nigeria were necessary to bring stability and peace in the sub-region.

The 1996 DDRR (disarmament, demobilization, reinsertion and reconciliation) program involved three stages: during the first stage, fighters were disarmed, registered and counseled. In the second stage, these disarmed combatants were drawn into work and training programs to gain marketable skills. Finally, the ex-combatants were reintegrated, a long-term process that involved food rations and tools for work.<sup>81</sup> By February 1997, about 24,500 of the estimated 33,000 fighters (or 74 percent) had been disarmed and demobilized. This group included 4,306 child soldiers and only 250 adult female fighters.<sup>82</sup>

It is important to note that child soldiers were the primary fighters in the first phase of the conflict—accounting for 15,000 to 20,000 of the soldiers between the six major armed factions, of which girls were a significant proportion.<sup>83</sup>

Women were also involved with the fighting, participating as direct combatants and as women associated with fighting forces (WAFF), who voluntarily or involuntarily provided logistical support and resources to the rebel groups. This support included preparing food, cleaning camps, and fetching water; the women and girls were also frequently used as sexual slaves or forced into marriage.<sup>84</sup> Although the exact number of female combatants for the first conflict is not known, women and girls comprised 30-40% of all fighter forces, or approximately 25,000 to 30,000 participants, between 1989 and 2003. While more women voluntarily participated in the second conflict, the number that joined or that were forced to

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<sup>81</sup> Thomas Jaye, "DDR and Transitional Justice in Liberia: Research Brief." prepared for International Center for Transitional Justice (2010), p. 6

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid* p.7

<sup>83</sup> Adekeye Adebajo, "Liberia's Civil War: Nigeria, ECOMOG and Regional Security in West Africa." (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2002), p.83.

<sup>84</sup> Dyan Mazurana, "Girls in Fighting Forces and Groups: Their Recruitments, Participation, Demobilization and Reintegration" in *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology* 8, no. 2: (2002), p. 105

participate during the first conflict was still substantial.<sup>85</sup> For example, Charles Taylor's NPLF included a female artillery unit, and numerous women achieved the rank of "general" within all of the warring factions.<sup>86</sup> Thus, the demobilization of only 250 adult female fighters does approach the number of women that participated in the conflict. Additionally, less than one percent of female child soldiers were incorporated into the DDRR program.<sup>87</sup> These reported low numbers reflect the extent to which women and girl combatants were excluded from the program as indeed in many other post-conflict programmes. It follows therefore that the needs of women and or girl child soldiers and their particular circumstances were not adequately considered. Because many of the women and girls experienced sexual violence during combat, an effective of Peace report in 2008 found that women soldiers are especially disadvantaged economically post-conflict, making them twice as likely as men to rejoin insurgent groups to avoid poverty.<sup>88</sup>

In the case of Liberia, the report found that almost 30 percent of over a thousand former female fighters would be willing to return to fighting "to feed their families and gain acceptance from their communities."<sup>89</sup> These numbers reflect the importance of involving women and girl soldiers in the DDRR process—particularly because, immediately following conflict, females were more useful to the factions than men who could no longer fight. Women and girls continued to provide logistical support for these groups, allowing their perpetuation and making it easier to revert to violence.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Abu Sherif, "Reintegration of Female War-Affected and Ex-Combatants in Liberia" in African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes: Conflict Trends, (2008).

<sup>86</sup> Annie Jones-Demen "Dynamics of Gender Relations in War-Time and Post-War Liberia: Implications for Public Policy." in War to Peace Transition: Conflict Intervention and Peace building in Liberia, (Lanham: University Press of America, 2009) p. 108.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid* Mazurana p. 118

<sup>88</sup> Ruthie Ackerman, "Rebuilding Liberia: One Brick at a Time" in World Policy Journal 26, no. 2: (2009), p. 8.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid* p.8

<sup>90</sup> Mazurana, p. 117.

## b) Mediation

In May 1990, before fighting had reached Monrovia, the initial peace efforts were being coordinated by the Liberian Inter-Faith Mediation Committee (IFMC). In June, this committee convened week-long talks between Doe's government and the NPFL at the US embassy in Freetown, Sierra Leone.<sup>91</sup> These early meetings foundered due to palpable intransigence on the part of the two main parties. Having reduced the writ of the government to the capital alone, a buoyant Taylor was poised to accept a political solution, but demanded as a precondition Doe's unconditional resignation.

Marooned in the Executive Mansion, Doe for his part refused to step down and this standoff culminated in an NPFL boycott of the talks and an escalation of hostilities. In the hopes of creating a plan of action geared towards resolving the issues of the Liberian civil war, Nigeria's leader, General Ibrahim Babangida, then chairman, called a meeting of ECOWAS heads of state and governments in Banjul (The Gambia) in May 1990. At this meeting General Babangida proposed and oversaw the adoption of an ECOWAS Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) "to settle disputes and conflict situations within the Community." The SMC was comprised of members from five member nations being the Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria and Togo.

Shortly after its founding, the SMC met with Liberia's warring parties (the AFL, the NPFL and the INPFL) hoping to negotiate an acceptable ceasefire agreement among the factions. The interesting fact about the mediation effort in the case of Liberia was that there were many warring factions involved in the peace talks and mainly international negotiators

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<sup>91</sup> [www.c-r.org](http://www.c-r.org) – retrieved on 9.52pm at 2/6/2011

conducted the mediation. This therefore meant that there were more interests to balance out as the team worked towards a palatable solution for everyone involved.

As part of its roadmap, the SMC convened a meeting in Sierra Leone in July 1990 and devised a peace plan that among other things, called for an immediate ceasefire and President Doe's resignation. The then executive secretary of ECOWAS, Abass Bundu carried out a mission to Liberia and held a meeting with Charles Taylor and President Doe. They both expressed their willingness to abide by the peace plan. However, few days later Taylor's NPFL advanced steadily towards Monrovia and he declared his intention to unseat Doe rather than abiding by the peace plan.

In view of this, the SMC had to convene another meeting once again in August 1990 to launch an intervention in Liberia, which was now characterized, by horrendous atrocities and acts of unimaginable savagery including cannibalism.<sup>92</sup>

At its inaugural meeting in July, the committee discussed the Liberian conflict and agreed on a peace plan with the following features: establishment of an immediate ceasefire by the warring parties; establishment and deployment of ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring group (ECOMOG) to monitor the observance of the ceasefire by all sides to the conflict; agreement by the parties to the establishment of an Interim Administration in Monrovia, pending the election of a substantive government; and agreement by the parties to constitute a substantive government through nation-wide elections to be monitored by ECOMOG.<sup>93</sup> These terms were unacceptable to the warring factions, particularly to Charles Taylor, who was the leader of the NPFL, resulting in failure to reach an agreement.

Taylor distrusted the SMC and its peace plan. He saw it as an effort by Nigerian to frustrate his bid to gain control of Liberia. His suspicions were somewhat justified had some

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<sup>92</sup> Ellis, S., "Liberia 1989-1994: A study of Ethnic and Spiritual Violence" in African Affairs, 187-197

<sup>93</sup> Adibe, "Liberian Conflict," p. 473

justification. Although the official position of ECOWAS, and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), was that Liberia lacked any official government, which meant that Doe was not a legitimate leader, Babangida clearly preferred a Liberia led by Doe, whom Taylor had sought to overthrow since 1989.<sup>94</sup>

Taylor was aware of Babangida's preferences, and believed the SMC's plans proposed by Babangida posed a direct threat to his own interests. He assumed that because ECOWAS adopted Babangida's plan, the Community had given Nigeria substantial control over the planning of the operation. Although ECOWAS members voted and approved the creation of the SMC, they left the details of the peace plan to the members of the Nigerian-dominated SMC.<sup>95</sup> Under this arrangement, the SMC could plan independently of ECOWAS and thus its members could control the aims of the operation which they set. It is notable that the said aims did not necessarily reflect the preferences of all members of the Community.

