

**FACTORS HINDERING PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL
CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE BUILDING: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA
(1990 – 2010)**

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R50/71299/08**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT FOR THE
AWARD OF A DEGREE IN MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT
MANAGEMENT AT THE INSTITUTE OF DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL
STUDIES (IDIS), UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my original work and has never been presented in any other University or examination body.

Signature:  Date: *9th Nov 2011*

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the Nairobi University supervisor.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many thanks to the Almighty God for guiding me through the entire period of project making and to my family for their encouragement and support during this entire period

Many thanks too to my supervisor for her patience during this entire research period. You gave me the chance to see my best side.

In addition, thanks to my family members and friends for the encouragement and support.

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to all those who believe in peace in the world and specifically women devoted to realisation of lasting peace in the world.

ABSTRACT

Despite the fact that women have often been on the frontlines of urging the end to conflict and providing the support that allows their families and communities to survive, they have mostly remained on the periphery of formal peace and reconstruction processes. The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors which hinder women participation in international conflict prevention and peace building using the case study of Kenya. The study aimed at finding out the socio- cultural as well as political factors hindering women participation in international conflict prevention and peace building with a case study of Kenya.

The study adopted a descriptive survey as it was deemed the best strategy to fulfil the objectives of this study. A descriptive study enabled extensive collection of secondary and primary data. Secondary data was collected from an in depth literature review while primary data was gathered through interviewing participants in Nakuru District. Analysis was done through content analysis.

The study has found that social cultural as well as political factors hinder the participation of women in conflict resolution and peace building. The study thus adopts the alternative hypothesis which holds that women role in conflict prevention and peace building efforts is significantly hindered by social-cultural and political factors.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

COGWO-Coalition for Grassroots Women Organization

CSOs –Civil Society Organizations

DRC –Democratic Republic of Congo

ECOWAS –Economic community of West African States

FPCT –Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory

GAD –Gender and Development

INXA — Iskuxirka Nabada iyo Xuquuqal Adamiga

MFUA - United Movements and Fronts of Azaouad

MINUSTAH - United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti

NGO –Non Governmental Organization

OECD –Organization For Economic Development and Cooperation

RUF - Revolutionary United Front of Sierra

SGBV –Sexual and Gender Based Violence

SFCPD - Sulima Fishing Community Development Project

UN –United Nations

UNIFEM –United Nations Fund For Women

UNMIK –United Nations Mission in Kosovo

UNSCR 1325 – United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

USAID –United States Agency for International Development

WID –Women in Development

VAW –Violence against Women

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In today's world, with conflicts in almost every region, the recognition has grown that development and security issues have become inextricably intertwined. Underdevelopment raises the likelihood of instability; war destroys development gains. While women are at times among those who perpetrate conflict, far more often they are among those who suffer the greatest harm. In today's conflicts, more than 70 per cent of the casualties are civilians-most of them women and children. Women also face specific and devastating forms of violence related to gender, including rape as a weapon of war and sexual slavery, practices that in turn greatly increase their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS¹. As women struggle to keep families together and care for the wounded on the margins of fragile war economies, they are the first to be affected by infrastructure breakdown, and may be forced into survival strategies that involve exploitation.

Despite the fact that women have often been on the frontlines of urging the end to conflict and providing the support that allows their families and communities to survive, they have mostly remained on the periphery of formal peace and reconstruction processes. In recent years, recognition has grown that this not only contravenes the right of women to participate in decisions that affect their lives, but that for a sustainable peace to take hold, women must take an equal role in shaping it. Their perspectives and experiences are critical to stability and inclusive

¹ Uganda Aids Commission, *The National Strategic Framework of HIV/AIDs Activities in Uganda 2000/1 to 2005/6*, 2007

governance. Recovery also provides a chance to strengthen gender justice through the formulation of laws, judicial systems and political processes that uphold women's equality².

In 2000, the UN Security Council reaffirmed the essential role that women play in peace-building in its historic Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. UNIFEM provided insights and information to the UN Member States that drafted the resolution. Its wide-ranging provisions call for women's full participation in all aspects of peace-building, from negotiations to post-war reconstruction³. It was noted that involving women and gender expertise in peace building activities globally is essential for reconstituting political, legal, cultural and socio-economic and social structures so that they can deliver on gender equality goals. Indeed, peace building may well offer the single greatest opportunity to redress gender inequities and injustices of the past while setting new precedents for the future. But these opportunities can be enhanced significantly – or constrained – by how the international community sets its priorities for recovery and uses its resources for peace building

The role of women in peace building has received some attention in countries such as Bosnia–Herzegovina where Helms⁴ noted that women have been among the most active leaders of the burgeoning nongovernmental organization (NGO) sector in post-war Bosnia–Herzegovina.

² Chris Dolan. "Collapsing Masculinities and Weak States –A case study from Northern Uganda", in F. Cleaver (ed.), *Masculinities Matter: Men, gender and Development* London, (2003).

³ International Crisis Group, *Beyond Victimhood: Women's Peacebuilding in Sudan, Congo and Uganda*, Crisis Group Africa Report N°112, 28 June 2006

⁴ Elissa Helms., *Women as Agents of Ethnic Reconciliation? Women's NGOs And International Intervention In Postwar Bosnia–Herzegovina*, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 26, No. 1, p 16, 2003

Helm further argues that in post-war transitional recovery, women's increased care-burdens and the gender specific impacts of macro-economic, labour and social protection policies are largely unaddressed. In Africa it has been noted that women rights are violated during conflicts. These violations include rape, which perpetrated by even those who are supposed to protect the women. Women have thus taken a proactive role in ensuring that conflicts do not recur. This is especially in the volatile central Africa and the Great Lakes Region. Experiences in Burundi, Somalia and DRC have shown that women's' perspectives on these issues can break deadlocks reached between political parties and that unity among women across political parties can create a better climate for negotiations.⁵.

Kenya like many African countries has experienced various conflicts since its formation as a nation. The earliest recorded conflicts were during the pre colonial times as communities raided each other and fought for animals, food and also women. During the colonial period the Kenyan people resisted against the European invasion and fought against the colonizers. After the colonial powers overwhelmed the Kenyan people the country experienced a spell marked with fewer conflicts but in the agitation for independence one of the worst conflict occurred as the Mau Mau fought the colonial powers. After independence the nation attained its independence conflicts were expected to be a thing of the past however this was not to be. The 'Shifta War' whereby the Kenyan with Somali ties were fighting for secession turned the North Eastern parts of the country into a battleground. After Shifta War was ended by the government

⁵ Jennifer. F. Klot, "UNDP/BCPR Gender Mainstreaming in Crisis Prevention and Recovery, A Forward Looking Review, (February 2006).p23

there ensued vicious pastoralist conflicts which have persisted up to date. With the clamour for multiparty democracy in the 1990s, the nation started experiencing another form of politically ethnic clashes which culminated in the 2007/2008 post election violence which nearly led to the collapse of the nation. In all these conflicts women and children have been the main victims and this has led women to pursue active roles in the peace building efforts in the conflicts. However, it has been observed that the contribution of women in these processes is negligible. Therefore, this proposed study wishes to investigate the factors that hinder the participation of women in peace building in Kenya with reference to the period between 1990 up to 2010⁶.

1.2 Problem Statement

Historical events have shown that women are the ones who bear the brunt of conflicts in the society. This is despite the fact that they are rarely actively involved in conflicts. As women struggle to keep families together and care for the wounded on the margins of fragile war economies, they are the first to be affected by infrastructure breakdown, and may be forced into survival strategies that involve exploitation. In the past decade women have thus undertaken various roles in peace building. Kenyan women have endured the most of the various conflicts, which have been experienced in the country in the past two decades. This has forced women to be actively involved in peace building efforts. The role and nature of peace building activities

⁶ KNHRC *A Report of the 2007 General Elections: Final Report* retrieved on 4th November 2009 from http://www.khrc.or.ke/documents/violating_the_vote.pdf, (2008), Nairobi, pg 231

undertaken by women in Kenya has received little attention by scholars. First, Kathina ⁷ undertook a study on women role in peace building efforts in Kenya. The study noted that women generally show a keen interest in peace processes but, the peace processes often preclude their full participation. It further argued that when peace negotiations and rebuilding destroyed economies become formal exercises, women fade into the background. Odongo⁸ undertook a study on the role of women in peace-building in Kenya, focusing on the 1992 Rift-valley ethnic clashes. He found that women were excluded from the peace processes. Women play an active role in how conflicts evolve sometimes in their escalation or prolongation, but more often in their prevention and resolution. Odongo also indicated that to achieve sustainable and durable peace, the full and equal participation of women and girls and the integration of gender perspectives in all aspects of conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace building is essential. From 1992, women began to get minimally involved in peace building and conflict resolution processes. However, from the foregoing discussion, their involvement and active participation has been under studied and rarely acknowledged.

This study seeks to investigate women's involvement and their role if any in peace building over the years studied in Kenya. The study further aims at investigating the factors

⁷ Monica Juma Kathina, *Unveiling Women as Pillars of Peace: Peace Building in Communities Fractured by Conflict in Kenya*, An Interim Report Management Development And Governance Division Bureau For Development Policy Nations Development Programme 2000 pp 74/75

⁸ George Odongo Amara, *Role of women in peace-building in Kenya: Focusing on the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes*, Masters Thesis, Southern and Eastern African Regional Centre for Women's law, University of Zimbabwe 2004, pp 12-13

which hinder women full inclusion and participation in conflict prevention, resolution and peace building processes with a case study of Kenya in the period between 1990 and 2010.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study was to investigate the factors which hinder women participation in international conflict prevention and peace building using the case study of Kenya.

The secondary objectives include:

1. To determine the key factors that underlies women's marginality in peace making, conflict prevention and post conflict reconstruction and rebuilding
2. To examine and analyse the socio- cultural factors hindering women participation in international conflict prevention and peace building in Kenya
3. To determine the political factors hindering participation of women in international conflict prevention and peace building in Kenya
4. To recommend ways in which women participation can be improved in international conflict prevention and peace building in Kenya

1.4 Justification of the Study

The study sought to assess the factors that limit and marginalize participation of women in conflict prevention, peace building processes and mechanisms and conflict resolution in Kenya over the past two decades. There are strong reasons why the study feels that women in

Kenya are crucial stakeholder in the peace process. Though conflicts disproportionately have a strong impact on women, as rape and conflicts survivors, widows, and heads of households and care takers of orphans, the role of women in conflict prevention and peace building is limited. This study wishes to find out the factors which have led to this disconnect. This proposed study also is a complimentary effort given the various ongoing reconciliation endeavours being undertaken in the country. The study is also equally important given the fact that Kenya is surrounded by the international community, countries in the sub region particularly where conflicts are rife or have come out of conflict thus this study will provide best practices and models from which to draw lessons. The findings from this study will inform policy formulation so as to ensure a strong focus interventions aimed at strengthening women's participation and contribution in peace building and reconciliation processes. The data from this study will go a long way in increasing the visibility of women's role in peace building and reconciliation as well as highlighting the key issues affecting women that need stronger advocacy in the future.

Academically the study will add to the body of knowledge on the subject of conflicts and peace building. The findings of the study will shed light on the factors which hold back the contribution of women in conflict prevention and peace building. The study will contribute towards future research. As the researcher will rely on the scholarly works of other scholars, this work will also be used by future scholars in their research work.

The twenty year period running from 1990-2010 has been picked for the study as it has experienced a fair share of the conflicts in Kenya. The conflicts in Kenya are usually politically incited and occur in periods leading to elections and period after elections. The 1990-2010

decades have witnessed a fair share of various conflicts with the most catastrophic being the December 2007/8 post-election violence.

The findings of the study too will be a guiding tool and yard stick to policy makers in matters of women's role and involvement in peace building processes and mechanisms, conflict prevention and resolution nationally, regionally and internationally. This will be of keen interest on policy guidelines to governments and organizations on peace and conflict matters.

1.5 Literature Review

1.5.1 Introduction

This section presents literature largely portraying the place of woman hood in the traditional African setting. It proceeds to discuss the understanding of peace building in the traditional African perspective. It then proceeds to discuss the role of women in conflicts and in peace building. The literature also touches on the factors which hinder women participation in conflict resolution and peace building.

1.5.2 Women in African Society

Research and writings on the place of womanhood in African traditional societies figure prominently in African literary and social science literature. Notable among them are female novelists whose works are reviewed below. Emecheta's ⁹ writings, for example, focus purely on the oppression of patriarchy in traditional African societies and therefore on the discourse of protest against the cultural injustice on the girl child in traditional societies. Her writings, in other words, draw serious attention to the brutalities, subordination and other oppressive realities and manifestations of the trammels of tradition on women in Africa. And her aim is to use the avenue of fiction to counsel modern African men towards putting a halt to the negative experience of patriarchal exploitation of women in Africa.

⁹ Buchi. Emecheta, *In the Ditch*. (London: Allison & Busby Ltd, 1972). *Second Class Citizen*. (Allison & Busby Ltd. 1974); *The Bride Price*. (London: Allison & Busby Ltd. 1976); *The Slave Girl*;(London: Allison & Busby Ltd. 1977). *The Joys of Motherhood*.(London: Allison & Busby Ltd. 1979); *The Moonlight Bride*.(London: Oxford University Press.1980); *Destination Biafra*.(London: Allison & Busby Ltd1982).

Nwapa's¹⁰ works and commitment, on the other hand, try to expose the woman's situation within traditional and contemporary African societies, especially her role as wife and mother. She highlights on the importance attached to having children and thereby stresses the unenviable lot of childless or barren women within the community. She examines the necessity for economic independence through determination and hard work, a sine qua non for self-fulfilment and freedom of action for a woman in the African context. Her writings, as much as those of her colleagues earlier mentioned, indeed aim at showing that women have multiple capacities that go beyond mere relevance for domestic assignment. To validate this, her female creations are, in general, industrious, businesslike and economically independent, pursuing with seriousness of purpose and determination whatever they have set their minds upon. Her principal point of view is that modern African society must change its attitude towards the woman, marriage and motherhood, which, desirable as it is, constitutes only an option for womanbeing in contemporary Africa. And that, women, when given the chance, can tower over men in mental and material achievements.

The positive results of such writings as the above in Africa are, among others, the current sensitization of the conscience of the men folk towards redressing the inattention to the girl child's education and welfare in African societies. Through their discourse of protest, and their other works which show that whatever a man can do, a woman can do it even better, they call attention to the plights of women in Africa, to the injustices of patriarchal orientation of the

¹⁰ Flora Nwapa; *Efuru*. (London: Heinemann 1966); *Idu*. (London: Heinemann.1966); *Never Again*; (London: Heinemann 1975); *One is Enough*. (Enugu Tana Press Ltd 1981).

traditional culture against the girl child, and to the need for African parents to take interest in giving adequate start in life to the girl child. The sequel is the development, presently, of a new vision for a balanced education of the modern girl child in contemporary Africa¹¹.

Notwithstanding the immense positive contributions of such writings as have just been highlighted, feminist studies in Africa have a number of limitations. One is their one-sided emphasis on the theme of woman subordination in Africa. By their omission to give account of the positive aspects of womanbeing in traditional Africa their writings overshadow and fail to draw out the immense contributions and the agentic role of women in peace building and conflict resolutions in traditional African societies¹².

Ntahobari and Ndayiziga¹³ writings, for example, focus purely on the oppression of patriarchy in traditional African societies and therefore on the discourse of protest against the cultural injustice on the girl child in traditional societies. Their writings, in other words, draw serious attention to the brutalities, subordination and other oppressive realities and manifestations of the trammels of tradition on women in Africa. And her aim is to use the avenue of fiction to counsel modern African men towards putting a halt to the negative experience of patriarchal exploitation of women in Africa.

¹¹ Elizabeth Ferris ; *Women, War and Peace*. Research Paper No. 14. (Fessehassion, Arster Sweden Uppsala Life and Peace Institute 1993) Pp 38-39

¹² Perlas Villanueva; *International Consultation on women as Peacemakers: Daughters of War, Women of Peace*. Women in Action (1995). P23

¹³ Ntahobari, J., & Ndayiziga, B. (2003). The Role of Burundian Women in the Peaceful Settlement of Conflicts. In UNESCO, *Women and Peace in Africa* (pp.11-26), Paris: UNESCO Workshops.