Because of Nigeria's prejudice toward him, Taylor came to view the entire ECOWAS intervention as a threatening force rather than as a neutral peacekeeping body.<sup>96</sup> This significantly undermined the negotiation process. Rather than cooperate with the SMC, the insurgent never wavered in his claim to rule Liberia. He would not even begin to consider any of the terms for peace until the SMC conceded to the removal of Liberian President Doe,<sup>97</sup> a demand that was unacceptable to the SMC. Consequently, they deployed the ECOMOG force in the military intervention.

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<sup>94</sup> Interview with LTC Anthony D. Marley, (US Army, retired) US Defense Attache to Liberia throughout the ECOMOG intervention retrieved from [www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/JCS](http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/JCS) - 30/5/2011 at 6.40pm

<sup>95</sup> Herbert Howe, "Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping." *International Security*, 21, no. 3 (1997), p. 152

<sup>96</sup> Carolyn M. Shaw and Julius O. Ihonvbere, "Hegemonic Participation in Peace-Keeping Operations: The Case of Nigeria and ECOMOG." *International Journal on World Peace*, 13, no. 2 (1996), p. 36.

<sup>97</sup> *Adibe*, p. 473

The SMC adopted its immediate goals for the ECOMOG operation in meetings during July and August 1990. These were articulated in the 1990 ECOWAS peace plan for Liberia. The forces were to focus their efforts upon disarming the factions in the expectation that this would stabilize Liberia.

In concurrence with this effort, the SMC intended to establish a Liberian interim government to rule the country until free and fair elections could be held, and a democratically elected government could take its place.<sup>98</sup> The SMC members chose an Americo-Liberian politician, Amos Sawyer, to run Liberia's interim government, and to work with the faction leaders to create an acceptable administration.

The success of these plans required that ECOMOG and the Liberian interim government complement each other. The interim government would create political stability while the West African force maintained the ceasefire.

The mediation efforts in Liberia has little or no presence of women as most of the efforts were constituted from patriarchal backgrounds being the political arena, which is very well known as a male dominated area, and the inter-faith initiative which is also well known as a male-dominated discipline in terms of leadership. Considering that women suffer and indeed continue to suffer in conflict and post-conflict environments, in the case of Liberia they did not have enough participation in the two main mechanisms employed in resolving the conflict, in fact they lacked clear channels to express themselves politically.

#### **2.1.4 Women's input in the Conflict Resolution Strategies**

The most common view on women's role during wars is that they perform no active or decision-making role and are generally considered victims of the violence committed by

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid

men. Various field studies and literature studies on women during the Liberian wars, however, show that a large proportion of Liberian women were very active during the armed conflicts. According to field studies<sup>99</sup> which were conducted during and after the wars, the active roles of women can be roughly divided into two groups.

First, the 'combatants', who are women who actively contributed to war crimes by joining one of the armies or rebel forces, facilitating weapon transport, or providing care and sexual services to soldiers.

Second, the 'peacemakers', who were the women who fulfilled an important role in peace building processes and reconciliation after the wars, for example by organizing peace protests, helping with the disarmament of the various armed forces and founding organizations for the rebuilding of social structures in Liberia.

#### a) Female combatants during the Liberian wars

Though there have been many reports of the atrocities women suffered, it is noteworthy that women in Liberia were not only passive victims of the war but that they were also active participants as combatants. According to Fuest<sup>100</sup>, various reports describe that women were forced to take on traditional male tasks such as 'making bricks, building and roofing houses, and clearing farms'. Statistics vary, but it is certain that one out of ten soldiers in the various armed forces consisted of women.<sup>101</sup> The fact that women have taken combative roles in wars and conflicts makes nonsense of the essentialist argument that women stay at home as nurturers, homemakers, and life givers.

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<sup>99</sup> Utas, Mats 2000, "Victimicy, Girlfriending, Soldiering: Tactic Agency in a Young Woman's Social Navigation of the Liberian War Zone", in: *Anthropological Quarterly* 78, 2: 403-430.

<sup>100</sup> Fuest, Veronica, "This is the time to get in the front: Changing roles and opportunities for women in Liberia". In: *African Affairs*, 2008, pages 107, 427: 201-224.

<sup>101</sup> Ellis, Stephen, "The Mask of Anarchy: the Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War". 1999. New York: New York University Press.

Fuest further noted that numerous young women resorted to fighting to protect themselves from rape, violence, murder and a harsh labor regime which forced some of them to become 'bush wives', wives of warlords, fighters, prostitutes and family providers, while others 'were conscripted to head-load material along forest tracks and cook and provide sexual services for the combatants'.

**b) Female peacemakers during the Liberian wars**

Apart from being active combatants, women also played the role of peacekeepers. Alani Badmus<sup>102</sup> describes the importance of the Liberian Women Initiative (LWI), a female organization with the goal to demand peace that was set up by Mrs. Etweda Cooper during the Liberia's first civil war (1989-1997). As evidenced in the Gini Reticker's documentary *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* (2008), the role of these women in bringing back peace in Liberia was indeed valuable and may in fact have contributed greatly to the eventual resolution of the conflict. These women's campaigns united both Muslims and Christians around a common goal which was to end the conflict in Liberia and therefore end the atrocities.

Under the leadership of Cooper they organized daily sit-ins at the fish market, street protests, rallies, sex-strikes and demonstrations to convince the warring factions to disarm and stop the bloodshed in return for meaningful employments that were organized and coordinated by the LWI network<sup>103</sup>. The LWI performed a significant role in supporting and advising the West African intervention force (ECOMOG) in 1995 during the disarmament of the various armed groups.

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<sup>102</sup> Alani Badmus, Isiaka, 2009, "Explaining Women's Roles in the West African Traagic Triplet: Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire in Comparative Perspective", in: *Journal of Alternative Perspectives in the Social Sciences*, 1, 3: 808-839.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid



Besides the LWI, many other women's organizations were founded during the two wars, like the *Women's Peace Initiative (WPI)*, the *Women in Liberian Liberty (WILL)* and the *Women in Peace Building Network (WIPNET)*<sup>104</sup>. The WILL, led by Mrs. Myrtle Gibson and Mona Wurch was of high importance because of food aid and sensitization programmes initiated to help alleviate the sufferings of war victims. The WILL also carried out activities outside of Liberia, for example visits to Liberian refugee camps in Gambia, Sierra Leone and Nigeria. WIPNET was similar to the LWI in its organization of marches and sit-ins in Monrovia in front of the Government House and House of Parliament. Some of its women members also organized prayers and fasting for the return of peace.<sup>105</sup>

Fuest notes that the war in Liberia generated an unprecedented level of collective female peace activism compared to women's peace movements in other African countries. She argues that observers' reports and anecdotal evidence explain this fact by pointing at the 'extraordinary level of persistent determination and militancy among Liberian female peace-building NGO's, whose members share a uniform of white T-shirts and head-ties'.

### **2.1.5 Conclusion**

Having looked at the genesis of the wars in Liberia, the various resolution strategies employed as well as the roles that women played, it would be in order to conclude that the wars in Liberia were ethnically motivated. Further that there were astronomical losses of lives going by the reported numbers of lives lost. The other interesting conclusion drawn from the study of the Liberian is the almost non-existent role played by the international community in trying to resolve the conflict. The external intervention that came in to assist in the resolution of the conflict was from the ECOWAS albeit its motives were mainly as a

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid

<sup>105</sup> Ibid

result of the need to preserve their own borders and therefore their countries from the influx of insurgents from Liberia.

With respect to the women's participation, it is notable that in fact women have been ignored in the process with their roles being relegated to only largely being victims of the conflict itself and in some instances being combatants themselves. This being the case, the process of resolution of the conflict was conspicuously lacking significant representation from women although they did also bear the brunt of the effects of the conflict through losing their own lives, their children's lives as well as their husbands'.

The Conflict in Liberia reached a turning point when the women having had enough staged peaceful protests which served to force the hand of politicians and rebels to resume negotiations when they were considering giving up on account of their wishes not being met and/or included on the agenda at the negotiating table.

## **2.2 THE KENYA CRISIS**

### **2.2.1 Introduction**

Kenya is easily considered to be probably the most strategic nation in the Eastern part of Africa if not also the most powerful, economically that is. The country also had been taunted as a 'haven' of peace in the midst of a turbulent horn of Africa region which was laden with nations at various levels of conflict. The country was a darling of the West as it was the point of operation for any intervention being carried out in the horn of Africa region. It therefore came both as a surprise and indeed shock when the country degenerated into yet another civil strife and therefore became a statistic in a continent laden with civil strife.

### 2.2.2 History of the Kenya's Post Election Crisis

A Republic of some 40 million people<sup>106</sup>, Kenya gained its independence from British rule in December of 1963. The country was then ruled by the founding father of the nation through a single party rule till he died. There was an attempt at introducing multi-party rule in the mid-1960s which was aptly thwarted by President Kenyatta who henceforth retained an iron grip on the country's rule. President Kenyatta's reign was characterized with nepotism and reports of him rewarding his cronies and tribe mates, members of his Kikuyu tribe, with prime government positions as well as allocations of huge chunks of public property.

His successor as president was his Vice President Daniel arap Moi, who is a Kalenjin from Kenya's western highlands. Before he allowed the repeal of Section 2A of the constitution to allow for multiparty elections in 1992, President Moi's rule was also heavily characterized by ethnic favoritism. In 1992, Moi retained the presidency due in large part to rifts in opposition parties resulting in opposition forces splitting votes. However, calls of rigging and dissatisfaction were present, and resulted in violence. In 1997, Moi was again re-elected for his final term, narrowly defeating Mwai Kibaki. In 2002, opposition forces realized their mistake in the past two elections, and united under NARC, or the National Rainbow Coalition, to carry Kibaki into the Presidency.<sup>107</sup>

On December, 27, 2007, millions of Kenya's 38.6 million people voted in the nation's fourth multi-party elections since multi-partism was introduced in 1992. An estimated 14.2 million Kenyans, 82% of eligible voters, were registered to vote in both the Presidential and Parliamentary elections. Nine presidential candidates, led by the incumbent candidate, Mwai Kibaki of the Party of National Unity (PNU) and main opposition leader, Raila Odinga of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), competed in the presidential election.

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<sup>106</sup> As per the 2010 census results released by the Ministry of Planning

<sup>107</sup> Josh Gwin, "Kenya's Post-Election Violence: Using a Kisii-Luo Case Study for a Critique of Common Thought." 2010, ISP, Collection, Paper 894, [http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp\\_collection/894](http://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/894)

Many reports showed ODM gaining votes in both races, but the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) declared President Kibaki as the winner. Kibaki was quickly sworn in even while many election observers declared the elections rigged and flawed. Some examples of discrepancy, according to the Congressional Resource Service report of 2008 titled, "Kenya: The December 2007 Elections and the Challenges Ahead"<sup>108</sup>, are the following:

(i) The ECK has 22 Commissioners, 19 of whom appointed by President Kibaki last year, consistent with the authority provided under the Kenyan Constitution. However, the appointment of the new Commissioners was reportedly done without proper consultation with opposition parties, according to the EU and Kenyan observers, which violates the Inter-Parliamentary Parties Group (IPPG) Agreement of 1997 that calls for consultation with opposition parties.

(ii) According to the EU Electoral Observation Mission (EU EOM) report, the government-controlled Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) Radio coverage gave the PNU 76% share of coverage, compared to the opposition ODM 13% and ODM-Kenya 5%. The KBC-TV gave PNU 71% of the share of coverage, ODM 11%, and ODM Kenya, a splinter party that broke from ODM, 5%. (iii) The Chairman of the Commission also admitted that he was under intense political pressure from powerful political leaders and the ruling party. (iv) In Maragua District, a Kibaki stronghold, the document received by the ECK showed turnout at 115%, but was later changed by the Chairman of the ECK to 85%. In Molo, a small town in the Rift Valley of Kenya, the vote tally results document reportedly showed 50,145 votes for President Kibaki, but the ECK Chairman publicly announced that Kibaki won 75,261 votes, more than 25,000 votes than documented.

After the results were announced, violence immediately erupted in many districts of Kenya. Over 1,000 deaths were documented and an estimated 350,000 persons were displaced. Some

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<sup>108</sup> Ted Dagne, CRS Report for Congress, "Kenya: The December 2007 Elections and the Challenges Ahead". Updated Sept 17, 2008, Congressional Research Service.

sources describe the violence as ethnically triggered, with the President's Kikuyu ethnic group fighting the Opposition's Luo ethnic group and Kalenjin ethnic group. Some sources see the violence as politically triggered, as the opposition party felt cheated and disempowered by a perceived rigged election. Other sources saw the violence as economically triggered as many victims were of higher economic standing and many of the attackers were said to be of lower economic standing. Other sources believed the violence to be triggered by land disputes stemming from colonial settlement policies.<sup>109</sup>

In February the opposition and the government began the negotiation process as directed by international bodies and under the leadership of former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan. The two sides agreed on a power sharing.

Further, as part of the agreement, the warring factions consented to an end to hostilities and improvement of humanitarian conditions. Apart from agreeing on the immediate cessation of hostilities in a bid to reinstatement of law and order, parties also contented to legislative reform that will protect the country from such future incidents. In 2010, of over 12.5 million registered voters, over 8.5 million Kenyans, or 72%, voted in a referendum for a new constitution. With almost 6 million in favor, and only about 2.5 million opposed, the new constitution is seen as most Kenyans as a very promising, hopeful sign of change and things to come.<sup>110</sup>

Following the post-election mayhem in 2007, the warring factions agreed on what was the 'roadmap to peace' namely the National Accord and Reconciliation Act (NARA) 2008 which inter alia recommended the establishment of District Peace Committees in all of Kenya's districts, with priority given to the Rift Valley – the area where most of the violence had occurred. Under coordination of the National Security Committee (NSC) and with UNDP-

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<sup>109</sup> Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, "On the Brink of the Precipice: A Human Rights Account of Kenya's Post-2007 Election Violence". Preliminary Edition, 2008.

<sup>110</sup> Referendum Results of 2010 by the Office of Public Communications, Can be viewed online at <http://www.communication.go.ke/katiba>

Kenya support, a programme was initiated to build capacity in this respect. Those districts with peace committees reported much less violence than others, a fact that considerably raised the importance of enhancing local capacities for peace.

### **2.2.3 Conflict Resolution Strategies Employed in the Kenyan Crisis**

The Explosion of the post-election crisis in Kenya shocked the greater East African region into action and indeed Africa and a flurry of solutions were sought to rescue this model nation from falling into the abyss of civil strife as most countries in Africa. The employed methods included military interventions in some regions of the country where there were active threats to peace, mediation spearheaded by the Panel of Eminent African Personalities as Communal Peace Building initiatives.

#### **a) Military Interventions**

By the end of January, however, the situation in Kenya had escalated to a point where a military option was being suggested. Rwandan President Paul Kagame was the first foreign leader to call for a military solution warning that the situation could easily slide into a mass slaughter. The fears of a slide into genocide were echoed at the African Union Summit, with the chair of the African Union Commission, Alpha Konare warning that a Rwanda-style genocide scenario was possible unless urgent measures were taken.<sup>111</sup>

The role of the military in Kenyan society illustrates this development. Kenya has always prided itself on its disciplined military forces, which are totally apolitical and subject to civilian rule. Indeed, apart from an attempted mutiny in the 1960s and an attempted coup in 1982, the Kenyan military has not been involved in politics. To its credit, the military is about the only institution in Kenya that got out of the post-election violence with its

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<sup>111</sup> Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, *On the Brink of the Precipice: A Human Rights Account of Kenya's Post-2007 Election Violence*, August 2008, p. 35

reputation intact. In the aftermath of the elections, the military was called in to undertake some police duties and did so without resorting to violence. In fact, parts of the country's transport network were reopened only after military intervention.<sup>112</sup>

By the end of February, with fears that the warring factions may not find a middle ground, the UK's Foreign Office Minister for Africa suggested that the military may have to be deployed to avert violence in the event the talks failed. The hot spots for the violence included the Rift Valley, Nairobi, Coast Province, some parts of Western and Nyanza Provinces. In some parts of Rift Valley for example, the Saboot who lay historical territorial claims and want Luhya people out of Trans Nzoia were accused of fanning the violence.