Nwapa's works and commitment, on the other hand, try to expose the woman's situation within traditional and contemporary African societies, especially her role as wife and mother. She highlights on the importance attached to having children and thereby stresses the unenviable lot of childless or barren women within the community. She examines the necessity for economic independence through determination and hard work, a *sine qua non* for self-fulfillment and freedom of action for a woman in the African context. Her writings, as much as those of her colleagues earlier mentioned, indeed aim at showing that women have multiple capacities that go beyond mere relevance for domestic assignment.

To validate this, her female creations are, in general, industrious, businesslike and economically independent, pursuing with seriousness of purpose and determination whatever they have set their minds upon. Her principal point of view is that modern African society must change its attitude towards the woman, marriage and motherhood, which, desirable as it is, constitutes only an option for *womanbeing* in contemporary Africa. And that women, when given the chance, can tower over men in mental and material achievements. Nwapa's works also constitute a testimony of the indispensability of the woman in the social and economic fabric of African community. They demonstrate the confidence she has in the ability of African women to lead a life of fulfillment within or outside marriage unfettered by men, provided they are economically independent.

1.5.3 Women in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building

It is against the background just presented that one can then see the great importance of the present colloquium that the proposed study is aimed at providing an unrivalled opportunity for giving a proper space and account of the positive contributions of women in peace building and conflict resolutions in African societies with Kenya in particular.

There is, one principal published text focusing on women and peace in traditional Africa. It is that one text that is reviewed below. It is composed of a number of case studies, which were carried out between the mid-1990s and the year 2001¹⁴. These studies were aimed at evaluating the role of women and peace in six African countries: Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Namibia, Somali, and Tanzania. The six studies were undertaken within the framework of the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Women and Culture of Peace Programme. The results clearly demonstrate an interesting collage of traditional conflict resolution and peace-building practices in Africa south of the Sahara. Consequently a thorough review of the six studies will be vital, as so doing would draw attention to important insights into the relevance of traditional African women agency in peace-building and conflict resolution practices that are worthy of our attention in our current search for solutions for the peace problems bedeviling the life and opportunities of people in contemporary Africa.

¹⁴ UNESCO, *Women and Peace in Africa*. Paris: UNESCO Workshop.

The six studies taken together generated two kinds of findings. The first was on women's contributions to peace building. The second was on women's contributions to conflict resolutions in traditional Africa. These findings are presented below.

The studies brought out the meaning of peace in traditional Africa. One of the most important results from the Cameroonian study is its finding on the African traditional notion of peace. According to the traditional Cameroonian people peace is not an absence of war. The investigator in the Cameroonian study rather observes that in almost all the cultures of Cameroon, peace was equated with 'freshness', health, well being, harmony, calm and tranquillity.

Another theme that comes out of the findings in the reviewed studies is that of women and peace building through positive childcare. An important finding from all the six studies reviewed, is that African traditional societies assigned women the role of educator. Such education is the type that starts from the cradle and was effected by means of a variety of activities in which the children participated¹⁵.

In particular, these studies reported that girls were specifically trained in their duties and responsibilities as women and that the elderly women were responsible for this training. It was suggested that from early childhood, each child was exposed to a variety of songs, stories, proverbs and sayings directed by the mother or the aunt and conveyed at the fireplace or after the evening meals, which aim at reducing conflict. The songs, stories, proverbs and sayings contain

¹⁵ UNESCO, *Women and Peace in Africa*. Paris: UNESCO Workshop.

simple but clear messages and moral teachings. Speaking particularly of the people of Burundi in this issue of women and mothers as peace educators in traditional Africa, Ntahobari and Ndayiziga¹⁶ observe that it was primarily the mother who had responsibility for the upbringing of the children.

A similar trend of emphasis on the role of ‘mother as peace builder’ is also noted in the study among the people of Somali where women were shown to prepare and train the young boys who are one day going to be adult men of the society. The mothers come out as a school for the young ones. According to the report “mothers always strive to bring up their children with positive norms and ethos, with a view to building a family equipped to contribute to the foundation of a decent society. They make every effort to lay the foundation for a healthy, confident society that can take charge of its destiny. The contributions of Somali Mothers in peace building are celebrated with the mother being termed as ‘indispensable for being and learning’¹⁷. When a family is built, women are the foundation and the fundamentals of learning and values ultimately lead to decency. The same appreciation of ‘the mother as school’ is found in the report from the Cameroonian study which underscored the idea that among the traditional communities in Cameroon, the mothers taught their children, particularly the girls, how to share and to show solidarity. They showed them how to protect the weaker children and the

¹⁶ Josephine. N & Basilissa N; *The Role of Burundian Women in the Peaceful Settlement of Conflicts*. In UNESCO, *Women and Peace in Africa* (Paris: UNESCO Workshops 2003) p18

¹⁷ Mohamed Abdi Mohamed. *The Role of Somali Women in the Search for Peace*. In UNESCO, *War and Peace in Africa* . (Paris: UNESCO Workshops2003) p87

handicapped¹⁸. These observations and trends clearly demonstrate that an essential contribution of women in traditional African societies is their role as school for the young. Through their important mothering role, the culture of peace is entrenched in children as a foundation for peaceful living in families, the community and the clan.

The studies' findings also brought out the theme of women and peace building through social capital transmission. Again; one principal revelation in the studies reviewed is the idea that in traditional African society's peace germinates and flourishes only on the manure provided by the presence of a number of key African cultural values. These values include: patience, tolerance, honesty, respect for elders, communality and mutuality, compassion, regard for due discretion, gentleness, modesty, self-control, moderation, flexibility, and open-mindedness.

In line with the above, the Mohamed¹⁹ observed from his Somali study that in order to strengthen peace, Somali customary law encourages people to uphold the principles listed below, which constitute the basic pillars underpinning the culture of peace. The principles in question include: tolerance, respect, consideration for neighbours and inviolability, respect for human rights and equality. To corroborate the importance given to the last two values is the Somali saying that, 'every one has a father.' Now, in addition to the above values are the following three traditional Somali customary principles, which state that the under listed crowned heads cannot be killed: women and children. And, among the Somali, according to Mohamed there is a saying,

¹⁸ Valerie. Ngongo-Mbede, *The Traditional Mediation of Conflicts by Women in Cameroon. In UNESCO, Women and Peace in Africa* (Paris: UNESCO Workshops 2003) p29

¹⁹ Ibid

“whoever commits this sin is considered to be a coward and is ostracized. Killing women and children breed perpetual conflicts.” The next group of crowned heads is the refugees. The others are the elderly and the sick. It was revealed too that the culture of peace underlying Somali customary law also covers non-combatants and civilians.

The Burundian study showed that the education of children was the preserve of women and that it was they who played the greater part in transmitting important traditional Burundian values to future generations²⁰. Thus an important conclusion to draw from the trend of results of the six studies in relation to the notion of values’ education and peace building in traditional African societies is that women play a dominant role in the transmission, propagation and consolidation of the critical values that generate peace and harmony in traditional African societies.

The studies’ findings also highlighted women’s contribution to conflict mediation in traditional Africa. The study by Mathey et al²¹ revealed that a fundamental fact of traditional Central African societies was the sacred character of the respect given to the elderly in general and to elderly women in particular. “The elderly woman,” according to respondents from that study, “was respected by all, and played a key role in crisis management and conflict resolution. Thus, when a conflict degenerated into armed violence, an appeal would usually be made to a

²⁰ Josephine .N, & Basilissa. N; *The Role of Burundian Women in the Peaceful Settlement of Conflicts*. In UNESCO, Women and Peace in Africa Paris: UNESCO Workshops 2003 p19

²¹ M.J. Mathey, etal;*The Role Played by Women of the Central African Republic in the Prevention and Resolutions of Conflicts*. In UNESCO, Women and Peace in Africa. Paris: UNESCO Workshop 2003 p41

third party of mature years to calm the tension and reconcile the combatants. Such an appeal for mediation was usually made to a woman who enjoyed the consideration and respect of all who knew her.” The same study revealed that if war broke out among the Zande, “the oldest women of the clan would go to meet opposing clan, and to interpose themselves between the fighters in order to make them see reason. When words proved fruitless, the women would threaten to expose their nakedness or to go down on their knees. In either case, the gesture signified a curse for those who bore the responsibility for such grave acts. Because of the respect that the enemy soldiers had for the women, they would usually put down their weapons before the fateful acts were accomplished.”

The same conflict mediation charisma is reported of women among the traditional Burundi people. According to the researchers, Ntahobari and Ndayiziga²², although the traditional Burundi society was organized and structured in ways that encouraged cohesiveness and peaceful coexistence, from time to time, like any other human society, it experienced conflict. Conflicts arose between individuals, within a family, between different families or between the inhabitants of different territories. To manage such conflicts, traditional society had well-organized regulatory machinery in which women generally played a major part. Under this system a woman was recognized as having an advisory role, behind the scenes, mainly where her husband was concerned, and as playing an active part in strengthening solidarity and social

²² Josephine. N & Basilissa .N *The Role of Burundian Women in the Peaceful Settlement of Conflicts*. In UNESCO, *Women and Peace in Africa* (Paris: UNESCO Workshops 2003) p 23

harmony generally. Within this structure, women played the more unobtrusive yet leading substantial role, both in their families and within their own circle.

Indeed indications from all the six studies had been that at home, the traditional African wife exercised a considerable influence over her husband although it was reported that authority was forced to remain discreet, as it was a controversial issue in society, which could see it as weakness on the part of the husband. As a result, the wife was usually discreet in public, but became the most influential adviser of her husband in the intimacy of the bedroom.

The responses of local women in dealing with conflict, rehabilitation and peace appear to be remarkably similar around the world too²³. The women NGOs are mostly active in trauma counselling, micro-credit, voter education, gender awareness, law reform and political advocacy. The main strategy they choose to prevent conflicts from re-emerging has been to work on fundamental economic and social change. They advocate to pay greater attention to civilian security, e.g. through security sector reforms and greater participation of women in police forces, judiciary system and in peace committees. They stress the need for cost-effective indigenous approaches to provide long-term treatment to traumatized women and children, and ask the international community to make concerted efforts to acknowledge and prevent sexual abuse of women and girls.

²³ Mohamed Abdi Mohamed. *The Role of Somali Women in the Search for Peace*. In UNESCO, *War and Peace in Africa* (Paris: UNESCO Workshops 2003) p103

Along this line, Mathey et al.²⁴ reported in their study of the traditional people of the Central African Republic that: apart from the meals shared with the whole family, the traditional wife in the communities of the Central African Republic reserved a small dish called the 'bed dish', which she gave to her husband at the bedtime. The wife gave him advice on the facts of life. That advice would greatly influence the decisions, which the husband later took. In a similar vein, Mohammed²⁵ reports from his Somali study that among the Somali some women poets use their art to search for peace in their country. Indeed, among the Tubur (Tupuri) of Cameroon, mediation by women was primarily a matter of age. The Wog Clu, or 'old mamas', were responsible for mediation and consulted on all problems, which disturbed the peace. Once consulted, a Wog Clu conferred with both those directly involved in the conflict and witnesses. The Nare Bunsonre of Cameroon was responsible for the day-to-day management of the conflicts between co-wives, adults, humans and nature. They communicated to humans not only the wishes for peace of the ancestors with whom they were in contact, but also the requirements for maintaining harmony with nature with which they were in communion²⁶.

Not only did women in traditional African societies mediate conflicts between human beings, but they could also serve as intermediaries in conflicts between human beings and nature.

²⁴ M.J. Mathey,etal; *The Role Played by Women of the Central African Republic in the Prevention and Resolutions of Conflicts*. In UNESCO, *Women and Peace in Africa* (Paris: UNESCO Workshop 2003) p45

²⁵ Mohamed Abdi Mohamed. *The Role of Somali Women in the Search for Peace*. In UNESCO, *War and Peace in Africa* (Paris: UNESCO Workshops 2003) p100

²⁶ Valerie Ngongo-Mbede; *The Traditional Mediation of Conflicts by Women in Cameroon*. In UNESCO, *Women and Peace in Africa* (Paris: UNESCO Workshops 2003) p21

Consequently in the land of Mungo of the Cameroon, for example, the report was given that any misfortune occurring in the community brought the latter to seek the mediation of the Kalbia, who were married women. In these communities, in general, misfortune and calamities were taken to imply the existence of conflicts between the people. A Kalbia had a very wide range of action: she could determine the causes of the evil undermining society and hindering peace, and she could ward off fate and restore peace, because she intervened between disruptive forces and society²⁷. Again these observations and others like them show that women in traditional African societies played strategic role not only in peace building but also in conflict mediation processes. They serve as bridge in peace restoration and conflict prevention when conflicts erupt in families, clans or communities in which they are bonded.

Another theme that comes out in the studies reviewed is women contribution to conflict resolution through practices and rituals. Under this theme the Somali study demonstrates that when clans fight and there is death, steps are taken to organize the collection and payment of blood money. A marriage or marriages involving the two parties immediately follow this. This kind of marriage occurs between a man who lost a brother or close relative and a girl from the opposing side. The main objective of the marriage is to heal the wounds and to cement the agreement/settlement reached by the two parties. It was also observed that in periods of conflict, there were times when a group of young, unmarried women from one of the warring clans paid visits to the opposing clan without the knowledge or consent of their families and offered

²⁷ Ibid , p 33

themselves for marriage. This immediately stabilized the situation, and sets in motion a peace process that eventually resolved the conflict. According to the Somali researcher,²⁸ in some parts of the country, women at times employed desperate measures to stop inter-and intra-clan wars. They formed a human chain, lined themselves up between the warring parties, and refused to leave until the two groups backed down. In this way, women played a key role in saving the lives of those considered to be of high standing in the community. This act often created an environment that enabled the warring parties to settle their differences peacefully and to establish good relations.

The Cameroonian study underscored the fact that in the traditional African societies the first wife was sometimes invited to deliberate with the men in the Assemblies. As a woman in what were essentially masculine forums, one of her tasks was to 'soften' sentences considered to be too severe or which could lead to revolt or revenge²⁹. Among the Bakossi of Cameroon, it was paternal aunts or lineage daughters (Umuada, among the Igbo of Nigeria) who were responsible for reconciling the individuals involved in a conflict³⁰. Among the Bamileke of Cameroon, according to Ngongo-Mbede³¹, the Magne, or mothers of twins, were considered to be blessed by God. Their mission was, first of all, one of peace. The arrival of a Magne in a place

²⁸ Mohamed Abdi Mohamed. *The Role of Somali Women in the Search for Peace*. In UNESCO, *War and Peace in Africa* (Paris: UNESCO Workshops 2003) p103

²⁹ Valerie Ngongo-Mbede, *The Traditional Mediation of Conflicts by Women in Cameroon*. In UNESCO, *Women and Peace in Africa*(Paris: UNESCO Workshops 2003) p28

³⁰ Ibid, p25

³¹ Ibid, p 31

of conflict had the immediate effect of stopping the hostile acts. Once in the midst of the confrontation, she assumed responsibility for reconciling the belligerents.

A much similar trend is noted among the traditional communities in Namibia. Becker's³² findings, for example, show among other things that women play strategic role in the spiritual healing of the wounds of war. The healing rituals they engage in are intended to purify and cleanse the war returnees of blood-guilt. The idea behind the ritual was that the blood of person killed had to be conciliated. The killer had to be purified with magic rites; otherwise his desire to kill would spread to other people, disturbing the communal peace. Among the Owamboland of Northern Namibia, according to Becker³³, a person who had acquired blood-guilt was regarded as taboo because a dangerous power was in him, which he received from the blood of the person he had killed. Ranger³⁴ elaborates that every soldier who returned from war had to undergo some purification ritual. Becker's study reveals that among the Namibians traditional healers play a significant role in these rituals aimed at providing spiritual healing and reconciliation and that many of these traditional healers and ritual leaders are female. The same trend is reported in the Cameroonian survey where it was revealed that in the land of the Beti, the Mangissa and the Eton, there was ritual practice known as the Mbabi. This was a purification rite aimed at restoring peace. This initiative could come from the women themselves when they realized that

³² Heike Becker. *Women, Politics and Peace in Northern Namibia. In UNESCO, Women and Peace in Africa .* (UNESCO Workshop Paris.2003) p65

³³ Ibid, p 67

³⁴ Terry Ranger. *Afterworld: War, Violence and healing in Zimbabwe. Journal of Southern African Studies, Vol. 18* No. 3 1992. p 33

peace did not exist in the community³⁵. The ceremony was presided over by a woman of very advanced years whose moral integrity was usually universally acknowledged.