The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights recorded in its report<sup>113</sup> that over 200 youths who were allegedly undergoing military training were arrested on 25 January 2008. On Wednesday, 19 March 2008, the former MP for the area was charged with training suspected organized gangs on his farm and set free on bond. Widespread atrocities by the Saboot Land Defence Force (SLDF) in Mount Elgon and surrounding areas prompted a military operation that has restored relative peace in the area. The military intervention did indeed succeed in restoring peace after disbanding the militias.

The role of the military during and after the post election violence especially in the North Rift region was brought into question. It is reported by various human rights agencies that in fact the state agencies, chief among them being the military, in the course of carrying out their duties used excessive force in quelling the violence in some instances while in others, the police were accused of inaction by the police.

In several places across the country including in the Rift Valley, there was often little to no police response to the burning of the houses of Kikuyu people by Kalenjin people. Military

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<sup>112</sup> Richard Barno, "Kenya: After the crisis, lessons abandoned" African Security Review 17.4 Institute for Security Studies, p. 173

<sup>113</sup> Ibid, p.63

personnel were eventually deployed in the Rift Valley particularly to provide armed escort to caravans of evacuating internally displaced persons. The presence of the military was necessitated by the failure of the police to provide adequate security even to residents of the Rift Valley as they left the region under threat of injury and death.<sup>114</sup>

#### b) **Mediation**

Following the outbreak of violence in Kenya after the 2007 election, the international community stepped in to spearhead reconciliation efforts. The members of the diplomatic corps within the country stepped in to try and get the warring factions to negotiate a settlement that was workable in the shortest time possible of course appreciating that in fact the longer the violence persisted, the harder it will be to actually bring an end to it.

The African Union being that responsible regional body stepped up and appointed a panel of eminent personalities to head the mediation efforts. The panel was made up of three eminent Africans being the then immediate former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, the former South Africa First Lady, Her Excellency Mrs. Graca Machel – Mandela and the former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, His Excellency Benjamin Mkapa. These efforts by the African Union resulted in the first face-to-face meeting, since the elections on 27 December 2007, between President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga on 24 January.

The African-Union led mediation effort eventually produced a power-sharing agreement between the presidential contenders and their political parties. Many Kenyan civil society groups mobilized to help contain and halt the violence in their communities, while calling for a political resolution to the crisis. The international diplomatic response to help broker a peace agreement, along with the grassroots peacemaking efforts that saved lives and helped

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid, p. 124



push Kenya's leaders to the negotiating table, prevented what could have been more widespread violence or even the country's collapse into civil war.<sup>115</sup>

Although the mediation process was far from perfect, and the core causes of the conflict were not immediately resolved, the road map for the resolution process which was absolutely necessary was laid out. The first and most important step was the need for the cessation of hostilities which would be by way of an end to the violence. In this regard warring factions agreed to reach out to their supporters and get them to put down their arms. The political settlement was pushed through rapidly and the power-sharing arrangement emerged on paper with very little understanding of how the parties would actually work together or implement real reforms.

The National Accord was signed and contained various remedial measures to be taken to ensure that the country does not relapse back into violence. These measures ranged from addressing historical injustices, putting in place measures to address ethnic strife between the various ethnic groups in the country to the need to reform governance structures.

#### **2.2.4 Women's Input in the Conflict Resolution Strategies**

The input of women in the conflict resolution in Kenya was not much different from the Liberian case as women were almost entirely absent from the negotiating table of the mediation process sanctioned by the Africa Union and led by the panel of Eminent African Personalities. The only representation from the warring parties was a woman each joining the negotiating teams from the Orange Democratic Party (ODM) and the Party of National Unity (PNU). As part of the need to include women in the conflict resolution process, the

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<sup>115</sup> Cohen, Roger "How Kofi Annan Rescued Kenya", 14 August, 2008, New York Review of Books 55(13).

government has streamlined affirmative action into all its policies to ensure that women's participation is not only guaranteed but assured.<sup>116</sup>

The above scenario notwithstanding, Graça Machel's request to set up a women's reference group for the mediation process had been very important in ensuring inclusivity of women's views and opinions in the discussions. As a result, a bipartisan group known as the women's consortium was constituted and was working with the Executive and Parliament on the issues contained in Agenda Item No. 4 of the National Accord which was the agreement entered to by ODM and PNU to end the post-election crisis.

The cited Government policy recognizes gender equality as a cross-cutting theme and points out that women's views, interests and needs shape intervention strategies as much as men's. This is recognized as critical in progressing toward more equal relations between women and men, boys and girls in peace building and conflict management.

With respect to the military intervention, the Kenyan military and indeed all other security forces have little in terms of numbers representative of women's participation. This therefore means that women's participation as military personnel was limited. As far as women as armed combatants is concerned, the violence level in Kenya did not escalate to the level of Liberia and therefore there are no real reports of women actually taking up arms.

This is not to say that women in Kenya have not been at the forefront of conflict resolution. In fact they have been frontrunners in conflict resolution and indeed advocacy for human rights and sustainable economic policies. The ethics of peace has been upheld by many African women who "have drawn upon the moral authority granted to them by virtue of their being creators of life (mothers) and nurturers of life (mothers, wives, daughters), to call for peace..."<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Draft National Policy on, "Peace building and Conflict Management", June 2009

<sup>117</sup> Mazurana D. E., and McKay, S. R., "Women and Peace building", Montreal, International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development, 1999, p.18.

### 2.2.5 Conclusion

Having analyzed the Kenyan scenario, it is clear that indeed the post election crisis did affect Kenyans in general. The historical causes of the crisis involved men and women. In Kenya, women form 51 percent of the population and constitute the majority of the country's electorate both in parliament and civic elections. They should, therefore, be fully integrated into the decision-making structures of Kenyan society. Violence against women can only be transformed at a deeper level by addressing the institutional and cultural structures that sustain these acts of violence. Women must not be seen merely as victims in need of assistance, but rather as active participants ready to undertake the challenge of transforming conflicts and instituting a just society.<sup>118</sup>

It therefore goes without saying that increasing the capacity of Kenyan women for peace and development is instrumental to working toward sustainable solutions to violence against women. In the same breathe, it would be useful to bear in mind that women themselves are not a homogenous group but also have distinguishing differences. The social, economic and political divide among women is one of the factors that stagnates their progression and integration as active participants in Kenyan society.

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<sup>118</sup>Elias Omondi Opongo, SJ, "Country Report: Kenya Breaking the Cycle of Violence: Women as Catalysts for Social Transformation in Kenya", 2007, P.6

## **CHAPTER 3: DATA COLLECTION**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The data that is the subject matter of this study has been divided into two groups being primary and secondary data. The primary data as earlier explained has been collected by way of questionnaires which were distributed in the identified area for research. The population for this study was specifically identified as one of the areas that was the violence hot spots during the 2007/2008 post election crisis in Kenya. Kibera was identified by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights<sup>119</sup> as one of the hot spots where violence broke out on the night of the 30 December 2007.

### **3.2 Data Collection**

The researcher herein with the assistance of the contacts within the greater Kibera Locality was able to identify, contact and interview 50 women and 50 men on their involvement either in the conflict or the post conflict scenario. The women and men are and have been residents of Kibera for over ten years and have been through three general elections within which time they suffered various levels of violence with the 2007/2008 period being the most violent one.

The researcher's questions to the interviewees largely focused on two categories being whether women did participate in the conflict and whether they also participated in the resolution process of the conflict. The researcher in pursuing this line of questioning sought to highlight the different roles that women play in conflict and post-conflict scenarios. From the literature review analyzed herein, it is clear that a lot of the roles that women are seen as

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<sup>119</sup> Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, "On the Brink of the Precipice". A report on the 2007/2008 Post Election Crisis, 2008 – Pg 35.

playing during and after conflict situation have largely been the roles of victims and not active combatants or equal partners with their men folk in the resolution processes.