The above trends show that although, for so many years, the strategic role of women in conflict resolution in contemporary Africa has continued to be ignored. The current review suggests this that attitude is ill-advised since we have seen that in traditional African societies women's positive contributions in such a venture had never been in doubt. From what the reviews suggest it was indeed the women who led the way in many instances of conflict resolution processes in Africa of yesteryear. So, despite their apparent self-effacement, women play a major role in restoring peace in traditional society.

The other theme present in the reviewed studies concerns women's role in consolidating peace pacts in traditional Africa. For instance, in situations of armed conflict, women played both an active and a passive role in the restoration of peace in traditional Africa. This was what happened within the framework of pacts, for example. As reported in that study a pact usually operated in the resolution of a conflict caused by the murder of a clan member. A girl could also be offered to the family of the victim as a form of reparation. This 'blood pact' not only put an end to the conflict in question but also precluded any future conflict between the descendants of the two clans, with the two being thenceforth intimately linked for life³⁶.

³⁵ Valerie Ngongo-Mbede, *The Traditional Mediation of Conflicts by Women in Cameroon*. In UNESCO, *Women and Peace in Africa* (Paris: UNESCO Workshops 2003)p29

³⁶ Josephine Ntahobari, & Basilissa Ndayiziga. *The Role of Burundian Women in the Peaceful Settlement of Conflicts*. In UNESCO, *Women and Peace in Africa* (Paris: UNESCO Workshops. 2003) pg. 23

Lastly there emerges the theme whereby women undertake the peace envoy role. The Somali study showed that in some regions, among the Somali, older women who could no longer conceive were used as peace envoys. Because women belong to both those considered to be inviolate and to the three whose heads are protected, they are shielded from war-related violations. In times of war women were the only one who could move across the zones of conflict freely and without much danger. It was women who studied the situation, assessed the prospects for peace, and facilitated contact and communication between the two warring parties. During periods of tension and in serious situations a peace delegation was sent³⁷. Married women, capitalizing on their neutrality and the privileges bestowed on them by Somali culture, shuttled between the warring clans, theirs and that of their husbands. They carried messages of peace and reconciliation, and they mobilized and encouraged the forces of peace from both sides. When the real cause or causes of the war were figured out, the aggressors acknowledged their mistake, submitted themselves to mediation and accepted the verdict. These revelations are instructive. They draw attention to the great potentials for peace and reconciliation, which African women hold for the larger society. It is therefore an issue to be regretted that despite all the strategic roles which women were able to play in the old Africa, current political culture in most parts of Africa tend to marginalize the position of women in the search for peace in various corners of the continent.

³⁷ Mohamed Abdi Mohamed. *The Role of Somali Women in the Search for Peace. In UNESCO, War and Peace in Africa* (Paris: UNESCO Workshops 2003) p106

1.5.4 Factors Affecting Women Participation in International Conflict Prevention and Peace Building

Scholarly works on the participation of women in various issues have identified various factors, which influence their active involvement. Warah³⁸ observes that though non-discrimination and the equal rights of women and men are fundamental principles of international human rights law, in practice, however, women are often marginalized in elections as a result of gender discrimination and any number of social, economic and political factors. This marginalization is often more acute in post-conflict countries owing to volatile security situations, the prevalence of well-entrenched military factions, large numbers of women refugees and other circumstances.

Goldstein's³⁹ in his extensive research on the roles of women in war and peace building activities spanning over 15 years, concludes that women in their efforts to change the war system must overcome three crucial dilemmas. First, the "if you want peace, work for gender justice" approach is explored. Second, women face the major dilemma of gender roles in peace building, when trying to change the war system. Some join the military or armed groups, but thereby usually perpetuate the war system because they have limited opportunities inside the army to enforce change. Alternatively, women often form the core of the peace movement, which may result in feminizing peace and in turn could re-enforce militarised masculinity. Third, most women try to be good mothers within the norms of their societies, thereby reproducing gendered

³⁸ Rasnah Warah (2008). *UN response to African Women in Crisis. African Recovery*. April-September 2008.

³⁹ Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*, (Cambridge University Press, 2001) pg. 37, 39, 41

war roles. Especially when raising boys mothers face a dilemma: if they raise sons as non-warriors they could some day be overrun by other societies that keep raising warriors. Hence, Goldstein observes rather pessimistically “real peace and real gender equity may both remain generations away”.

John Paul Lederach⁴⁰, a renowned peace builder, concludes in his review of 20 years of peace building efforts that there three gaps that women have to overcome to be successful in peace building. The first gap Lederach identifies is lack of vertical integration of peace initiatives. Relationships of respect and understanding between higher levels of leadership with community and grassroots levels of leadership and vice versa are not developed. Most peace building work, particularly in the field of conflict resolution has been aimed at improving relationships by getting counterparts of relative equal status to meet with each other. The emphasis on this type of dialogues has fostered mainly horizontal relationships and lacks responsive and coordinated relationships up and down the levels of leadership in a society affected by protracted violent conflict. It seems that the ability of women to build these vertical links is further hampered by the lack of representation of women at higher levels in the society and the gender bias in war and peace work, strengthening at least the image of feminine peace and masculine militarism. The second gap deals with the lack of structural transformation to bring the much-needed social and economic justice required for sustainable peace to last. Women usually lack the resource required during the reconstruction and reorientation processes.

⁴⁰ John Paul Lederach, – Justpeace: The challenge of the 21st century. Center for Conflict Prevention, Utrecht, 1999, p.3134

Lastly there is the limitation of seeing peace as an end product, and not as a dynamic, ongoing process of transformation.

María Villellas Ariño⁴¹ argues that women's absence in peace processes cannot be explained by their alleged lack of experience in dialogue and negotiation, but by a serious lack of will to include them in such important initiatives of change. Women have wide ranging experience in dialogue processes including many war and post-war contexts, but there has been a deliberate lack of effort to integrate them in formal peace processes.

Sanam Anderlini⁴² argues that the main reason that explains women's absence at the peace table is "the paucity of women in leadership positions in political parties, the state, or nonstate groups". Nevertheless, Anderlini points out that even in the cases where women have been able to reach these positions, they remain largely excluded from decision making. Other authors⁴³ refer to the scarcity of women in the field of diplomacy and also among the leadership of irregular armed groups. This exclusion refers not only to the parties directly involved in the conflict but also to the third vertex of the triangle, occupied by people or institutions in their capacity as mediators or facilitators in these processes. Antonia Potter⁴⁴ in her analysis of the profiles of Track One or Official Diplomacy mediators, as well as the characteristics required of

⁴¹ María Villellas Ariño *The Participation of Women in Peace Processes. The Other Tables*, ICIP Working Papers: 2010/05, Institut Català Internacional per la Pau, Barcelona, May 2010 pg 13-15

⁴² Sanam N. Anderlini, *Women at the peace table. Making a difference*. New York: UNIFEM, 2007. pg 58

⁴³ Armengol, Vicenç Fisas. *2008 yearbook on peace processes*. (Barcelona: Icarla Editorial. 2008) pg. 79.

⁴⁴ Potter, Antonia. *Gender sensitivity: Nicety or necessity in peace process management?*. (The Center for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2008). Pg 102-104.

these practitioners aimed to find out why these positions are hardly ever occupied by women. She remarks that there are two basic obstacles that are impeding equitable participation of men and women in the role of mediation: on the one hand, the lack of political will, and on the other hand, arguments such as the perception on the part of some mediators that the participation of women occupying this position disproportionately diverts the agenda of the negotiations towards so-called “women’s issues”. Sanam Anderlini⁴⁵ further argues that a common statement by policymakers is that gender equality or women’s issues are not suitable to be discussed at the peace table.

In addition, there are factors such as the difficulty to take part in the establishment of informal relationships (of enormous importance in the peace process), where participants in the negotiation establish bonds of a personal nature and thus are open to greater trust. It is not easy for women to join these “all-male” informal spaces and therefore they miss an important part of the process. All this being in addition to the usual reticence of the warring parties to accept outside intervention and compounded by the fact that the intervention is led by a woman, as according to International Alert⁴⁶, “in male-dominated societies where women have not been involved in political affairs, often those who do not enter the space are viewed with scepticism and distrust by other women and men”.

⁴⁵ Sanam N. Anderlini, *Women at the peace table. Making a difference*. New York: UNIFEM, 2007. pg 61

⁴⁶ International Alert, *Women Waging Peace. Inclusive security, sustainable peace: A toolkit for advocacy and action* (Hunt Alternatives Fund and International Alert, 2004). Pg 26

Finally, it should be also noted that the leadership of some of the armed groups as well as the governments are distrustful of considering women's participation or including gender issues on the agenda as something relevant or important for the course of the negotiations. Questions relative to the emancipation of women have been considered as secondary by many armed groups and always contingent on the attainment of other objectives such as national liberation. Rarely are these issues perceived as a path that can be covered at the same time. On the side of those that have the decision on who participates and who does not, it is often stated that the peace table is not a venue for discussions of gender equality or women's issues, as the priority should be the end of armed hostilities⁴⁷ (Anderlini 2007: 6; International Alert and Women Waging Peace 2004). In this sense, the peace table is seldom considered to be the place to address 'cultural norms' and it is also argued that promoting the participation of women can alienate some leaders and put the peace process at risk.

In the Kenyan context several studies have been undertaken which have highlighted women participation in peace building and conflict resolution. Kathina⁴⁸ undertook a study on women peace building efforts in Kenya. This study documented the experiences of women peace envoys or pillars of peace in Kenya. Drawing from three contrasting peace-building environments; Wajir, Bungoma and in the North Rift Valley. The study found that women can

⁴⁷ Ibid, pg 34 and Sanam N. Anderlini,. *Women at the peace table. Making a difference.* New York: UNIFEM, 2007. pg 67

⁴⁸ Monica. Juma Kathina. *Unveiling Women as Pillars of Peace: Peace Building in Communities Fractured by Conflict in Kenya*, An Interim Report Management Development And Governance Division Bureau For Development Policy Nations Development Programme (2000) pp 65-89

champion peace within the public arena. The study noted that women generally show a keen interest in peace processes but the peace processes often preclude their full participation.

Another study was conducted by Odongo⁴⁹ who, focused on the 1992 ethnic clashes in Rift Valley. The study noted that women and children bore the brunt of the mayhem, comprising the bulk of the victims. Women, therefore, organized through their informal and formal structures to harmony in the Rift-valley province. They used the church (religion), workshops and their nature as mothers as the entry points to promote a culture of peace. The study reveals that during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes and after, women used various methods to help restore peace in the Rift-valley province. For example, among the Pokots, the use of the *legetio*⁵⁰ was prominent. The study posits that even though women participated in peace building during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes they were (and still are) under-represented in peace-making initiatives.

As the two studies in the Kenyan perspective noted the Kenyan women are misrepresented in the peace initiatives in their communities. This study wishes to find out whether things have changed on the ground or they are as they were during the duration of these studies. By thinking out and seeking to undertake this study, the researcher hopes to positively contribute to giving voice to the often unsung and under-recognized role of women in promoting

⁴⁹ George Amara Odongo. *Role of women in peace-building in Kenya: Focusing on the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes*, Masters Thesis, Southern and Eastern African Regional Centre for Women's law, University of Zimbabwe 2004, pp 25

⁵⁰ Ibid, pp 46

the culture of peace in Kenya. Given the new circumstances in Kenyan politics, economics and social life, Kenyan scholars must re-examine the priorities in their research agendas. They must reconsider the paradigms and approaches they use to study the impacts of conflicts on the nation. Central to this reconsideration is an understanding of the role of women in peace building.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

Conflict theories are perspectives in social science which emphasize the social, political or material inequality of a social group, which critique the broad socio-political system or which otherwise detract from structural functionalism and ideological conservatism. Conflict theories draw attention to power differentials, such as class conflict, and generally contrast historically dominant ideologies. This study takes the social approach to the study of conflicts. The several social theories that emphasize social conflict have roots in the ideas of Karl Marx (1818-1883), the German theorist and political activist. The Marxist, conflict approach emphasizes a materialist interpretation of history, a dialectical method of analysis, a critical stance toward existing social arrangements, and a political program of revolution or, at least, reform.

Gendered issues affecting women can be appropriately studied using the feminist theoretical perspectives⁵¹, which seek to identify the elements of women's voice, insight and understanding of reality. Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical, or philosophical discourse, it aims to understand the nature of gender inequality. While generally providing a critique of social relations, much of feminist theory also focuses on analyzing gender

⁵¹ Francine D'Amico, "Feminist Perspectives on Women Warriors." *Peace Review* Vol. 8, no. 3 (1996): 381.

inequality and the promotion of women's rights, interests, and issues. The issues of conflicts and peace have always been central to feminism. A feminist account of the world can hardly be imagined without considering the impact that violence has had in women's lives throughout history.

The study will adopt Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory as advanced by Annette Weber⁵². The genealogy of feminist peace and conflict theory – naturally – comes as a hybrid phenomenon. Feminist peace and conflict theory (FPCT) is nurtured by a variety of disciplines and methodologies. As is symptomatic for feminist studies, the questioning of normative standards is grounded in women's epistemology. The Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory reflect on the need of visibility of women in conflicts and have led to a broader understanding of security issues. FPCT introduced the interconnectedness of all forms of violence: domestic, societal, state based and inter-state and its gendered dimension. The silencing of women's experience and knowledge is discussed in all FPCTs. However the consequences of this silencing and the possible solutions for a change is largely divided in an understanding of essentialist 'female nature' and a construction based understanding of gender as a discursive practice⁵³. For a feminist theory on peace the analysis of war and conflict is essential.

The variety of approaches range from historical accounts of women in war to the psychological scrutinizing of gendered upbringing of children. Critical writings by women in liberation

⁵² Annette Weber *Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory, Routledge Encyclopedia on Peace and Conflict Theory*, Vol. 7(5): pg 1 (2006)

⁵³ York, Jodi. "The Truth About Women and Peace." *Peace Review* 8, no. 3 (1996): 327.

movements in Latin America, Africa and Asia as well as the critique on western feminism by working class. Black scholars have further shaped the discussion.

Feminist Peace and Conflict Theory reflects on the need of visibility of women in conflicts and has led to a broader understanding of security issues. FPCT introduced the interconnectedness of all forms of violence: domestic, societal, state based and inter-state and its gendered dimension. It critically discussed the collaboration of the 'Beautiful Soul' (Jean Bethke Elshtain, 1987) in the machinery of violence. The slogan of the Western nineteen-sixty' women's movement: 'The personal is political' can still be seen as the common ground for FPCT to transform normative legitimization of the use of violence. The moral argument of men as makers of war and women as victims of war was the dominant analysis in FPCT until the late nineteen-eighties. Therefore, this approach is deemed the most appropriate for this study.

1.7 Hypotheses

In the view of the above, the following hypotheses were developed and will be tested

H1: Women role in conflict prevention and peace building efforts is significantly hindered by social-cultural and political factors.

H0: Women role in conflict prevention and peace building efforts is not significantly hindered by social-cultural and political factors.

1.8 Operationalisation of Terms

Conflicts: Conflict in this study is defined as the disagreement between two or more individuals or groups over an issue of mutual interest. It involves clashing of opposing principles brought about by differences between individuals, or communities.

Conflict Prevention: these are the activities and structural framework put in place to ensure that conflicts do not arise.

Conflict Resolution: these are the mechanisms put in place to terminate or end ongoing conflicts

Peace building: These are all the efforts geared towards the achievement of lasting peace during periods of conflicts

1.9 Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey as it was deemed the best strategy to fulfill the objectives of this study. Descriptive studies describe characteristics associated with the subject population. Descriptive research is appropriate in investigating relationships among variables. The variables of this study were political factors, cultural factors and role of women in conflict prevention and peace building process. Surveys allow the collection of large amount of data from a sizable population in a highly economical way.

The population for this study included women living in Nakuru District. These formed the population of the study. Dealing with all members even for a smaller accessible population is difficult due to the tremendous amount of time and resources needed. A sample is a smaller population obtained from the accessible population. Simple stratified random sampling was used

based on the sampling frame below to come up with a sample of 50 respondents.