The researcher's interview sequence as represented in the table below was by way of asking the interviewees questions which are highlighted in Table A below. The contents of the table include the answers of the interviewees which are largely in the form of yes or no answers. This sequence is informed by the level of literacy of the interviewees hence the simple line of questioning adopted. The line of questioning was also influenced by the time line of the research as well as the cost implications that may have constrained the researcher if the same was complicated and indeed would have required more complicated tools of analysis.

The researcher's findings after interviewing 50 women and 50 men are presented in the Table A below;

	Number of Women	Number of Men
<b>Area</b>	Kibera	Kibera
<b>Was there a Conflict Situation in Kenya in 2007/2008?</b>	Yes – 50 No – 0	Yes – 50 No - 0
<b>Women as victims</b>	Yes – 35 No – 15	Yes – 45 No - 5
<b>Women as active combatants</b>	Yes – 15 No – 35	Yes – 5 No - 45

*Interpretation of the above responses in Table A<sup>120</sup>*

The interpretations of the above results are as follows with respect to the individual questions asked;

<sup>120</sup> Table showing the interviewees and their responses

When asked the question of whether there was a conflict situation in Kenya in 2007/2008, the women whom the researcher noted were largely illiterate, all agreed that indeed there a conflict situation in Kenya after the general election of 2007/2008. The women also agree that the violence that broke out at that time was of unprecedented proportions that threatened to push the country over the precipice. The men on the other hand first pointed out that the violence is always expected every election year but that what shocked them was the magnitude of the violence and further how quickly the violence gathered momentum and degenerated to anarchy in a short while. The men pointed out that although the violence that usually breaks out during each election year is expected, what shocked them was the very poignant tribe issue that refused to disappear as the crisis escalated. The researcher's overall finding with respect to this question was that pursuant to the 2007 presidential election in Kenya, there was a crisis of violent proportions never before seen in the country.

With respect to the issue of women as victims versus women as active combatants, of the 50 women interviewed 35 women saw the role of women generally as victims of conflict situations. When quizzed further, the women pointed out that the women are largely victims because they have many concerns during conflicts unlike men as most of them are actually single parents. The single parent household women pointed out that they are too concerned about their children during conflicts and therefore devote their time to protecting them as opposed to being active combatants which would then leave their children uncared for. For the women who were in marriages and/or 'come we stay' relationships, they still viewed their role as victims because with their husbands away in an active conflict, they are left behind to take care of homes and children.

For these women who viewed themselves as victims, some of them attributed this perception to the deeply rooted in cultural practices which were very patriarchal in nature. According to

these 35 women, the place of women was in the home taking of the children while men were viewed to be the ones supposed to go out and fend for their families as well as protect them from harm. These women also pointed out that they were not expected by societies that they lived in to take any frontline role in fighting during conflict situations as that was the perceived role of men in the society.

It was interesting to note that there was still as significant number of women who viewed women as being active combatants in conflict situation. 15 of the 50 women who formed part of this study pointed out that women also were capable of active combatants in conflicts. They gave examples of cases where women were hiding combatants in Kibera, organizing small armies and pointing out the households to be attacked on the basis of them being from the wrong tribe. The women also pointed out that some women also took up arms to not only secure themselves and their families but also to be able to secure a portion of the spoils for themselves in the ensuing anarchy that was characterized by looting.

The men on the other hand almost all the 50 men viewed women as victims of conflict situations. In these regard the interviewed men capitalized on perceived physical weakness of women in terms of actually fighting in the conflict situation. These 45 men were categorical that war and conflict situation are not places for women and that in fact where women are caught in a cross fire or in conflict situations, they are almost always victims of atrocities like rape and murder.

It was interesting to note that women were not viewed by the interviewed women as being capable of even masterminding conflict situations. The men felt that women were not capable of physical participation in conflicts. These men professed lack of any knowledge and/or information of situations where women have actually participated in conflicts.

The findings notwithstanding, there was a minimal number of the interviewed men who felt that there were scenarios where women have been known to be active combatants in conflicts and even commit atrocities. 5 out of the 50 men interviewed felt that the overall number of women who masterminded conflicts or who actually took up arms during conflicts was minimal at best. They gave examples of the situation during the Kenyan post-election scenario 2007/2008 where, in their neighbourhood (Kibera), women were part of the gangs that looted homes and businesses and commanding violence rings within the slums to weed out unwanted tribes. In this regard men felt that in as much as few women were active participants in conflict, there were still women who were active combatants.

The overall finding of the researcher was that the women were largely viewed as victims in conflicts owing to their perceived nurturing nature. There however was a notable viewing of women as active combatants which is an emerging view that has served to challenge long held patriarchal notions that women are more likely to be victims in a conflict than active combatants. In terms of women's participation in conflict resolution, the researcher also put the following questions to the same group of 50 men and 50 women. The responses are tabulated below<sup>121</sup>;

	Number of Women	Number of Men
<b>Area</b>	<b>Kibera</b>	<b>Kibera</b>
<b>In your opinion, should women participate in conflict resolution?</b>	Yes – 25 No – 25	Yes – 15 No - 35
<b>Can women impact conflict resolution positively?</b>	Yes – 30 No – 20	Yes – 7 No - 43

<sup>121</sup> Table reflecting the responses of women and men on gender participation in conflict resolution.



<b>Can women impact conflict resolution negatively?</b>	<b>Yes – 16</b> <b>No – 34</b>	<b>Yes – 4</b> <b>No – 46</b>
<b>Have women successfully participated in conflict resolution?</b>	<b>Yes – 10</b> <b>No – 40</b>	<b>Yes – 10</b> <b>No - 40</b>

The question of women and their participation in conflict resolution evoked cultural and patriarchal emotions among the interviewees with both men and women falling back to their cultural roots to discern the need to have women participate more effectively in conflict resolution. The most interesting perspective the researcher found out was the fact that even with the increased advances in the areas of women's rights, women did not consider themselves worthy participants in the arena of conflict resolution.

The women when asked whether women have participated in conflict resolution pointed out that largely and in their opinion they were not aware of many women with a role in conflict resolution. The few women who had had anything, had a common feature which was a considerably higher level of education than the rest and this coupled with their level of exposure and interaction with the outside wide (the world outside of their neighbourhoods) had helped them come into contact with some interventions on women's input into conflict resolution like the initiatives carried out by the local community based organizations working in the area of Peace and Justice in Kibera and Langata areas.

The women largely viewed their contribution as being that of participants in peace building and conflict resolution rather than being in leadership roles which they are comfortable leaving to the men in their communities. The reasoning behind this perspective was largely attributed by the interviewees to not only cultural dynamics and patriarchal perspectives but also the community and tribal approach of boy child having unrivaled access to education and general opportunities to participate in decision making.

It was however also interesting to note that half of the women who were interviewed were of the opinion that women should participate in conflict resolution. The reasons advanced by the women for this view was among others that women were also key stakeholders as the conflicts also affect them and further that leadership is best shared between men and women as they may bring to the fore different perspectives on how to address the issue of conflict and conflict resolution. The general perception of women on their participation in conflict resolution is that though women should play a role, men have largely dominated.

The men on the other hand were less enthusiastic about the participation of women in conflict resolution. 15 men felt that women can and should be equal participants at the table when seeking to resolve conflicts. The men concurred that women have in the instances where they have been given opportunities to participate in conflict resolution contributed immensely to the process. They gave examples of the community based initiatives which were carried out in Kibera post the 2007/2008 conflict scenario in Kenya. This perspective did not however hold water for the other 35 men who were interviewed. These men felt that in fact women are best left to household chores.

When asked about the experiences in their own backyards, the men reiterated their earlier perspective of the fact that women are not equal participants in conflict resolution as that constitutes decision making which are all roles to be played men in society. The reality is that the men interviewed could not run away from their patriarchal upbringing which largely trained them to look at women as the ruled and those who are incapable of taking up leadership because as one interviewee pointed out, *"hii dunia ni ya mwanaume.....wanawake kwanza hawawezi kutuamulia maneno ya uongozi!* (that it's a man's world and women cannot decide on leadership issues).