Table 1: Sampling Frame

Cluster	Sample Size
Women Teachers	10
Women Leaders	10
Other Women	25
Administrators	5
Total	50

The study used both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was obtained through interviewing women involved in conflict and peace building efforts. The interviews were carried out with the help of an interview guide. The interview guide contains relevant issues concerning the international conflict resolution and peace building and the factors hindering participation of women. Secondary data was obtained from analysis and review of books, journals, papers and other available literature on the issue of role of women in peace building. The data was analysed using content and thematic analysis. Content analysis is a technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of responses and objectively identifying and using the same approach to relate trends. The results were presented under identified themes.

1.10 Study Outline

The study is organized into five sections. The first chapter is the proposal. It gives the introduction to the study. The research problem is conceptualized and provides justification for this study. The chapter also presents a literature review, theoretical framework, the hypotheses and the research methodology that will be used by the study. The second chapter will be a discussion on the factors affecting the role of women in conflict prevention and peace building in the global context. The third chapter will give a discussion of the factors affecting the role of women in conflict prevention and peace building in the regional context. The fourth chapter will be a critical analysis of findings in the Kenyan case. The fifth chapter will constitute the conclusions and recommendations.

FACTORS AFFECTING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACE BUILDING IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

This section seeks to bring out the issues in conflict resolution and peace building which are gendered and relate to women. The discussion uses cases where conflict has occurred such Serbia, Kosovo, Cambodia, Rwanda, DRC Congo among others.

2.2 Women in Conflict Prevention and Peace Building

The international context of peacebuilding policies and, to a lesser extent, programs, has evolved markedly since the mid-1990s. This evolution reflects the changing nature of conflict situations and complex emergencies, as well as the way in which nation states and international organizations continue to redefine the roles of various actors engaged in or affected by the conflict. It also coincides with two important and interacting shifts in thinking directly related to international development. The first is a growing understanding of the meaning and role of gender and gender relations in development, reflected in a widely accepted change of focus from “women in development” (WID) to “gender and development” (GAD) and the complementary notion of empowerment. This gives greater attention to the power relations between men and women in all spheres, from development projects to the workplace and home. It also recognizes

that institutions themselves often inadequately represent women's interests, obstructing progress toward gender equality.⁵⁴

The second important shift in thinking concerns global understanding of human rights and their practical relevance to development. The 1993 World Conference on Human Rights was a turning point in the articulation of actions by state and non-state actors that contribute to the realization of all human rights. Special attention to violence against women as a violation of human rights, reinforced by debates at subsequent world conferences in Cairo (on population and development) and Beijing (on women), contributed to a better understanding of the relationship among gender, power, human rights, security, and development. Similarly, ongoing efforts are exploring the intersection of gender, human rights, empowerment, and HIV/AIDS, which is especially cogent in conflict-affected settings. Understanding this multi-faceted relationship and defining a normative framework for the formulation of national and international policies continues to be the focus of efforts to establish a rights-based approach to development.⁵⁵ This bears particular relevance to the pursuit of gender equity in post-conflict settings. Recognizing the policy context established earlier by Sørensen⁵⁶, it is possible to distinguish two policy-relevant periods since then: one from 1998 until October 2000, when the U.N. Security Council

⁵⁴ World Bank, *Engendering Development: Enhancing Development Through Attention to Gender*, New York: Oxford University Press 2001

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⁵⁶ Sørensen, Birgitte "*Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources.*" The War-Torn Societies Project, Occasional Paper No. 3, 1998 UNRIS p. 34

adopted Resolution 1325; and the other from October 2000 to the present. In many respects, 2000 marked a major shift in the international community's policy stance toward issues of women and gender in relation to peace and security concerns. In sync with this policy evolution, a wide array of national and international non-governmental organizations have altered their programs and procedures as they, too, grapple with the intersection of gender, human rights, and development processes in post-conflict settings. Such organizations are often on the front line of efforts to translate policy into practice and thus play an important role in bringing the new policy discourse to life.

Sørensen in his 1998 study, in her review of gender roles in pre and post conflict efforts, issued a call for more gender-specific data and gender-sensitive analyses. At that time, major international institutions such as the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) and the World Bank were just establishing new guidelines for their respective institutional responses to conflict, including the significant challenges associated with new forms of intrastate violence and complex emergencies. This policy review occurred in the wake of the Beijing conference in 1995, which identified women and armed conflict as a critical area of concern, and the 1998 42nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which included that area as a focus of discussion. Various U.N. meetings around the world preparing

for the five-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action in 2000 also highlighted women and conflict for review at the regional level.⁵⁷

The Beijing Platform for Action⁵⁸ recognized that peace was inextricably linked to equality between women and men and development, and emphasized that women's full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts was essential for the promotion and maintenance of peace and security. The Platform for Action set out six strategic objectives. Increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation. First it sought to reduce excessive military expenditures and control the availability of armaments. Secondly, it sought to promote non-violent forms of conflict resolution and reduce the incidence of human rights abuse in conflict situations. It also set out to promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace. Another objective was to provide protection, assistance and training to refugee women, other displaced women in need of international protection and internally displaced women. Lastly it sought to provide assistance to the women of the colonies and non-self-governing territories.

⁵⁷ Sørensen, Birgitte "*Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources.*" The War-Torn Societies Project, Occasional Paper No. 3, 1998 UNRIS p.35

⁵⁸ Gardam, Judith & Jarvis, Michelle, "Women and Armed Conflict: The International Response to the Beijing Platform for Action", *Columbia Human Rights Law Review*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 2000, pp. 23-88

Since the Fourth World Conference in 1995 there have been remarkable developments in terms of expansion of the international normative and policy framework on issues related to women and armed conflict, including in the United Nations Security Council. New issues, which were not specifically addressed in the Platform for Action, have expanded the discourse and global implementation efforts have become centred around a broader agenda on women, peace and security. The Commission on the Status of Women has considered the theme of women and armed conflict on a number of occasions. In 1998, the Commission adopted agreed conclusions on women and armed conflict that called for action in a number of areas, including: ensuring gender-sensitive justice; meeting the specific needs of women affected by armed conflict; increasing the participation of women in peacekeeping, peace building, pre- and post-conflict decision-making; and addressing disarmament, illicit arms trafficking, landmines and small arms.⁵⁹ In 2004, the Commission adopted agreed conclusions on women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building.⁶⁰ These recognized that peace agreements provide a vehicle for the promotion of gender equality and that a gender-sensitive constitutional and legal framework was necessary to ensure that women fully participate in such processes. At its 52nd session in 2008, the Commission on the Status of Women reviewed implementation of its agreed conclusions on "Women's equal

⁵⁹ Gierycz, Dorota. Women, Peace and the United Nations Beyond Beijing, In *Gender, Peace and Conflict* 14, (Inger Skjelsboek & Dan Smith eds., Sage 2001) pp 102, 105, 107.

⁶⁰ Giles, Wenona, & Jennifer Hyndman, Introduction: Gender and Conflict in a Global Context, in *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones* 3, (Wenona Giles & Jennifer Hyndman eds., University of California Press 2004) pp 17,19-20.

participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace-building” adopted in 2004.⁶¹

In reference to Jennifer⁶² over the past century, the landscape of war has featured many intractable conflicts that have taken millions of lives, destroyed communities, displaced populations and destabilized economic infrastructure. By definition, intractable conflicts stretch out over long periods of time and resist resolution. The obstinacy of these conflicts creates a culture in which conflict, both violent and non-violent, becomes ingrained in the fabric of society. Both men and women suffer negatively from violent conflict and both participate as aggressors. However, women are more susceptible to harm and abuse in environments racked by violent conflicts whether or not they are engaged in the conflict. Even in the absence of war, women's lives are often subject to neglect and exploitation.

The above observation relates closely with the report by Bureau for crisis prevention and recovery⁶³ that commonly, female lives are valued less (e.g. infanticide), they have fewer opportunities for education and training, they do not have access to critical health information, their decision-making capability is non-existent, and they suffer as victims of domestic violence. In the workplace, disadvantages include unequal pay, less access to jobs and promotions as

⁶¹ Beilstein, Janet. The Expanding Role of Women in United Nations Peacekeeping, in *The Women and War Reader*, (Lois Ann Lorentzen & Jennifer Turpin, eds., N.Y.U. Press 1998) pp 140.

⁶² Jennifer F. Klot. *Women and Peace building; Commissioned by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) And the Peace building Support Office (PBSO) Social Science Research, 2007*

⁶³ Bureau for crisis prevention and recovery. Donor proposal for conflict prevention and recovery UNDP, 2010,

compared to equally positioned men, difficulty participating in politics, and invisibility in public affairs. Overall, there are threads that unite women's experiences around the world. These threads include lack of access to social networks, powerlessness, lack of voice, and a tendency to be negatively stereotyped. Women's participation in conflict resolution and in peace building, either voluntary or involuntary, adds an additional level of complexity to their already complicated lives.

In reference to a research by Scheper⁶⁴ women play an important role in grass roots levels to advocate against conflict, manage during conflict and to rebuild society (economically/culturally/socially) after conflict. However, this involvement rarely equates to participation at higher levels through negotiation of peace instruments. Women's role in society is still primarily a caring one. Women's participation in formal peacekeeping and reconstruction processes helps ensure that issues affecting women and children are effectively addressed. This benefits the whole society and increases the chances of long-term stability and economic and social recovery. Elisabeth⁶⁵ adds that there are increasing calls to integrate women into all levels of the peace process, and some arguments to support this include: It will lead to improvement in the design of solutions to conflict that will be effective at community level and produce a lasting,

⁶⁴ Elisabeth E. Scheper. *Role of Women in Violent Conflict Prevention and Negotiation*; International Center of Ethnic Studies, Colombo 2002, pp 7

⁶⁵ Bureau for crisis prevention and recovery. *Donor proposal for conflict prevention and recovery* UNDP, 2010,

lasting peace. If 50 per cent of the population isn't involved in designing processes to keep peace then the solutions are unlikely to be effective.

According to Lesley⁶⁶, lack of women in peace keeping and operational roles can send a message to the local community that it is a male run operation. This can create barriers for local women and prevent them approaching peace keepers. Good relations with the local community are essential for effective peace-keeping as they allow easier flow of information between peacekeepers and civilians, and also lead to better security for both groups. Reflections of one female peace monitor in the Balkans noted that the local women came to her to voice their opinions and not her male colleagues. The women were extremely active in facilitating contact and discussion between disputing factions and galvanizing the peace, however did not feel comfortable dealing with male peace-keepers. Women tend to have strong networks and an effective ability to raise public awareness about issues through the community. Women have reported that humanitarian aid programs need to promote gender equality and self-reliance for women as opposed to a humanitarian welfare system of reliance. Askin⁶⁷ noted that Women in most cases seek an investment in a country's future as opposed to a short-term crisis fix, and they want a gender dimension in the planning, design and implementation of humanitarian assistance.

⁶⁶ Abdela, Lesley. *Kosovo: Missed Opportunities, Lessons for the Future, in Development, Women, and War: Feminist Perspectives* (Haleh Afshar & Deborah Eade eds., Oxfam 2004) pp 93-5.

⁶⁷ Askin, Kelly D. *Gender Specific War Crimes in the Yugoslav Conflict, in War Crimes Against Women: Prosecution in International War Crimes Tribunals*, (Martinus Nijhoff 1997) pp 267.

Women's active involvement in peace negotiations and rebuilding processes can result in the inclusion of gender equality into new constitutional, judicial and electoral structures.

The period after the Second World War saw a decline in inter-state wars as compared to intrastate wars. Many countries embarked in conflicts within their national borders, contrary to conflicts between states evidenced prior to post world war two periods. These state conflicts mostly centred on resources and poverty, translates to massive amounts of casualties, majority of them being women and children. It is through women's active participation and involvement that an effective positive change can be enhanced especially on issues of Peace, which is the basis for any developmental activity. Pertaining peace matters, women contribute to Peace building in many ways although their contribution has been overlooked in the past due to the fact that it takes unconventional forms. They constitute a large part of the society and therefore time has come for their role no longer to be under-estimated. This paper is based on an analysis of the contributions made by women as Peace builders in recent decades, especially after the year 2000 when the Security Council Resolution 1325 was implemented. The exact factor that has caused the remarkable positive change since the beginning of women's involvement will be analysed. This paper argues that women can bring back remarkable results in Peace building efforts if given the opportunity because in most cases they are the most affected victims during and after violent conflicts. It should be noted however that men have not been entirely secluded, but rather

it tries to show how important the role of women can be when they are involved in peace building.⁶⁸

If progress is to be made towards building more peaceful, cooperative and just societies where human security is valued as paramount, building peace must more deeply involve women and women's approaches. As documented throughout this essay, women's roles in, and contributions to, peacebuilding have been underutilized and lacking in recognition at community, national, and international levels. Despite women's marginalization outside the mainstream peace and international security arenas, their work in peacebuilding is substantial. We contend that distinct yet little studied women's peacebuilding approaches in response to violent conflict are key elements to the attainment of human security and peace. Consequently, knowing more about the gendering of peacebuilding policies and projects, as well as women's peacebuilding capacities, holds the potential for expanding women's capabilities by developing alternative approaches that can be used as a basis for policy making and training programmes. Furthermore, both gender-aware and women's peacebuilding processes can offer models that expand the repertoire of available approaches for both men and women. In conclusion, for women's full

⁶⁸ Hawa Noor Mohammed, *Women and Peace building*, Otto-Von-Guericke-University Magdeburg, Faculty of Humanities and Educational sciences, Institute of Political sciences Peace and Conflict Research, M.A. Gender and Conflict, SS 2009.

participation in peacebuilding to be enhanced, there needs to be specific focus upon building their capacities, and gender must be included as an explicit aspect of peacebuilding initiatives.⁶⁹

The importance of involving women in peace-building efforts has been demonstrated in research that shows a connection between the status of women in a society and its level of conflict: Violent conflict is more likely to erupt in countries where women are inadequately represented in official institutions and where domestic violence against women is prevalent. This fact, however, comes close to mocking the other fact that it is young males who are most often victims of pre-conflict violence. Strengthening the role of women in society and making full use of their knowledge and expertise, therefore, promotes peace and contributes to conflict-prevention.⁷⁰

Gender equality should be an integral part of any kind of peace building activities, whether it is conflict prevention, conflict resolution or post-conflict reconstruction. Let us not forget that it is where violence and discrimination against women exist prior to a conflict that these are almost certain to remain and even be aggravated throughout conflict. The same applies to women's participation in decision-making structures of a society. If their participation is

⁶⁹ Dyan Mazurana and Susan McKay, *Women & Peacebuilding*, International centre for Human rights and Democratic Development, January 1999

⁷⁰ Hilary Charlesworth, *Are Women Peaceful? Reflections on the Role of Women in Peace-Building*, *Feminist Legal Studies*, Vol. 16 (3) pp. 347-361

limited before the outbreak of a conflict, they are unlikely to be involved in decisions relating to the conflict or a following peace process.⁷¹

While women have often been absent from formal processes of peace negotiations and development of reconstruction plans, they have generally played a vital role at grass root level in sustaining and later rebuilding local economies and communities. For example, women's organizations have contributed to ensure that peace accords address demands for gender equality in new constitutional, legal and electoral frameworks. Furthermore, women's organizations at grass root level around the world have found the Resolution 1325 of the Security Council an effective tool for bringing greater attention to the needs and priorities of women.

The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was adopted in 2000 by the UN Security Council as a policy framework to strengthen women's role in peace building. Its most important message is that women are not only victims of violence; they are also a powerful force toward peace building and decision making on peace and security issues. The key commitments of UNSCR 1325 include ensuring gender balance in all levels of decision-making, gender perspective in all reports, protection and respect of human rights of women and girls and gender perspective in post-conflict peace processes and in peacekeeping. Resolution 1325 refers to the need for full implementation of international human rights law that protects the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts. Also, it calls for measures that ensure the

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protection of, and respect for, human rights of women and girls, for instance relating to police activities. One of the most important features of UN Security Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security is that it does not focus on women as victims, but as invaluable actors in any successful peace-building effort. Resolution 1325 clarifies that not only do women need to be represented, but their perspectives and experiences should also form part of the decision making.

The importance of bringing gender considerations to bear within peace operations was codified by the UN under Security Council Resolution 1325. This resolution, passed in October 2000, calls for the UN to ‘integrate a gender perspective in the resolution of armed or other conflicts and foreign occupation’.⁷² In seeking to carry out this general call for an increased awareness of gender perspectives, UNSCR 1325 also makes some specific suggestions for actions to further this goal.

One recommendation is that those charged with peacekeeping or peacebuilding should promote both equal participation of and equal opportunities for men and women in the forces that are deployed. Given the current preponderance of males in these forces, meeting this objective would help to integrate a gender perspective in peace operations both directly, by increasing the sheer number of women involved, and also indirectly, by virtue of the fact that women can play roles which men cannot. For instance, women could:

⁷² United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, S/RES/1325 (2000) passed on 31 October 2000, as found at http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf, accessed on 9/8/09.

*“perform body searches on women... . serve as positive role models for local women who are considering joining, for instance, the police. ... take a different approach in the detection of security risks, thereby potentially enhancing identification of the specific types of danger that women are exposed to in host societies”.*⁷³

2.3 Participation of Women in Conflict Prevention Globally

Women around the world face significant challenges to their participation in peace building processes. Even national legal frameworks around women’s peace building or the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) often do not filter down to the community level. A woman in Peace Building is a comprehensive unit that assists all activities within the Gender and Justice programme. Peace processes comprise a range of informal and formal activities. Women are active in informal activities but are seldom included in the formal processes. Formal processes include early warning, preventative diplomacy, conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace-building, and global disarmament. Activities cover conflict resolution, peace negotiations, reconciliation, reconstruction of infrastructure and humanitarian aid⁷⁴.

⁷³ Jody Rae Bennett (2009), ‘The Softer Side of Security’, *ISN Security Watch*, 1 July, as found at <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Current-Affairs/Security-Watch/Detail/?ots591=4888CAA0-B3DB-1461-98B9-E20E7B9C13D4&lng=en&id=102726>, accessed 1 January 2011. Bennett notes that the report also points out that in some places such as Afghanistan and Iraq it is dangerous for a woman to talk to a strange male, but that she could talk to another woman.

⁷⁴ United Nations. *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development Women and International Migration*. Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for the Advancement of Women, New York, 2006

Women are not generally represented among decision-makers and military leaders in societies that are affected by conflict. Women are significantly under-represented in formal peace negotiations including as local participants representing warring factions and as representatives of international authorities that oversee or mediate deliberations and institutions invited to the negotiating table. Very few women are appointed as Special Representatives, Special Envoys or regional directors in peace missions. Participation in formal processes generally requires specific skills and access to resources and institutional support. Women's capacity for effective participation is often limited because many women do not have these. Issues of concern to women often do not reach the negotiating table, in part because of their limited participation in formal peace negotiations⁷⁵.

Many participants in formal peace processes have negative attitudes towards women's involvement. There is lack of women's networks, female role models and critical mass of women (sufficient numbers of women, generally considered to be around 25 per cent) in decision-making bodies. Some highly qualified women have expertise in their particular field but do not have qualifications or experience in formal decision-making structures. International institutions and other high level decision-making bodies are typically male dominated with environments that are hostile and unfamiliar for many women. The marginalization of women in many societies affected by conflicts including their significant under-representation in politics and the defense forces severely limits their capacity to participate in decision-making. While gender

⁷⁵World Conference on Religion and Peace Conference. *"Women, Children and Conflict"*, Cordoba, ADHOC, LICADO: 2002

mainstreaming policies have been introduced in many countries and in international institutions, difficulties have continued with their implementation. The lack of resources and political commitment are key problem areas⁷⁶.

In his research on how Gender shapes the war system, Goldstein⁷⁷ explains that the fate of women in conflict and post-conflict zones around the world has traditionally been in the hands of national and international male diplomats, officials and leaders who have conceptualized security based on the needs of the state as opposed to the concrete security needs of individuals. For women especially, conflict and post-conflict resolutions of the 20th and 21st centuries have shown very little regard for their real needs and concerns. As such it recognizes the critical role that women's participation in public life, politics and the security sector has for. Ensuring that women's rights are protected in conflict and post-conflict situations, The resolution recognizes the under-valued and under-utilized contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peace-building, and stresses the importance of their equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security⁷⁸.

In addition to the difficulties inherent in an economic and political transition, the women of Southeast Europe simultaneously found themselves in the midst of violent and destructive war and conflict. Kosovo itself struggled first with almost a decade of structural violence culminating

⁷⁶ Ibid

⁷⁷ Goldstein, Joshua S. *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp 113

⁷⁸ Ibid

in open conflict in 1999. Macedonia teetered on the edge of conflict and violence throughout this time while Albania have been experiencing armed revolt and conflict following its economic collapse and fall into chaos in 1996-7⁷⁹.

These conditions of conflict led to the militarization of these societies and the further marginalization of women from decision-making as public attitudes reinforced the view that women were not the decisive politicians or strong leaders needed during war and conflict. However it is precisely the importance of including women's voices in conflict and post conflict periods that was affirmed by the bloody events in the 1990s in regions such as the Western Balkans. The creation of the Lobby was a response to the growing awareness of the marginalization of women from decision-making on peace and security in the region, concerns over recent security and stability and the return to traditional values within the sphere of politics, which are eroding women's rights⁸⁰.

The responses of local women's groups in dealing with conflict, rehabilitation and peace appear to be remarkably similar around the world too. The women NGOs for example have been active in trauma counseling, micro-credit, voter education, gender awareness, law reform and political advocacy. The main strategy they choose to prevent conflicts from re-emerging has been to work on fundamental economic and social change. They advocate paying greater

⁷⁹ Hunt, Swanee. *This Was Not Our War: Bosnian Women Reclaiming the Peace* (Duke University Press 2004) pp34-36.

⁸⁰ Slapsak, Svetlana. The Use of Women and the Role of Women in the Yugoslav War, in *Gender, Peace and Conflict*, (Inger Skjelsboek & Dan Smith eds., Sage 2001) pp 167, 178.

attention to civilian security, such like through security sector reforms and greater participation of women in police forces, judiciary system and in peace committees⁸¹. They stress the need for cost-effective indigenous approaches to provide long-term treatment to traumatized women and children, and ask the international community to make concerted efforts to acknowledge and prevent sexual abuse of women and girls. And finally, they are active in promoting female candidates to run in post conflict elections and in increasing the overall women's political participation⁸².

An earlier USAID research has further noted a marked increase in the number of women's NGOs in the post conflict era, for which they found four explanations: increased female Political participation; disillusionment with existing organizations that lack a gender agenda; post conflict democratization that provided more political space for NGO work; and large sums of international donor assistance that came in. The sustainability of these new women organizations needs further attention, especially with regards to the lack of appropriate management skills and dependence on temporary foreign donor assistance⁸³.

Another interesting experience to share of women taking initiative and institutionalizing conflict resolution and prevention is the Komnas Perempuan (Indonesian National Commission

⁸¹ Walsh, Martha. Profile: Bosnia and Herzegovina, in *Women and Civil War: Impact, Organizations, and Action*, (Krishna Kumar ed., Lynne Rienner Publishers 2001) pp 59.

⁸² Manchanda, Rita. Civil War in Sri Lanka: Ambivalent Empowerment, in *The Aftermath: Women in Post-Conflict Transformation*, (Sheila Meintjes, Meredith Turshen & Anu Pillay eds., Zed Books 2002) pp 123.

⁸³ *ibid*

on Violence against Women), that was set up in October 1998 by a Presidential Decree in response to the outcry of Indonesian women's organizations against the sexual assault and violence during the May 1998 riots in Jakarta⁸⁴ It is an independent body that maintains close relations with the respected National Commission on Human Rights, based on joint interests in promoting a gender-sensitive approach to basic human rights protection. This active participation of Indonesian women in conflict prevention and peace building prompted Komnas Perempuan to set three main objectives with the aim to bridge the gaps between the 'government and society' which as a result brought about several consequences including increased public understanding on all forms of violence against women (VAW), created a conducive environment for the elimination of violence by legal and policy reform; and strengthened the capacities for prevention of violence and in dealing with the consequences of VAW through national, regional and international networks. Its work covers five areas that constitute active participation women in mapping violence; building expertise on trauma counseling and reconciliation; witness protection; institution building, and training programmes for personnel from government, army and civil society to learn how to deal with and prevent conflict in future.⁸⁵

In response to complexity of modern civil conflict Komnas Perempuan 2000 reports that Indonesian women's organizations have been undertaking many initiatives, like emergency

⁸⁴ Siapno, Jacqueline. *Gender, Nationalism, and the Ambiguity of Female Agency In Aceh, Indonesia, and East Timor*, in *Frontline Feminisms: Women, War and Resistance*, (Marguerite R. Waller & Jennifer Rycenga eds., Routledge Press 2001) pp 276.

⁸⁵ *ibid*

assistance, set up trauma teams, documented atrocities, campaigned for peace, organized women in conflict areas, and influenced national policies to end the violations an experience that greatly reduced the victimization of women and addressed the problem associated with their absence at the negotiation table in spite of the multitude of initiatives, which women have been taking since 1998.⁸⁶ Participation of Indonesian women in conflict management has therefore necessitated women's groups to push themselves upon the decision makers and insist on their voices being heard. They closely adhered to their slogan that "Every single progress in women's involvement is a product of a conscious and targeted struggle against the dominant current"⁸⁷. This participation as a result saw Indonesian women systematically involved in the democratization and justice work in an effort to put an end to the violations.

In some western countries, women are greatly vulnerable to economic exclusion largely due to direct and indirect discrimination. Minority women, many of whom live in remote areas, will often also face barriers due to regional underdevelopment. Economic exclusion means that women have inadequate access to markets, resources, services, socio-political institutions and technology. Factors causing this include barriers to citizenship; 'ethnically disqualifying' criteria for education and employment; lack of or inadequate implementation of anti- discrimination

⁸⁶ Komnas Perempuan, *An Indonesian Approach to the Consequence of Armed Conflict*. Presented to the Beijing conference in June 2000 in New York, pp 4, 6

⁸⁷ Ibid pp 4

legislation; language barriers; and regional under-funding⁸⁸. Minority women are particularly vulnerable as they face double discrimination as women and as members of minority communities. Minority women are susceptible to experiencing lower levels of education than minority men or majority women, and therefore they are less likely to speak the majority language when compared with men. These barriers in conjunction with discriminatory practices prohibit women from political, economic and social participation. Minority communities in general tend to have fewer educational opportunities, higher mortality rates, higher rates of poverty, and higher unemployment than other poor groups⁸⁹

2.3.1 Iraq and Kosovo

According to world survey on the role of women in development,⁹⁰ Participation in peace processes one of the major focuses of peace processes in ethnically or religiously-divided societies is how the state will be governed in the future and what role the various communities will have in it. It is highly important for women to take part in such processes. However, in Iraq

⁸⁸ Elisabeth E. Scheper. *Role of Women in Violent Conflict Prevention and Negotiation*; International Center of Ethnic Studies, Colombo 2002, pp 7

⁸⁹ Richter-Lyonette, Elenor. *Bibliography Gender, War & Justice: With Special Reference to the Balkan Wars 1991-1999 (The Coordination of Women's Advocacy 2002)* pp 76.

⁹⁰ Al-Ali, Nadjie. *Reconstructing Gender: Iraqi Women Between Dictatorship, War, Sanctions and Occupation*, *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 4 No 7 (2005) pp739.

and Kosovo, these processes have been dominated by a small number of groups, often those that were actively involved in armed conflict, leaving other groups with no voice⁹¹.

Following the 'ethnic cleansing' in 1999 led by Milosevic, and then the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military intervention, the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has been in Kosovo for seven years in probably the most extensive international intervention to end and reverse an ethnic conflict. Despite the amount of resources poured into Kosovo, international rule has done little to entrench the protection of minority rights and create an integrated society. Instead, the approach is one of segregation, of keeping the main communities – the Serbs and Albanians – separate, and relegating all other communities to second-class status. 'Ethnic cleansing' happened in 1999, under international rule, and again in 2004, even after UNMIK had been the main governing authority for several years. Rather than resolving the underlying problems, Kosovo is in the position of a 'frozen' conflict. Women have been systematically excluded from decision making in Kosovo, with the appearance of participation (guaranteed seats in the Assembly) but without the reality, in particular on the most important decisions⁹².

Despite an increase in the number of women in parliaments, in Kosovo women remain significantly underrepresented in decision-making positions in politics. Only a few women are mayors in each country and the number of government ministers varies between one and three by

⁹¹ Abdela, Lesley. Kosovo: Missed Opportunities, Lessons for the Future, In *Development, Women, and War: Feminist Perspectives*, (Haleh Afshar & Deborah Eade eds., Oxfam 2004) pp 89.

⁹² *Ibid* pp 91

country. No significant efforts have been made by state institutions, political parties or civil organizations to increase the participation of women in high-level positions in their ranks. This as a result has greatly hindered participation of Kosovo women in peace building processes⁹³.

2.3.3 Serbia and Bosnia

The wars in the Balkans had a strong ethnopolitical background, or at least they led to a confrontation between different ethnicities and countries. So it was obvious that the region would need initiatives that include people from various sides in order to bridge the gaps along the former frontlines. There was a need to search for constructive ways to deal with the wounds, suffering and distrust caused by the war. Given the nature of these wars the role of women was complex.⁹⁴

A major obstacle to women's participation continues to be societal perceptions of the security sector as "a man's" sphere. Women are slightly more represented in police forces than in military. Many peace building efforts here are therefore limited by tight timeframes and resources. Numerous conflicts are extremely complex and linked to different forms of frictions, caused by unequal access to important resources, ethnic strife, unequal position of minorities and

⁹³ Corrin, Chris. Developing Policy on Integration and Re/construction in Kosova, in *Development, Women, and War: Feminist Perspectives*, (Haleh Afshar & Deborah Eade eds., Oxfam 2004) pp 63.

⁹⁴ Centre for Nonviolent Action *20 Pieces of Encouragement for Awakening and Change– Peacebuilding in the Region of former Yugoslavia*. (2007)Belgrade/Sarajevo: CNA.

long lasting suppression of democracy. In many cases, these conflicts are not properly perceived by the international community and can be a consequence of enforced or “negative” peace⁹⁵.

A study by Elissa Helms⁹⁶ examines how women are represented by women's nongovernmental organization (NGO) activists and their foreign donors in postwar reconstruction initiatives in Bosnia–Herzegovina. She argues that dominant donor representations of women as peacemakers and natural agents of ethnic reconciliation present a paradox for the women they target. Women are charged with achieving the very political goals of ethnic reconciliation and refugee return, yet the essentialist constructions used to encourage women's peacemaking roles effectively marginalize them from formal political power. When local women activists use similar “affirmative” gender essentialisms, they risk closing off women's potential for influence in the formal (male) political sphere. However, she further argues, given the moral and political climate of postwar Bosnia, in which politics is perceived as a corrupt, male sphere, this strategy allows women to gain moral authority and real, though indirect, power with which to achieve their often very political goals.

⁹⁵ Amiri, Rina. *Fine Lines of Transformation: Afghan Women Working for Peace*, in *Listening to the Silences: Women and War*, (Helen Durham & Tracey Gurd eds., Martinus Nijhoff 2005) pp 245.

⁹⁶ Elissa Helms, *Women as agents of ethnic reconciliation? women's ngos and international intervention in postwar bosnia–Herzegovina*, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 26 (1) January-February 2003, pp. 15-33

2.3.4 Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a landlocked and mountainous land that has been beset by turbulence and instability for nearly a century. Littered with landmines and plagued by internecine fighting, the country came close to ruination during its US backed proxy war against the Soviets which started in 1979 and went on for nearly two decades. Women are significantly under-represented in formalized peace and rebuilding processes including negotiations, peace accords and reconstruction plans. Women in Afghanistan are often comprised of a very small proportion of participants in the various conflict resolution and peacekeeping forums, women are often marginalized and their contributions under-valued. Women are not necessarily passive participants, but are strong contributors and potential leaders with expertise in assisting with conflict resolution and reconstruction⁹⁷.