When exploring the issue of the impact of men and women the process of conflict resolution, the 50 women interviewed were largely of the view that women would actually, if involved, influence the process positively. This they attributed to the fact in their opinion, it is often women who are better positioned to take on peace keeping roles owing to their socially constructed roles largely interpreted as nurturers, mediators and care givers within the family. The balance of the women who felt that women would actually influence conflict resolution processes negatively gave their main reasons as the fact that women and children constitute the majority of victims of conflict situations. When asked to explain how this happens they were quick to point out that owing to their physical weaknesses and/or perceived weakness, women and children end up suffering the brunt of war and conflict situations. The interviewees further pointed out that women and children being too preoccupied with escaping their hitherto almost certain fate, ending up as victims of war and conflict, they may not have the preserve of mind to actually participate in conflict resolution.

The men on their part, were divided in their response of what sort of influence women exerted on conflict resolution processes. About ten 10 of the 50 men interviewed believed that there was potential for women to influence conflict resolution processes positively. This was attributed to the fact that women have skills of balancing interests and helping calm temperatures where disagreements ensue. They were however quick to point out that the women were also good at playing parties against each other especially if they were seeking to protect their own interests.

The men, while admitting the important role that women play in conflict resolution, pointed out that the women are usually very good at building network at the very basic level of society which then encourages unity among peoples and rallies them around a common cause. The men also acknowledged the fact that women have been more consistent than men

in forming movements around issues affecting them including peace, non-discrimination, and accountability among others.

The men gave examples of the role women played in calming temperatures during the Kenyan 2007/2008 post election crisis by way of organizing peace committees and meetings which they used to bring together their communities which had been divided along tribal lines. The meetings worked well in helping the communities discuss the issues that were creating divisions among them. The resultant effects were joint activities for the youth, the elderly and children which helped them focus more on factors that unite them as opposed to focusing on taking arms to exterminate the other.

The researcher noted that a majority of the men being interviewed felt that there was no place for women in conflict resolution processes as they felt that decision making is generally the preserve of men and men only in most African societies. They felt that women were not conversant with matters politics and governance in general and therefore could not be entrusted with this important roles as they were largely preoccupies with taking care of their families and children.

On the final issue of whether women had generally successfully participated in conflict resolution, the men and women were in agreement that that is largely not true as the women had not had the chance of actually trying their hand in conflict resolution. Out of the 50 men and 50 women interviewed, 10 men and women agreed that they knew of very few instances where women had participated successfully in conflict resolution. In further response herein the men pointed out that patriarchy has not allowed women to get anywhere near decision making which they strongly viewed conflict resolution to be part of.

The women who agreed that some women had successfully participated in conflict resolution had done so with exemplary results. They attribute these responses to the grassroot communities and the impact women had in rallying people together like during the cross-

border conflicts between some tribes within Kenya which included the Kisii and Maasais on the Transmara issue.

The women also pointed out that the negligible roles played by women in conflict resolution was as a result of the fact that their roles were relegated to the basic tenets of society and not the high powered power brokering games that were seen during the resolution of the conflict in the Kenyan post-election crisis, 2007/2008.

### **Liberia**

The position of Liberian women was and still is weak, due to the importance of customary law in society but particularly due to the civil wars that destroyed the country's stability. The weight of tradition remains strong and married women have few rights within their family and within the society as a whole. However, Liberian women have a particular situation as they are more educated than their counterparts in other African countries (for instance, the literacy ratio is one of the highest in Africa). Furthermore, women are very active through civil society, and at all of its levels, from rural farmers to urban elites. Thus, women's movements actively brought the two Liberian civil wars to an end.<sup>122</sup>

That women are under-represented in decision making structures at all community and regional levels in West Africa is not just a mere statement but is actually the glaring evidence of the inequalities between men and women. This is once again largely attributed to patriarchy, the high level of illiteracy, and poverty. This fact has however not deterred women from taking on the roles of peacemakers. Thus, the women of West Africa have been known as traditional peacemakers for generations.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> [www.wikigender.org/TheRoleofWomeninEndingLiberia](http://www.wikigender.org/TheRoleofWomeninEndingLiberia)'s retrieved on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2011 at 11.30pm.

<sup>123</sup> Thelma Elijor, "Women's Involvement in Peace building. A Platform for Involvement in Decision Making: The WIPNET Experience." Geneva, 3 December 2003,

Michael Fleshman<sup>124</sup> has quoted Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Her Excellency the President of Liberia, as having remarked at one time that: "Women are more concerned about people.... They are in the homes carrying the burden of the home and the family." From that experience, "women bring a sensibility, sensitivity, to those things which bring peace." The President was making these remarks while commenting on conflict resolution and the input women can make.

The researcher looked to various publications to ascertain the role played by women in the processes of conflict resolution in the country. Liberia had its first coup in 1980 and the women engaged in peace building in these times by way of providing food for the internally displaced, provide clothes among other humanitarian assistance initiatives throughout the country during the conflict times. It is noteworthy that women were never actually physically involved in the formal peace building processes. The women's initiatives towards realizing peace throughout the war torn country were carried through grassroots organizations and community based organizations.

The steps taken by women during and after the conflict did not exempt women from enduring the atrocities that are rife during wars and conflict. The Liberian women's main contribution to the peace and/or conflict resolution process in their country was largely in the form of campaigns to raise awareness on the conflict situation as well as organizing demonstrations to rally fellow Liberians around the issue affecting them. When the peace process moved to Accra, the women did not give up but rather journeyed to Ghana to ensure that the parties at the peace negotiation table did not forget that they were still suffering the brunt of the conflict.

The various instances of violent conflicts that started in the 1990s in West Africa created a new role for women. Because the men were embroiled in active conflict, grassroots women's

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<sup>124</sup>Michael Fleshman, "African women struggle for a seat at the peace table", Africa Recovery, Vol.16 #4 (February 2003), page 1

groups started to organize, creating networks of information to protect their families and their communities. Women would inform each other of new attacks, safe routes and other vital information so needed in situations when life and death is concerned. Women were frequently using information they got from male family members involved in the conflict. It is notable that the hopelessness of all parties involved and the increasing violence brought women together.<sup>125</sup>

Leymah Gbowee<sup>126</sup> was broken by a savage civil war until her bitterness turned to action, with the realization that women are all too often the silent sufferers in prolonged conflicts. Gbowee was instrumental in galvanizing women across Liberia in 2003 to force a peace in the region; she organized Christian and Muslim women to demonstrate together, founding the Liberian Mass Action for Peace, launching protests and even a sex strike.

Gbowee remembers that upon arrival in Accra, Ghana, they stayed protesting for three months during which time they took to barricading doors of the negotiation room to keep the negotiators at the table until they resolved the issues that were pending. Ms. Gbowee remembers the resilience of the Liberian women in keeping up a spirited fight even in the face of continued atrocities which had resulted in the loss of their husbands and children. They never lost sight of the need for resolution of the conflict that was burning their country.

WIPNET (Women in Peace Building Network) which spans across Nigeria, Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Benin, Senegal, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, and Ghana, mobilized women during the Liberian civil wars with the goal of advocating peace and security within the nation. The Network was involved in the peace process through its project, Women of

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<sup>125</sup> Rachel Amram, "Mano River Women's Peace Network (Marwopnet): Women's inclusion as a tool for peace building", University of Pittsburgh, retrieved from [www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/standinggroups/documents/Amram.pdf](http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/standinggroups/documents/Amram.pdf) on 3rd September 2011 at 11.04pm

<sup>126</sup> [www.thedailybeast.com/contributors/leymah-gbowee.html](http://www.thedailybeast.com/contributors/leymah-gbowee.html) retrieved on 3rd September 2011 at 10.35pm.

Liberia Mass Action for Peace Campaign.<sup>127</sup> WIPNET members directly engaged with rebels in disarmament camps to convince them to “*lay down their arms*”, which fact had the cumulative effect of speeding up the disarmament process” thereby bringing the conflict to an end.