However, they are in most cases poorly represented in peace forums and delegations. Women seldom play a role in peace negotiations or peace operations at any level. There are currently no women acting as the United Nation's Secretary-General's Special Rapporteurs or Envoys. Women have not been involved in sufficient numbers in peace keeping operational and field based duties – as observers, civilian police and human rights personnel⁹⁸. Generally, women play a less visible role during the conflict and are then denied an opportunity to participation in

⁹⁷ Saira Yamin. *Peace building in Afghanistan: revisiting the global war on terrorism by*; regional centre for strategic studies Colombo, Sri Lanka. 2008

⁹⁸ Mertus, Julie. *Discussion: Improving the Status of Women in the Wake of War: Overcoming Structural Obstacles*, *Columbia Journal of Transnational Law*, (2003) pp 42

peace discussions. Peace negotiations are conducted by individuals representing the armed forces and government representatives. In the post-conflict phase, the formal systems of government tended to exclude women in reconstruction and peace building activities. In Afghanistan, discriminatory attitudes and practices continue to disadvantage women and adversely affect their opportunities to participate in leadership and decision-making. Negative gender stereotyping of women, including through the media, persist and these reinforce the tendency for men to be predominantly nominated and selected for decision-making bodies. The traditional working pattern of leadership and decision-making bodies continues to act as a barrier to women's participation. Participation in decision-making in the areas of conflict resolution and peacekeeping has often been difficult for women with family responsibilities⁹⁹.

2.3.5 Haiti

Most women's rights advocates describe Haiti as having a culture that inherently discriminates against women, where gender-based violence in the home is exceedingly common, and a lack of access to economic autonomy renders women helpless in the face of such dynamics. High rates of violence, HIV/AIDS prevalence and cultural taboos about such violence create a highly complex advocacy environment. Standard models of peace building have not only proved ill-suited for the Haitian context and challenge the international community and national counterparts in finding durable solutions but has also aggravated disparity in participation of

⁹⁹ Rahim, Taiba. *An Identity of Strength: Personal Thoughts on Women in Afghanistan*, *Red Cross International Review* (2002) pp 627.

women in conflict management. The situation is further deteriorated by the recent high levels of kidnapping and drug-related crimes which underscores the nexus between political instability, endemic poverty and small arms proliferation¹⁰⁰

Gender-sensitive outcomes in peace process in Haiti have been promoted by attempting to ensure that the internal institutions created or reformed during the peace process are more representative of the society they aim to serve. Here, for example, Nadine Puechguirbal, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) Senior Gender Advisor, has asserted that the effort to recruit and engage women in the Haitian National Police:

*“is very important, not only for the way in which the police will function and be seen by the population, but also because the feminisation of the national police will highlight the involvement of women in non-traditional roles as actors and agents of change in Haiti”.*¹⁰¹

2.4 Summary

Since the end of the Cold War, a number of regional conflicts worldwide have devastated innocent populations. The conflicts in the Balkans come to mind as a prominent example. With these developments the literature about women and war has proliferated. The chapter presents several cases which bring the situation regarding the participation of women in conflict

¹⁰⁰ Flanders, Laura. J'Accuse! in *War's Dirty Secret: Rape, Prostitution, and Other Crimes Against Women*, (Anne Llewellyn Barstow ed., Pilgrim Press 2000) pp 157.

¹⁰¹ Jody Rae Bennett (2009), 'The Softer Side of Security', *ISN Security Watch*, 1 July, as found at <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Current-Affairs/Security-Watch/Detail/?ots591=4888CAA0-B3DB-1461-98B9-E20E7B9C13D4&lng=en&id=102726>, accessed 1 August 2010.

resolution and peace building. The chapter has presented cases from Iraq, Serbia Kosovo, Afghanistan and Haiti to bring the issues which affect the participation of women in conflict resolution and also in peace building.

FACTORS HINDERING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACEBUILDING IN THE AFRICAN REGION

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses relevant issues on the subject of the study under the African region context. It aims at putting the study in its rightful context.

3.2 Genesis of conflicts among African Countries

In a review, Adeyemi¹⁰², notes that in Africa for example, there are currently fifteen countries involved in war, or are experiencing post-war conflict and tension. In West Africa, the countries include Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Togo. In East Africa, the countries include Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda. In Central Africa, the countries include Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda. In North Africa, the country is Algeria and in South Africa, the countries include Angola and Zimbabwe¹⁰³. At the base of these wars is the rich natural resources each of these poor countries hold of timber, oil or diamonds, compounded in many cases by the foreign extractive industries presence, their opaque, unreported payments to the governments and the governments' opaque, unreported use of the money to create and fund wars. The wars serve the purpose of creating a distraction, as the

¹⁰² Oyeniyi, Bukola Adeyemi, Seeking Panelist for "Wars and Conflicts in Africa" Panel on an International conference on African Predicament, Accessed on 3rd September 2010 from <http://www.h-net.org/announce/show.cgi?ID=166920>

¹⁰³ Jennifer F. Klot. Independent Expert Paper 1. Commissioned by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) And the Peace building Support Office (PBSO) Women and Peace building. Social Science Research Council ,2007

countries and their fleeing, displaced citizens are robbed of their countries' natural resources, easily converted to cash, for the personal use and fortunes of ruling parties. Tribal conflict is deliberately antagonized, so it can be blamed for the conflict.

The economics of ethnic conflict in poor societies should also be considered. Conflicts are often kept alive by the opportunities for profit and the issue of who actually benefits becomes key in understanding what motivates the battling fractions. Armed conflict can be extremely lucrative for the warring elites, who would effectively lose their access to natural resources and income once the conflict ends. Precious natural resources play rather decisive roles in a number of recent deadly conflicts: diamonds in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Angola; drugs in Colombia, Afghanistan and Myanmar; oil in the Democratic republic of Congo. In addition, the steady influx of relief goods provided by international humanitarian agencies form an important source of food and medical supplies, which would dry up once the deadly conflict ends. The politics of civil conflict, years of depressing poverty and lack of hope for a better future, make the continuation of armed conflict an almost rational choice, an alternative way of life. Being “deprived of hope” to a fair chance in life provides the most immediate cause for violence and conflict¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰⁴ Stewart, F and V Fitzgerald, Introduction: Assessing the Economic Causes of War, in F Stewart and V Fitzgerald, *War and Underdevelopment*, (Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University, 2000) p. 1.

3.3 Women in Peace Building in Africa

In World Survey on the Role of Women in Development, it was particularly noted that a lasting peace cannot be achieved without the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives and participation in peace processes¹⁰⁵. Informal peace initiatives of grassroots women's groups and networks, organized across party and ethnic lines, have carried out reconciliation efforts and have been increasingly recognized by the Security Council. The Council has met with women's groups and representatives of NGOs during its field missions to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kosovo and Sierra Leone and provided that gender perspectives need to be fully integrated with full involvement of women in peace negotiations at national and international levels, which should include training for women on formal peace processes. Gender perspectives should also be an integral part of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction programs. A no-tolerance, no-impunity approach must be used in cases of violation of the code of conduct in peacekeeping operations. And gender sensitivity training must be provided to the peacekeepers before they arrive in the zones of conflict. But, above all, involvement of women in conflict prevention and peace building should be the most important ingredient in all these efforts and in the endeavor to build a culture of peace in all parts of the globe. Elisabeth provides that sustainable peace is inseparable from gender equality. There is need to allow women to play the most significant and substantive role in making transition, from the culture of violence to the culture of peace.

¹⁰⁵ World Survey on the Role of Women in Development Women and International Migration. Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for the Advancement of Women. United Nations • New York, 2006

3.4 Dilemma of Conflict Prevention in African countries

In countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), there has been a significant improvement in women's participation in decision-making following the period of conflict. However, a number of challenges exist that need to be addressed. These include: translation of the political gains into changes in women's status at all levels of society; the issue of quantitative versus qualitative representation that clearly addresses the needs of women; legislative and policy reforms that support and promote women's advancement; maintaining the gains; role and position of women in multiparty politics; establishing effective links between women politicians and the women's movement and the contribution of women's political participation to peace building processes in the region. Elisabeth emphasized the need to provide space for women to reveal their experiences as fighters, organizers for peace, and caretakers of rehabilitation centers, mothers of the deceased, and partners beginning to rebuild their lives. She noted that women's testimonies are very powerful and varied, and that women's experiences are not uniform, hence the need to bring out more visible individual settings. She observed that while women play a key role in peace building, women are sent back to the kitchen after peace has been achieved because peace is believed to be for leaders.

3.5 Participation of Women in Conflict Prevention and Peace Building in Africa

Women have played an important role in the transformation of conflicts in Africa by becoming active across political, religious, and ethnic affiliations. Theirs is often conflict

management at the local level, where Africa's internal wars are increasingly fought, and their efforts can be the first steps towards reconciliation in communities devastated by violence. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the involvement of women in the peace process increases the likelihood for a sustainable peace. Given the fact that women have been excluded from the conflict resolution literature, there is a need for systematic studies regarding gender and conflict management¹⁰⁶.

In reference to Report of the Consultation Workshop¹⁰⁷ in nearly every country and region of the world, we can point to areas in which there has been progress on achieving gender equality and women's empowerment. Yet, this progress has been uneven, and the gains remain fragile. Virtually nowhere are women's rights given the priority they deserve. And, despite increased global awareness, in many countries the rights of women are still under threat. Intensified efforts are needed to promote women's rights at the national level and to develop effective mechanisms to fully ensure them and to monitor their enforcement. Equally challenging is the growing violence against women and girls in armed conflict. In today's conflicts, they are not only the victims of hardship, displacement and warfare, they are directly targeted with rape, forced pregnancies and assault as deliberate instruments of war. Women are deeply affected by conflicts, which they have had no role in creating. Women's interests have been neglected by the

¹⁰⁶ Jennifer De Maio, "Women Waging Peace: The Role of Women and Conflict Management in West Africa" Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association 67th Annual National Conference, The Palmer House Hilton, Chicago, IL, 2010-06-05, pp 1

¹⁰⁷ Report of the Consultation Workshop .Women's political participation in countries emerging from conflict in the Great Lakes Region of Africa. Understanding conflict. Building peace, 2007

peace process, which has resulted in male-centered approaches to peace and security. The intrinsic role of women in global peace and security has remained unrecognized since the creation of the United Nations both in Africa as well as in western countries.

The findings by Cheryl and McKay¹⁰⁸ pointed to gender- and context-specific aspects of peacebuilding. Most of participants' peacebuilding activities occurred outside of the aegis of national governmental institutions and their peacebuilding priorities focused less upon structural rebuilding and more on processes, people, and relationships. One of the important priorities was the prevention of violence toward women.

3.5.1 Western Africa

West Africa has for many years been the most unstable subregion on the continent. Since 1960, of the 15 member states that make up the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) most have been through several military coups, 37 of which were successful. One causative factor for such unprecedented insurrection is the suffering of women throughout the sub region. This has exacerbated conflicts and brought destruction, untold hardship, poverty and underdevelopment. The wars that raged in West Africa from the early 1990s left hundreds of thousands of people dead and millions more exiled from their homes and lands. Marked by extreme cruelty, mindless atrocities and the widespread use of sexual violence and child soldiers, these conflicts devastated communities. Most schools, hospitals, power supplies and roads were

¹⁰⁸ R. Cheryl, S. McKay, Peacebuilding as a Gendered Process, *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 62 (1) pp. 141–153, (March 2006)

destroyed. Peace agreements eventually ended war in Sierra Leone in 2002 and Liberia in 2005. Sierra Leone held its second post-war elections in August 2007 - a sign democracy was at work. Liberia's 2005 election brought into power Africa's female president. A peace agreement in Côte d'Ivoire ended four years of political impasse but the country's future depends on its successful implementation. Guinea remains volatile after a recent coup and could destabilize the entire region.

There are many challenges to preventing conflicts and securing lasting peace. Acute poverty is a serious threat. Disenfranchised young people - considered a root cause of the conflicts - still face serious social, economic and political exclusion. Western African have tended to adopt the "grassroots peacebuilding models".¹⁰⁹ Grassroots peacebuilding is not about idealism (although a good dose of idealism probably helps). It is a pragmatic approach to the realities of contemporary conflict, as communities seek to make themselves less vulnerable to violence. It is central to the pursuit of internationally recognized development goals, themselves integral to the exercise of fundamental human rights. Yet while there is increasing acceptance of the importance of 'bottom-up', participatory approaches to development, the argument has not yet been conclusively won in the field of development and still less in the case of peacebuilding. This is partly because there needs to be greater exploration, documentation and advocacy around the question: 'How can it be done effectively?'

¹⁰⁹ Kare Lode for the Conciliation Resources Accord publication, 'Owning the process, public participation in peacemaking' (Ed. Catherine Barnes, London Conciliation Resources, 2003).

Grassroots peacebuilding enhance the participation of women in the peace processes as was noted in the Mali and Sierra Leone cases. The west African state of Mali underwent a separatist conflict in the north of the country between June 1990 and March 1996. The conflict had its origins in the political marginalization of the northern region and particularly of the nomadic Tuaregs, who inhabit the area along with Arab nomads and the Songhoy sedentarists of the Niger River basin. During successive post-independence regimes, northerners were largely excluded from any kind of political office and there was scarcely any investment in education, health and communication infrastructure in the area. Armed rebellion was sparked in 1990 when a small group of Tuaregs attacked military and government installations, resulting in a brutal crackdown against both Tuareg and Arab civilians. Conflict escalated and various organized armed movements of northerners emerged.

Efforts to reach a peaceful settlement of the conflict began in late 1990 but an early bilateral agreement between the government and two main armed movements was never implemented. A military coup in March 1991 brought General Toure to power and led to renewed peace efforts. Toure enlisted the support of the Algerian government in the peace process, and in December 1991, the armed movements agreed in a meeting in El Golea, Algeria to form the United Movements and Fronts of Azaouad (MFUA). A series of preparatory meetings involving representatives of neighbouring governments as well as prominent civil society leaders, the government and the MFUA led to the negotiation of elements that culminated in the signing of a National Pact in April 1992. However, it soon became clear that the National Pact process was incapable on its own of transforming the dynamics of the conflict

and bringing about sustainable peace. Both the national army and the armed movements were fraught with indiscipline. Local units, unaccustomed to civilian rule, continued to fight the war and made implementation of the agreement virtually impossible. The 'peace dividend' was practically non-existent as many donors failed to honour their commitments to support economic development projects and local community efforts were hampered by the poor security situation.

By July 1994, elected President Konare was under severe pressure and facing a possible coup d'etat. In an effort to address the problems, he convened a series of 'regional concertations' (consultations) to stimulate public debate on the future of the country. A total of seventeen public meetings were held throughout the country during August 1994, with some regions holding more than one meeting in order to accommodate large populations or geographic coverage. The purpose of the meetings was to listen to people's frustrations and bring public debate out into the provinces and beyond the traditional political elite. It was intended to generate new political alternatives and not specifically to address the conflict in the north. Regional meetings were summed up in a final national concertation in Bamako. Although participation in the regional concertations was open to all members of the public, very few nomads participated in the process as the security situation had led to deteriorating inter-ethnic relations. Thus, despite the process creating greater national consensus on the need for fair treatment of all groups in the north, its significance for peacebuilding is questionable. Few people in the north consider the regional concertations to have played a significant role in bringing peace to the region. It was only towards the end of 1994 that real breakthroughs in the conflict began to occur. Recognizing that they would need to take greater responsibility for finding a settlement of the conflict, local

traditional leaders initiated peace talks in their communities. The first meeting took place in the village of Bourem in November 1994, initiated by the village chief who convened local leaders from the surrounding area. They reached agreement on the need to motivate people under their influence and in early 1995 a second meeting in Bourem resulted in a local truce to end the fighting. This was soon followed by a series of local meetings, leading to the negotiation of localized ceasefires that ended organized violence by April that year. However, with large numbers of the population still heavily armed, and the social and economic infrastructure in tatters, there was still a lot of work to be done. Hoping to build on these successes, the government dispatched several commissions to undertake consultations throughout the north. Yet in the context of a history of authoritarian rule, local people were unwilling to trust government officials, who failed to understand the difficulties of initiating local action in such a setting. With people needing guidance instead from leaders they trusted, the government commissions achieved no results.

Local peacemaking efforts continued, though, and in September 1995, the first reconciliation meeting was held in Mbouna and attended by some 2,500 people. But the scale of the meeting made it difficult to manage and people realized that such generalized reconciliation efforts would require much tighter local leadership. It was then that a small group of civil society leaders formed a 'facilitation group' to provide guidance for local initiatives. They called on a trusted international NGO, Norwegian Church Aid to assist their efforts. Following the successful implementation of the first inter-community meeting under this structure and subsequent demand for its replication elsewhere, the organizers were able to initiate a 'Fund for

reconciliation and peace consolidation in Northern Mali' supported by a number of foreign government donors. Thirty seven inter-community meetings were then conducted throughout the north. The meetings were structured to meet the needs of communities characterized by levels of interdependence with regard to territory, natural resources and trading venues. Given the lack of leadership structures at this level, the facilitation group selected meeting organizers on the basis of their individual integrity, position and capacity to convene the events. They listed a series of problems arising from the war and requested that the communities develop commonly acceptable solutions to each one. The meetings were cautioned only to deal with problems that were within their control so as to ensure a focus on generating realistic solutions.