Yet another women’s grouping that also worked tirelessly to make an impact on resolution of the conflict in Liberia. The Mano River Women’s Peace Network (MARWOPNET) was also engaged in the peace process in Liberia through the presence of its delegation during peace talks and has continued to remain a vital part of Liberian reconstruction.<sup>128</sup>

Various publications have documented statistics and a record of activities undertaken by the women of Liberia in demonstration of their displeasure at the continuing conflict that was not only killing their children and husbands, had also succeeded in dividing people in more ethnic and religious line than ever before seen in Liberia. The women though lacking in both financial and other resources, used the best weapon they had – themselves. The women chose to put themselves in the line of fire to contribute to the efforts that were already being made to save their country. The situation in Liberia definitely took a turn towards resolution because of the persistent intervention of women in redirecting the attention of politicians trained on the real issues which were the conflict itself.

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<sup>127</sup> [www.responsibilitytoprotect.org](http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org) retrieved on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2011 at 10.16pm

<sup>128</sup> [www.marwopnet.org/welcome.htm](http://www.marwopnet.org/welcome.htm) retrieve on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2011 at 10.24pm



## **CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Findings**

Throughout history, Kenyan women have been systematically excluded from decision making processes in general and peace building in particular. The mechanisms that were established in response to the post December 2007 developments in Kenya were a classic case of exclusion of women from national decision making processes. The fact that there were some women at the mediation table, as explained earlier in this thesis, were mainly women drawn from the educated, powerful women who also doubled as powerful politicians in the country. The researcher opines that the representation at the table and in other conflict resolution should have included the ordinary women folk and not only the power brokers.

The difference between the Kenyan experience and the Liberian one is that the Liberian intervention by women was led and carried through by women and this may, among other reasons, have contributed greatly to the election of the first African female president. The persistence of the women in Liberia galvanized women into action in the entire Western Africa region as it brought to the fore challenges women face in conflict situations and more importantly it highlighted the need to have women as equal partners with men in negotiating conflict resolution.

The exclusion of women from peace building and conflict resolution processes in Kenya is not grounded in reason, law or fact. Women have participated in varying degrees in the planning and execution of conflicts as well as conflict resolution in Kenya's conflict areas. On the one hand, they have participated as transporters of arms as well as custodians and rescuers of victims. On the other hand, women initiatives have made valuable contributions

to conflict resolution and peace building such as for instance in Wajir and the North Rift region. They have mobilized resources, victims and perpetrators and facilitated reconciliation among warring communities.<sup>129</sup>

Although Kenya has signed both the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women as well as United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325), none of them have been entrenched in Kenya's peace keeping architecture.<sup>130</sup> As a result of the lip service paid by government towards inclusion of women in all decision making structures in the country, the positive roles of Kenyan women peace makers have gone unrecognized and unsupported.

Where women have been given the chance to participate in peace building and conflict resolution, they have ended up with inconsequential tasks that contribute nothing to the conflict resolution process such as setting up the meeting venue, rapporteuring at the meeting, or praying at the beginning and the end of the meeting. This exclusion of women from active conflict resolution is one of the reasons why efforts at conflict resolution and peace building in Kenya have by and large failed to produce lasting peace. This has left the country in a fragile peace state where due to non-inclusion of women in all sectors of conflict resolution, the women fail to own the conflict resolution process and sometimes see it as a foreign solution undertaken in the boardroom without consulting them.

Pursuant to the post election crisis in Kenya after the 2007 disputed general elections, Kenya is at a critical stage in its life as a nation state that can only be stabilized by continued work towards the achievement of lasting peace. While the researcher acknowledges the importance of the Kofi Anan led process and the peace deal that ended the violence, the researcher

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<sup>129</sup> [www.peacedirect.org/Kenya](http://www.peacedirect.org/Kenya) retrieved on 4th September 2011 at 12.34am

<sup>130</sup> [www.womenforjustice.org/WOJA\\_files/Page2615.htm](http://www.womenforjustice.org/WOJA_files/Page2615.htm) retrieved on 4th September 2011 at 12.34am

opines that the real peace process must happen in the spaces where ordinary Kenyans live their daily lives that is in their homes, their neighborhoods, where they work, at the markets they visit, in the schools that their children attend as well as social and/or entertainment spots they frequent.

The realization of the of the tough task ahead of the nation and its people, the fact that real peace cannot be achieved unless the cumulative interests of all parties affected and or touched by the conflict are taken into account. This specifically speaks to the involvement and/or increased involvement of women in the processes with a view to ensuring that women are recognized, supported and coordinated.

Angela E.V. King<sup>131</sup>, the experiences of women have shown that, despite their successes, particularly in grassroots mobilization and campaigning, women continue to be marginalized and ignored. The challenges they face are manifold. They seek peace for their communities. They seek peace that is rooted in social justice and freedom. And at the same time, they are struggling for gender equality against long-term structural factors, which reinforce social and gender inequalities and inhibit women's leadership potential.

The Researcher concurs with King's hypothesis that was set out in three challenges that she sees as facing women generally and they are as follows;<sup>132</sup>

- i. First, women are poorly represented at higher levels of decision-making. To illustrate this point, King pointed out that out of the 146 Heads of State and Government who attended the 2000 Millennium Summit, at the United Nations Headquarters, New York, only four were women and none of these came from Africa (Latvia, Finland,

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<sup>131</sup> Angela E.V. King, Assistant Secretary-General & Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, speaking at the Africa Women's Forum's Third International Conference on "Women and Conflict Management in Africa" 2001.

<sup>132</sup> [womenshistory.about.com/library/etext/speech](http://womenshistory.about.com/library/etext/speech) retrieved on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2011 at 1:13am

New Zealand and Bangladesh). Measures such as proportional representation, quotas, and a percentage of women on lists of candidates successfully used in Tanzania and South Africa, for example, will enable women to move ahead numerically, and transform parliamentary agendas. But merely having more women in positions of power is not enough. Women's participation in all levels of government is crucial and must become an accepted feature of public life.

In the same breath, King proposes a way of countering this challenge by stating that current power structures have to recognize that by denying women the right to be part of the decision making process, they are denying true democracy and the more comprehensive political agenda which it introduces.

- ii. A second challenge is gender-based violence against women. Violence against women during armed conflict continues to be a major problem. Civilian casualties, most of them women and children, account today for 90 per cent of war-related deaths. Although the statutes and rules of the International Criminal Tribunals on the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda and now of Sierra Leone, and of the International Criminal Court include rape as a crime against humanity, and sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and other forms of sexual violence, respect and protection of women's rights by all governments is needed.

King's proposal for confronting this challenge is to advocate and promote the Campaign of Zero Tolerance to Violence against Women.

- iii. Perhaps, the most insidious barrier to women's equal participation in decision-making and leadership, however, is persistent stereotypical attitudes towards the respective gender roles of women and men. This constitutes the third challenge.

To meet this challenge, the media throughout Africa must play a key role in highlighting good practices in gender equality and where women in peace succeed. Women themselves must be prepared to work together in a joint sisterhood covering the continent to gain recognition as a solid force not only as individuals in order to participate in peace missions, drawing up peace accords and rebuilding communities.

In summation, King points out that without a voice in decision making women have no access to resources. Without access to resources and to the institutions which shape social norms and attitudes, women will continue to be marginalized. To sustain these efforts and to change attitudes, women need support networks and the support of the international community. These sentiments by King are echoed by the researcher's.

#### 4.2 Hypotheses Testing

This research from the onset sought to prove the following hypotheses;

- Inclusion of women in conflict resolution is necessary so as to ensure fruitful resolution processes;
- That women have a long history of being peace makers and that they are the missing link in effective conflict resolution in Africa;
- That women have an equal right as men to participate in conflict resolution processes;

The researcher has from analyzing both written material (which have been quoted) and interviews with people who lived through the conflict in Kenya, indeed shown that women have not been included and/or seen to be worthy partners to be considered for inclusion in the conflict resolution processes and/or peace building exercises.

The case study of Liberia served to highlight the impact women can have in a process that can keep leaders and politicians in general focused on the conflict situation and thereby contributing towards the realization of peace in their communities. The women in Kenya on the other hand were not included in the main peace process spearheaded by Kofi Annan, the former Secretary General of the United Nations. In light of this realization, the first hypothesis sought to be proved by the researcher is thus proven.

The second hypothesis has also been proven as the engrained patriarchy has resulted in relegating women to the traditional roles of caring for homes and their families. These traditional nurturing roles, which have been perfected by women overtime, have been seen especially in the examination of Liberia been turned and applied them in the conflict situation and thereby resulted in bringing peace to the country. By this the researcher is making specific reference to the fact that in the Liberian example, women being unable to take up active arms in an open and guerilla manner, opted to use what was readily themselves – their own selves. This basically means women took the fight to the president in a more pacific manner, through organized peaceful demonstrations. The women used the suffering they endured as mothers and wives who had lost their husbands and children to cry to the world and bring attention to their plight. And it worked.

In the Kenyan case, the interviewees carried out and the inclusion of women in the Kofi Annan led to a more gendered process in resolving the conflict situation. This was however not as more clearly seen as the Liberian case where the women even took long road trips to Accra, Ghana to ensure that they keep up the pressure on their leaders and indeed the leadership of West African states who were working towards a solution. This clear example of the Liberian case proves the researcher's second hypothesis that in fact the women's need and desire for peace, being peace makers and peace builders even in their families led them

to pursue peace for their families and indeed their entire country. The women in this case knew very well that armed conflict had not succeeded in bringing peace in both Kenya and Liberia and hence the resolution to pursue mediation and other peace building initiatives which have been preferred by women. The women and men interviewed in this research have also proven that though perceived as peace makers in their communities, cannot be entrusted with the role of peace building as that constitutes decision making roles which are left to men.

With respect to the third hypothesis, the inequalities that abound between men and women are still quite a thorn in the flesh of many an African society. The researcher has found out in the course of this research that in fact, women have been excluded from peace process as it has largely been deemed to be the preserve of men. This is even despite the fact that laws both national and international call for there to be equality between men and women in terms of access to both leadership roles but also key issues like access to resources.

The exclusion of women from conflict resolution in Liberia and Kenya was highlighted by the fact that even during the Kenyan mediation process there were only two Kenyan women leaders at the table, who in the researcher's opinion did not in fact represent the grassroots population but rather the elite in Kenyan society. Even among the interviewees, the researcher found that the reluctance of including women in conflict resolution is largely due to the perception that women were not up to the task of leadership which is the preserve of men.

In Liberia, being a patriarchal as Kenya, the place of women was relegated to the nurturing of families. This, as evidenced by even the theories set out in this study shown that women have been ignored and denied a place at the conflict resolution table.

## CHAPTER FIVE: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Conflict is a gendered activity: women and men have different access to resources, power and decision making before, during and after conflicts. The experience of women and men in situations of tension, war, and post-conflict reconstruction is significantly different. Approximately 80% of today's civilian casualties are women and 80% of all refugees and internally displaced people worldwide are women and children. As emphasised in the Platform for Action of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, "while entire communities suffer the consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society and their sex".<sup>133</sup>

The occurrence of conflict is almost as old as mankind himself. Some of the greatest consequences that arise from conflicts are armed conflict, rape and sexual assault on women and girls, destruction of property as well as murder and other extrajudicial killings. Despite this apparent and almost always reached at conclusion that women are victims of war and conflict, women should not be viewed solely as victims of war.

Women assume the key role of ensuring family livelihood in the midst of chaos and destruction, and are particularly active in the peace movement at the grassroots level. They work at realizing this by way of undertaking activities that are aimed at cultivating peace within their communities and their countries at large. However, the absence of women at the peace negotiating table is undeniable and cannot be wished away any longer.

Increasingly in response to modern day conflicts, international humanitarian agencies have taken to recruiting women to work in conflict zones as administrative personnel, medical

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<sup>133</sup> Resolution 1385 (2004), "Conflict prevention and resolution: the role of women", Parliamentary Assembly retrieved from [www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/session/presskit/fs5.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/session/presskit/fs5.htm) -on 4/9/11 at 1.54am.



personnel. This in the researcher's opinion still fails to address the issue participation of women at the negotiating table during peace processes. The translation of this is that women have mostly been absent from formal peace negotiations and policy-making processes on war and peace issues. There is a growing understanding of the role of women in conflict resolution and the specific skills and abilities they bring to the decision-making process. This however should be followed through by action to ensure that women participate in the peace process.

The discussion concerning women's roles in war and peace also tends to focus largely on the issue of how war affects women and on the role they can play after the termination of wars and conflicts. One issue that should receive greater prominence is women's potential role in preventing wars and avoiding rifts, social inequalities and mismanagement. Assuming women are more peace-oriented, more risk-aware and better at communication, women's increased participation in politics and in decision making should have a salutary effect and should be given more weight."<sup>134</sup>

The constraining effects on women that curtails their increased participation in conflict resolution and peace building processes, is greatly attributed to their relegation to the household and the private spaces of society which two factors are spurred along by the tenets of patriarchy. What tends to be ignored is the historical reality that women's work of feeding, rearing, and healing humans, building and rebuilding communities under conditions of constant change, including war, environmental catastrophe, plague, and continual push-pull migrations, has produced resources and skills within women that have been critical not only to human survival but to human development.

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<sup>134</sup> Benard, Cheryl, "Assessing the Truths and Myths of Women in War and Peace," The United States Institute of Peace Conference Perspectives on Grassroots Peacebuilding: The Roles of Women in War and Peace, September 14, 1999.

The nurturing and peace seeking nature of women is yet another problematic issue which is often, in the analysis of reconciliation and reconstruction of post war and conflict scenarios, seen as a 'natural' extension of women's role in society, is taken for granted. This means that the work of is unrecognized and frequently under-resourced. It is stripped of its political meaning and rendered, like much of women's work, invisible. Women remain marginalized, their problems ignored, their experiences unanalyzed, and their skills under-utilized.<sup>135</sup>

The question that must be addressed, and has remained unaddressed, is when does capitalizing on women's strengths in peacemaking and conflict resolution become perpetuating traditional sex role stereotypes, stereotypes that rationalize domination and inequality, which are indeed two roots of violent conflict. Aware of this contradiction, some activists explicitly reject traditional stereotypes of women, arguing that the values and attitudes that give rise to these stereotypes are inextricably linked to the values and attitudes that give rise to war itself.<sup>136</sup>

In light of the views of women which are perpetuated by the traditional framework, the intervention of women in the into the public world as political leaders dealing with questions of war and peace is seen as undesirable, even detrimental. Yet the same traditional role which often precludes women from public political life has also provided a major entry point, and justification, into politics.

Women's inclusion in conflict resolution processes as the researcher found out, cannot be left for determination to the whims and wishes of those in power but rather must be reflected in policy and actually be implemented for the full effect of women's participation to be felt in conflict resolution. The UN resolution on the participation of women in peace and conflict

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<sup>135</sup> [www.gppac.net/documents/pbp/4/2\\_intro.htm](http://www.gppac.net/documents/pbp/4/2_intro.htm) retrieved on 11/9/11 at 12.45pm

<sup>136</sup> Ibid above

issues must also find expression in a country's legislation and policy and further be fast tracked in terms of implementation to ensure that countries work towards lasting resolution of conflicts.

The inclusion and indeed participation of women in conflict resolution, as seen by the example of Liberia has been known to have a positive impact in ensuring effective conflict resolution. The interviews carried out by the researcher also succeeded in showing that while women in Kibera had not actively participated in main stream conflict resolution, they had taken on the roles of peace makers in their communities in their own small way and there had been positive impact because of that participation.

As the feminist theory propounds, the equal participation of women in conflict resolution as indeed in other areas of conflict resolution is important as it gives women, who constitutes at least half of the world's population an opportunity to participate in resolution of conflicts which affect them and their communities. The significance of women's participation in conflict resolution cannot be underestimated as they have proved that they have, probably, more desire for peace for their communities and indeed families than their men folk.

Indeed, perhaps because women tend to be victimized by intractable conflicts more than men, and gain less from their continuation than do men (who gain jobs, prestige, honor, challenge, excitement, travel, in addition, of course, to mortal risk), women may be in a particularly strong position to work for peace.

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