The facilitation group also suggested that a diverse group of people should be involved in decision-making at the meetings, including traditional leaders, religious leaders, and civil society leaders including representatives of women and youth. Local politicians, soldiers and government officials were given 'observer' status, to ensure that sufficient space was given to the communities to engage in and renew their traditional forms of dialogue. Prior to each meeting, the main organizer would travel around their area to discuss the process, listen to people's issues and try to address obstacles to their involvement, such as long-standing disputes. The consultations would also allow the organizer to hear different positions on particular issues and identify possible areas of consensus on solutions. Each meeting was attended by between 300 and 1800 people and typically lasted one or two days. It began with an introductory plenary,

including the selection of members for topical commissions. The commissions typically focused on issues of security and development and each commission would debate possible solutions to their issue, looking for compromises between the known positions of influential figures. Their proposals would be brought back to the plenary where people could make last comments or suggestions. Then the meeting would choose members for follow-up commissions to carry out the decisions. Although there were variations between the meetings, there were also some important trends in their outcomes. The practical results included the re-opening of markets, reduction in armed robbery and greater willingness among ex-combatants to join demobilization camps and turn in their weapons. There was also overwhelming agreement on the need to restore the authority of the state through the development of its institutions. The greatest resistance to the meetings came from those who supported the status quo: those making money out of refugee facilities in neighbouring Burkina Faso who did not want to see refugees returning to Mali; and local parliamentarians who were not formally part of the process and saw it as a threat to their power-base. However, with the majority of northerners supporting the processes and seeing the tangible benefits emerging, and with the government keen to support the successful consolidation of peace in the north, these groups were unable to seriously jeopardize the processes. This experience of peacebuilding Malian-style suggests several important lessons. Firstly it offers a striking example of the failure of a bilateral negotiation model in a context of intense social fragmentation. At the same time, it illustrates the importance of political will and consensus on addressing the conflict at a national level in order to create an enabling environment for local peacebuilding efforts to flourish. Secondly it highlights how patterns of

local interdependence can act as a catalyst and incentive for finding common solutions and overcoming divisions entrenched through armed conflict. At the same time, a carefully constructed local facilitation group was able to bridge different localities, offering a common basis for peacebuilding as a regional project whilst respecting the specific characteristics of different communities and enabling truly local processes. Finally, the Malian inter-community meetings balanced tradition and modernity, based on equality and respect for all involved.

The southern Sierra Leonean district of Pujehun was one of the first places in the country to experience the rebellion that plunged the country into brutal civil war in 1991. A small group of fighters, going under the previously unknown title of the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF) struck border villages in the district after crossing the Mano River from Liberia. With the stated aim of overthrowing the national government and reviving multi-party democracy, the RUF also indulged in looting, coercion of youths into their ranks and the execution of horrific acts of violence against government officials, extension workers and traditional leaders. In southern Pujehun, the RUF capitalized on resentment created by earlier abuses by the ruling party, combined with endemic poverty and lack of employment opportunities, to strengthen its struggle. The national authorities fostered the development of a third fighting force, the Citizens Defence Force, based on traditional hunting practices. The interplay and allegiances of armed actors at the local level led to the violent splintering of the social fabric.

Almost a decade of civil war was punctuated by various half-hearted and unsuccessful peace efforts, including the failed Abidjan Accord of 1996 and the compromised Lome Agreement of 1999. With peace achieved on paper, the parties showed little will to make it happen in practice. Despite the important roles played by UN peacekeepers and British SAS forces, it was not until the landmark elections of May 2002 that many believed the war to be over. And in communities scarred by spirals of horrific violence and devastated of basic infrastructure, the transition to peace remains slow and painful. In the area of Sulima in the south-eastern district of Pujehun, the Sulima Fishing Community Development Project (SFCDP) was initially established to improve living standards and promote development. In the period of relative calm following the 1996 elections, and in the context of refugee return to the locality, the SFCDP initiated various peacebuilding activities, including youth vocational training, micro-credit, resettling women victims of the war and developing communal fishing as a means of rebuilding the economic base of the community. The activities specifically addressed root causes of conflict to alleviate existing tensions within the community. However the 1997 coup forced many project staff to flee to neighbouring Liberia, where they worked without any operational frameworks in refugee camps to build trust between pro-government and pro-RUF members of the community, in preparation for their return home. With the return to civilian rule in 1998, many community members did return and the SFCDP was formally revitalized. The organization began to employ an integrated approach to achieving the following inter-related objectives: one objective was to achieve effective communication, consultation and negotiation at all levels. Another objective was setting up of peace-enhancing structures, identified as democratic political

structures, effective and legitimate justice systems, a social free-market system and information, education and communication system. It also explicitly recognized the importance of a conducive political climate at all levels. To develop responses to the problems faced by the communities, local people organized workshops in three chiefdoms, bringing together youths, local authority officials, Imams, elders and women. The workshops identified specific conflict issues in each chiefdom and explored possible paths to reconciliation. It became clear that the three chiefdoms faced similar problems, including disputes caused by the death of the paramount chief and lack of civil authority.

In response to these conditions, the workshops enabled the communities to establish mechanisms for conflict resolution in the form of 'peace monitors'. One peace monitor was appointed for each section (subdivision of a chiefdom) with a mandate to identify early signs of conflict and to intervene before they escalated. On beginning their work, the peace monitors appointed a principal peace monitor to be responsible for overall management and coordination. Drawing on the strong Islamic traditions of the area, the twelve peace monitors are mainly respected Koranic teachers or mwalimus. They use the mediation and other conflict resolution skills acquired through their religious faith and training, as well as receiving some additional training in 'Western' approaches to conflict transformation. Each monitor is responsible for covering between ten and fifteen villages and given a bicycle to facilitate mobility. They are expected to work approximately ten days per month and receive a small stipend for their efforts. Where peace monitors encounter larger disputes between villages, they call in a 'grievance committee' established at chiefdom level to assist in resolving the conflict. In addition to the

'peace monitors', the SFCDP re-established its poverty alleviation and development initiatives, through the revitalization of local fishing and fish-processing and a micro-credit programme for women. These activities are geared specifically to women in recognition of the increased poverty they experience in the Sulima area, their particular responsibilities for family welfare and their need for economic and social reintegration as a result of their suffering during the war. These economic development components have provided micro-credit to 35 women's groups and provided funds for the purchase of two fishing boats and the training of a 12-person fishing crew. Despite various problems related to sea hazards, unusually low fish stocks and the dominance of Ghanaian fishing boats, the initiative has resulted in tangible gains for the women involved, demonstrated by their ability to construct new shelters, expand their businesses and pay school fees for their children. The activities have also generated revenues from an increase in fish processing by smoking.

A recent impact assessment of the SFCDP suggests that there have already been several direct benefits from the project. Participants feel it has enhanced their self-esteem, enabled them to make small but significant advances in reconstructing their houses and other infrastructure, offered special benefits to women through personal and economic empowerment; led to local processes of reconciliation; minimized recourse to litigation and led to improved family relationships and community cohesion. Additionally, evaluators have noted that the initiative has contributed to a shared understanding of the importance of peace as a lynchpin for local development. Participants demonstrate an increased awareness of their civil rights and

obligations, and a greater degree of shared analysis with regard to the causes of conflict in their localities as well as an enhanced capacity to envisage non-violent processes of resolution.

Inevitably, there are many daunting challenges facing the SFCPD. With the restoration of state mechanisms for law and order throughout Sierra Leone, the peace monitor system will need to engage and coordinate its work effectively with the police and chiefdom administrative structures being revitalized in the area. Although difficult, it is an opportunity for the project to influence the vertical structures of governance where patronage and corruption are still rife. Secondly, economic development activities will slowly need to address the pressing need for further substantial financial investment in primary fishing equipment and improved transportation given the long distances to local markets, whilst maintaining local ownership and sustainability. To date, the project has benefited from an active and sustained partnership with Conciliation Resources' office in Sierra Leone, which is engaged in advocacy at national and international levels as a means of enlisting financial and political support for the initiative, as well as assisting local staff with training and awareness-raising in principles and practices of conflict transformation. In particular, CR is currently engaged in a 'learning and dissemination' initiative in support of the SFCPD. Through a facilitated 'learning seminar' with key participants in the SFCPD, it has been possible to develop detailed written documentation on the objectives, methodology, experiences and lessons learned from the initiative so far. This has also been recorded as a documentary film. The documentation will shortly be shared among key national and international policy-makers in Sierra Leone, the wider sub-region and Europe, through targeted 'dissemination seminars'.

The experiences of the SFCDP highlight several key opportunities and constraints facing grassroots peacebuilding efforts. The indigenous peacebuilding methods are rooted in the traditions and structures of this rural area of Sierra Leone. They draw strength from the dynamism and vision of the local project director and his colleagues. They address community problems: reintegration of ex-combatants, domestic violence, competition for scarce resources and develop solutions through consensus and based on the resources and social capital of the locality. Yet while it remains locally-rooted, it remains vulnerable to the effects of macro-level conflict in Sierra Leone, where national strategies for peacebuilding are at best patchy and at worst non-existent, and where the political instability that scars this region of West Africa threatens continued destabilization.

At the same time, the pioneering work of the SFCDP is also making a modest contribution to stability at the national level. By addressing and resolving causes of conflict in one of the key flashpoints of the country, it is playing vital preventive role and directly contributing to the consolidation of peace beyond its own environment. Yet, as well as highlighting the importance of improved patterns of communication between groups within a community at the grassroots, the SFCDP illustrates the necessity of sustained advocacy at the national policy level to ensure that appropriate investment and supporting institutional frameworks can be found to strengthen its activities.

Women in West Africa have also been actively involved in peace processes through involvement in Civil Society Organisations. CSOs in Africa have a strong history of being at the

forefront of movements that dislodged entrenched authoritarianism to introduce democratic governance on the African continent. In West Africa, civil society, through trade and student unions, women's groups and professional associations, was active in the struggles for independence. As the political context in different West African countries evolved from the post-independence era to military and autocratic rule, to current endeavours to build democratic states, the role of civil society also evolved. CSOs across West Africa have been important catalysts for ending military dictatorship, advocating for pluralist and open societies, and promulgating democratization and good governance.¹¹⁰

3.5.2 Eastern Africa

In East Africa, 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 (women together for women) which is a successful and innovative Rwandan women's group. This group of peace action campaign is designed to give women the resources to create a more peaceful society. Their

¹¹⁰ Elizabeth Ferris, *Women, War and Peace*, Life and Peace Research Report No.14 (Uppsala, 1993)

efforts include constructing houses, creating local women's dialogue clubs and training and educating women¹¹¹.

Elizabeth¹¹² notes that a lot has changed in terms of advancement of women's status in the social, economic and political situation in Rwanda. There is greater participation of women although they are still struggling for positions of high responsibility. It has proved difficult for women to achieve these positions without compromising their solidarity for women's issues and concerns. Although the Rwanda's constitution provides for 50 percent women's representation (Article 14), this provision has not been incorporated into the electoral laws. Consequently, very few women were elected into parliament in the recently concluded elections, i.e., only 33 out of 632 (5.2 percent) and only 9 out of 60 (15 percent) of the ministers are female. It was also noted that it is difficult to continue working for women once in power, due to the numerous constraints and pressures women in political decision-making face.

Cairns¹¹³ in his research on the impact of violent civil conflict on women and children in DRC observed that only a small proportion of women were elected at the national and provincial Parliamentary elections that took place in the second half of 2006. Women only constitute 8.4 Percent of the new National Assembly, which is a setback in comparison with the previous

¹¹¹ Colletta, Nat & Michelle Cullen. *Violent Conflict and the Transformation of Social Capital. Lessons from Cambodia, Rwanda, Guatemala and Somalia*. (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2000) pp 13.

¹¹² Elizabeth Powley . 'Rwanda: Women Hold Up Half the Parliament,' in *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*. Stockholm: IDEA, 2005. Available at: www.idea.int/publications/wip2/upload/Rwanda.pdf (accessed 7 August 2010)

¹¹³ Cairns, Ed - *Children and Political Violence*. (London, Oxford, 1996)pp 33-34.

transitional assembly that had a percentage of 12 percent. The women cited lack of money to stand as candidates and to run a proper campaign as a serious drawback. Low involvement of women in political parties further exacerbates the problem. Many women ran as independent candidates, thus reducing their chances to be elected, as the electoral code is more favorable to political parties' candidates. Women also were disadvantaged in that they had a lower level of literacy and could not compete against the more educated men. Likewise, the number of aspirants worked against them. Many women candidates suffered from their lack of connection with grass-roots women and community-based women's organizations. Another notable threat to women participation in peace building is the role of the church that was used in the DRC particularly to discredit women's participation. Smear campaigns were orchestrated by rival male candidates, with the full backing and participation of the Catholic Church. Likewise in Rwanda, the Catholic Church strongly marginalized women in peace building campaigns by opposing women's efforts.

In Burundi, women played a big role in the politics and administration after the war as heads of zones, which was not the case before the war. However, the issue of women's accountability is linked to the poor mechanisms of accessing power where women in decision-making positions are subjected to lots of pressure that limit their ability to maneuver this results to minimal women's representation in conflict resolution efforts which is still very low both at

national and local levels (30 percent of representation of women in parliament and 12 percent at the grass-roots level)¹¹⁴.

The introduction of quotas in the peace agreement and in the new constitution in Burundi was highly effective in increasing women's participation in governance. Burundian women have called for support to reinforce the work of women's machineries within all ministries, to ensure effective gender mainstreaming. Despite many efforts, Burundian women's organizations are constrained by their reliance on international NGOs to provide access to information. They persistently called for strengthening capacity development and support for their full participation in peace building processes and frequently requested for gender advisers to represent them in the national conflict resolution process, such efforts were very strenuous and sometimes not forthcoming. On the other hand, despite constitutional guarantees of gender equality, Burundian women continue to face discrimination in matters related to family law, property, inheritance and criminal law, and participation in conflict prevention¹¹⁵.

Women in Burundi through marriage were a real link between two families, two clans and even two ethnic groups. Society generally recognized several qualities in women that made them accomplish their mission namely qualities of compassion, patience, reserve, tenderness, modesty etc. Socially, women played an important part in naming ceremonies as well as in

¹¹⁴ P. Uvin (2007) Human Security in Burundi: The View Below (by youth), *African Security Review*, Vol. 16 No. 2 June 2007 pp 78, 79.

¹¹⁵ P. Buyoya, , *Mission possible*, (Paris, L'Harmattan, 1998) pp 31, 33, 35

moments of joy and hardship. Women prepared presents, food and drinks during festivities and entertained guests with their songs and dances. In the prevention and resolution of conflicts, the traditional Burundi woman contributed through the teaching of positive values of peace and coexistence that she imparted to her children and wise advices provided to her husband on the one hand and a role as a moderator and conciliator when dispute arose between neighbours and relatives on the other. When the crisis erupted in 1993, some women leaders who had taken part in the sociopolitical life of the country in the years 1970-1990, (former ministers, parliamentarians etc.) observing the violence between the Hutu and Tutsi communities spreading dangerously went to the residential areas and schools in Bujumbura preaching messages of peace. They preached the values that were associated with the traditional Burundi women¹¹⁶.

According to Uganda Aids Commission,¹¹⁷ despite the fact that Uganda is seen as a model for women's political participation, lack of government support and its reluctance towards enacting laws related to women's rights such as International Alert & EASSI the Domestic Relations Bill (DRB) shows retrogression, and is an indicator that women's participation is no longer a priority. Manipulation of women by political parties which force them to focus on party agendas is observed as a major challenge. Consequently, women's solidarity in the struggle for gender equality is at most times compromised.

¹¹⁶ J. Gahama *Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Burundi*, DPMF. Addis Ababa: Development Policy Management Forum, 2002 pp 17.

¹¹⁷ Uganda Aids Commission. *The National Strategic Framework of HIV/AIDs Activities in Uganda 2000/1 to 2005/6*, 2007 pp 13, 14.

In Uganda, women feel a sense of disenchantment and betrayal by government, given that some of the important laws do not support even the women parliamentarians. On issues of accountability, it is clear that there are tensions between women politicians and women's organizations about advancing the women's movement in Uganda. The idea of women politicians holding allegiance to their own political parties, rather than to the women's movement, results to lack of dynamism and purpose within the women's movement. The institutions are male dominated and organized around male interests, with women often in lower ranks where they cannot influence the trend of events. The church in Uganda, just like the Catholic Church in the DRC, is identified as a hindrance to women's participation in politics and in conflict management, as it engages in 'smear campaigns' questioning the morality of female candidates. This clearly demonstrates however that despite the pivotal role women play in peace building, they are heavily excluded in formal peace negotiations and cease-fire talks¹¹⁸.

Another country in East Africa which has brought to fore women issues is Somali. During the Somali civil war many women found themselves at the centre of conflicts fought between their sons, husbands and other male relatives. For the sake of their families many women have been active in peacemaking and peacebuilding. In Somali society it is men, specifically the elders, who traditionally have the means to make peace through dialogue and mediation. But although women are typically excluded from decision-making forums where

¹¹⁸ Klaus Deininger Raffaella Castagninia, Incidence and impact of land conflict in Uganda, *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, Vol. 60 (3), July 2006, pp 335

peace accords are negotiated, their position within the clan system gives them the ability to bridge clan divisions and to act as a first channel for dialogue between parties in conflict.

Women have also been effective in influencing elders and others to intervene in conflict and have mobilized resources to finance peace meetings and support demobilization. While men typically focus on achieving a political settlement, with the assumption that peace will ensue, women's vision of peace exceeds this and includes sustainable livelihoods, education, truth and reconciliation. Women have also led the way in mobilizing civil society engagement in peace work, although few of their initiatives for peace have been documented. Many women peace activists have found the struggle for peace inextricably linked to that for women's rights.

In internationally-sponsored peace processes women have successfully lobbied for places in decision-making forums and for seats in parliament. And they have made some gains in formal politics, holding seats in the different Somali parliaments and some cabinet posts. But their political role remains severely compromised. The emergence of religiously driven politics presents Somali society with a new challenge: some Islamic groups are supportive of women's participation in politics; others are against it, which threatens to undermine the few political gains that women have made.

The war against Siyad Barre's regime in the 1980s was seen as a just cause by many Somalis and many women participated in the struggle to end the dictatorship. Those who earned respect from their participation later used this to demand concessions from warlords and militias.

Several became leading members of civil society and the women's movement and became engaged in peacebuilding. But with the collapse of the state, women also lost the legal status and equal rights that had been afforded them. While women have actively engaged in peacebuilding, the gendered nature of clan-based politics means that women are typically excluded from full participation in peace talks.

It is commonly said in Somalia that while women can build peace only men can make it. One reason for this is that a woman's affiliations with her father's clan, and her mother's, husband's, children's and son-in-law's clans, mean that a woman's clan loyalty is perceived as unpredictable. They therefore are not included as clan delegates in negotiations and decision-making forums that can affect the fortunes of the clan.

By the same token a woman's multiple clan affiliations can give her a structural role as a peacebuilder, enabling her to act as a conduit for dialogue between warring parties and to exert pressure on them to keep talking. When mobilized, women play an important influencing role in local peace processes, especially if they have wealth, are related to clan elders or come from a respected family. In Puntland, in response to one conflict, elderly women from several clans approached the leaders and demanded a cessation of hostilities. Their message was simple: 'we have had enough displacement in our lifetime and at this age we can't tolerate it anymore'. This mobilized clan elders and leaders to intervene and ensure the conflict was peacefully resolved.

Peacebuilding conferences in Somaliland, in Borama and Sanaag (1993) and Hargeisa (1996), would not have taken place without the collective lobbying of women pressurizing the elders to intervene to end the conflicts. But despite their efforts, and confirmation from religious leaders that Islam offered no grounds to exclude them, women did not participate in the talks themselves, other than as fundraisers and cooks. After exerting pressure on their clansmen, ten women were allowed to observe the peace talks in Borama in 1993 and eleven were allowed to observe the 1996 Hargeisa Conference, but had no voting rights. One of the powerful lobbying strategies women have used under such constraints is poetry. In the 1998 Garowe conference in Puntland, Anab Xasan, frustrated by what she called 'male power-grabbing and selfishness', recited a poem that left many men in tears. Reportedly, after hearing the poem the elders agreed to allocate women seats in the administration.

Excluded from the all-male arena of clan-based politics, women have directed their collective political acumen and agency into the civil society space that opened up after state collapse. Within the somewhat inchoate definitions and boundaries of civil society, Somali women have operated as key players and shown keen leadership. Indeed some women would argue that Somali civil society organizations' engagement in peace work did not start until women took a dedicated leadership role.

Inspired by their involvement in the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995, women in Mogadishu in 1996 built on their growing experience in cooperating for peace to establish the Coalition for Grassroots Women Organizations (COGWO) as a platform for peacebuilding that

united women's voices and efforts. COGWO has worked to promote women's rights and to support victims of violence, but its major contribution to peacebuilding in Somalia has been in stimulating the engagement of civil society organizations (CSOs).

In 1997 a workshop of CSOs organized by COGWO in Mogadishu concluded that it would take more than dialogue among a small group of warlords and their international patrons to secure a lasting solution to the Somali conflict. The organizations at the meeting made a commitment to take action to overcome the obstacles to peace: warlords and their supporters in the international community, certain businesspeople, elders, militia, and irresponsible media, and inaction by civil society.

The first step taken after the workshop was to set up the Peace and Human Rights Network – Iskuxirka Nabada iyo Xuquuqal Adamiga (INXA). This was a turning point in Somali politics and CSO engagement in peace processes. INXA became a platform that politicians wanted to associate with, including the warlords, who saw it as an opportunity for political survival because the public was fed up with them.

3.6 Factors hindering participation of women in conflict prevention in African countries

Given the relation between existing gender balance in the society and the impact of armed conflict on women, it is important to take a closer look at the roles of women in war and peace building. Pro-active conflict prevention efforts have strongly expanded in scope and popularity over the past few years and are now commonly referred to as peace building. Peace

building is a process seeking to transform non-violent attitudes and behaviors to achieve sustainable peace. In reference to a study by the Burundi Peace Building Study Project, the term “sustainable peace” refers to a situation characterized by the absence of physical violence, the elimination of political economic and cultural forms of discrimination, a high level of internal and external legitimacy, economic self sustainability and a prosperity, which enhances the constructive transformation of conflicts. From a study of Peace Building, Burundi Peace Building Study Project, identified eleven predominant areas where women participated in an effort to resolve conflicts. This range from peace marches, education and exhibitions to conflict resolution, demobilization, civil disarmament, and trauma counseling endanger management¹¹⁹.

Based on findings on a study conducted from Rwanda, DRC, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Zimbabwe and South Africa,¹²⁰ the study argues that there are five major impacts of intrastate conflict on women and gender relations, First it was observed that there arises violence against civilians, of which 95% is female and internal displacement, of which 90% is women and children. There is also redefinition of female identities in the society, both as victims and as perpetrators and increased poverty and starvation, as result of targeted destruction of civilian property as well as communal violence leading to lasting bitterness, anger and hatred. The study found that in all six countries the most traumatizing factor that hinders participation of women in conflict management is their lack of adequate physical security, both during the conflict and the

¹¹⁹ R. Lemarchand, *Burundi, Ethnocide as Discourse and Practice*, (Cambridge, 1994) pp 74-79.

¹²⁰ UNCEF, *The Impact of Conflict On Women And Girls In West And Central Africa And The UNICEF Response*, The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), New York, op cit

post conflict demobilization of the militia. As Colletta and Cullen¹²¹ puts it, this challenge greatly keeps women trapped in their homes, not being able to move around freely. In majority of African countries currently in conflict, Rape is predominantly used as a systematic tool of warfare and torture. Moreover, many women see themselves forced to engage in prostitution in the post conflict era, as only available means of income. This as a result has inflicted majority women with a feeling of anger and bitterness which deteriorates their patriotic effort to participate in conflict prevention as well as in peace building.

Moser¹²² reviews community-based peace-building initiatives in three African countries: Liberia, Rwanda, and Uganda. The author notes that women encounter several barriers to engagement at the community level, for example: exclusion from male-dominated decision-making forums, lack of funding, exclusion from formal peace-building processes, resistance to initiatives that challenge cultural traditions, and security risks. Nevertheless, female participation in community forums is starting to have an impact on the nature of dominant institutions and identities. The examples provided in this paper illustrate how women can take advantage of the perceived gender role of women as peace-makers, although the author notes that the “approaches accessible to women are in most cases small-scale and informal, and... women must act carefully to avoid community backlash.”

¹²¹ Colletta, NJ and Cullen, ML - *The Nexus between violent conflict, social capital and social cohesion*, WB Working paper, 2000, p.4.

¹²² Moser, A., 2007, '*Women Building Peace and Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict-Affected Contexts: A Review of Community-Based Approaches*' UNIFEM
http://www.unifem.org/attachments/products/WomensBuildingPeaceAndPreventingSexualViolence_eng.pdf

From an extensive research by Colletta, and Cullen it is clearly discovered that in most cases women are confronted with economic restrictions which leads to a decline in their status. Lack of property rights for women in many societies of African countries make female-headed households lose their land, as well as little access to bank loans. Thus with increased poverty hitting the female population hardest and leaving them malnourished and often deprived of basic education and health services, denies women an expanded public roles and especially sufficient to ran local political institutions during the conflict¹²³. However, as York¹²⁴ notes, in many countries, while the activities in peace building increased in number, women's peace efforts routinely lack access to resources and support, lose the benefits of lessons learned thereby ending in isolation. This relates to John Paul Lederach,¹²⁵ a renowned Mennonite peace builder, and who confides that participation of women in peace building is in most cases hampered by lack of vertical integration of peace initiatives; Relationships of respect and understanding between higher levels of leadership with community and grassroots levels of leadership and vice versa which in many governments are not developed.

Most peace building work, particularly in the field of conflict resolution has been aimed at improving relationships by getting counterparts of relative equal status to meet with each other. The emphasis on this type of dialogues has fostered mainly horizontal relationships and

¹²³Colletta, NJ and Cullen, ML - *The Nexus between violent conflict, social capital and social cohesion*, WB Working paper, 2000, p.4.

¹²⁴ York, Jodi. "The Truth about Women and Peace." *Peace Review* 8, no. 3 (1996): pp 327.

¹²⁵ Lederach, John P - *Justpeace, the challenge of the 21st century*. In: *People building peace*, (European Center for Conflict Prevention, Utrecht, 1999), p.30

lacks responsive and coordinated relationships up and down the levels of leadership in a society affected by protracted violent conflict. Scheper¹²⁶ adds that in many places, the ability with women to build these vertical links is further hampered by lack of representation of women at higher levels in the society and the gender bias in war and peace work, strengthening at least the image of feminine peace and masculine militarism.

3.7 Summary

The preceding chapter presents a discussion on the role of women in conflict resolution and peace building concentrating on the situation in Africa. It goes on to discuss several cases and looks at some of the factors affecting the participation of women in conflict resolution and peace building. The subsequent chapter presents a critical assessment of the finding of the research study.

¹²⁶ Elisabeth E. Scheper. *Role of Women in Violent Conflict Prevention and Negotiation*; International Center of Ethnic Studies, Colombo 2002, pp 9

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings obtained from the interviews and then gives a critical evaluation of the secondary and primary data collected which sought to answer the research questions. This chapter takes an overview of issues that have emerged in each part of the research and makes a critical analysis. It will bring out any contending issues and demonstrate how the views relate.

4.2 Research Design

The study will adopt a descriptive survey as it deemed the best strategy to fulfill the objectives of this study. Descriptive studies describe characteristics associated with the subject population. Descriptive research is appropriate in investigating relationships among variables. The variables of this study will be political factors cultural factors and role of women in conflict prevention and peace building process. Surveys allow the collection of large amount of data from a sizable population in a highly economical way.

4.3 Population

The population for this study will include the women living in Nakuru District. These will form the population of the study. Dealing with all members even for a smaller accessible population is difficult due to the tremendous amount of time and resources needed. A sample is a smaller population obtained from the accessible population. Simple stratified random sampling

will be used based on the sampling frame below to come up with a sample of 50 respondents.

4.4 Content Analysis

This section presents the findings obtained from the interviews. The section discusses the finding as per the objectives of the study.

4.4.1 Socio- cultural factors

The study found that the main actors in Kenya are the politicians and the youths who are mainly men. These are the ones who incite and participate in the fighting. The politician were said to be motivated by the political interests especially hunger for power. On the other hand youth were motivated by money due to poverty and joblessness. Other issues singled out as drivers for conflicts included search for wealth, land issues as well as revenging deaths.

Women were said to come into the conflicts for various reasons. Women are forced to participate in war sometimes furthering it but in most of the time in looking for a lasting solution. As noted by Cheryl and McKay¹²⁷ peace building is frequently viewed in terms of post-conflict societal reconstruction without consideration of cultural context and gender. The reasons why women are involved in prevention and peace building were varied. The participants in the study indicated that women are the ones who suffer generally as a result of war and thus this is their main reason of engaging in activities to prevent escalation of conflict as well as ensuring that

¹²⁷ R. Cheryl, S. McKay, Peacebuilding as a Gendered Process, *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 62 (1) pp. 141-153, (March 2006)

lasting peace is realized. Women were also said to be involved in conflict prevention and peacebuilding due to their integral part they play in the society. The participants indicated that women are part of the society and are thus involved in the day to day issues facing the society in which they are living in. the participants indicated that it is the wish of every woman to live and raise her family in an environment of peace as most women have seen the consequences of war on women and children. This were the main issues which were said to be driving women to engage passionately in efforts to prevent conflicts as well as in peace building activities.

Women were said to have embraced several methods in their conflict prevention and peace building efforts. Mainly women use persuasion as their strongest tool in conflict prevention and peace building. They persuade their husbands and sons to desist from engaging in activities which might transpire into conflicts or which will escalate existing conflicts or hinder peace building efforts in the society. This is done at family gatherings while the family is gathered for meals. Women also use their women groups to spread information and enlighten others on the consequences of letting their sons and husbands engage in conflicts. This enhances the grassroots women of the need to do all they can to prevent and make efforts towards realization of lasting peace. Women also encourage and participate in intermarriages which link communities which may have been for a long time been involved in conflicts. The intermarriages help in fostering understanding amongst different communities which may have had a history of conflicts. The participants said that this led to strong bond between such two communities and even enabled the communities to see the other from a different angle as they would visit each other and be able to move the enemy tag. Women also use coercive means whereby they would

indicate that they won't give their sons food if they engaged in conflicts and also went ahead to warn them that if they engaged in conflict they would be chased away from home. Women in influential position were also noted as playing an active role in conflict prevention and peace building. These include women leaders and women politicians. Of particular note were the women media personalities such as Caroline Mutoko (a presenter at KISS FM), Julie Gichuru (a news caster at Citizen TV) and Peninah Muthoni Mbugua (popularly known as PM Squared who is currently a presenter at Kameme FM). Other influential were said to include athletes such as Tecla Lorupe who had done a lot of peace building using her Tecla Lorupe peace Marathon initiative.

The participants indicated that though women were willing and are actively engaging in conflict prevention and peace building efforts they are faced with monumental challenges. Among them are taboos in various communities. The participants indicated that taboos existing in various communities restrict the activities in which a woman can engage in. the participant noted that it was near taboo for women to address men at the grassroots' level as she would easily be shouted down no matter how relevant her contribution were. This led to women to rely on their husbands who may not defend their wives pints well. The participants also indicated that other taboos prevented women from coercing their husbands into engaging in conflicts. The participants cited the example of denying their men sex if they participated in conflicts. They noted that this is an effective tool yet they can't utilize due to taboos and other beliefs which are against this. Another taboo was said to be where parent could curse their daughter or son for

marrying from an 'enemy' community. This hindered the realization of peace and fostering of co existence among communities.

The belief system amongst conflicting communities and parties were said also to hinder participation of women in conflict prevention and peace building efforts. A belief system is the way in which a certain community is conditioned to make decision based on a set of beliefs. The participants noted hat the major belief hindering women participation is the idea that women cannot participate in matters concerning the society on an equal footing as men. This belief is held by the husbands who pass it on to their sons making it very hard for women to be able to convince these men on the importance of peace. Other belief systems which complicate the participation of women are those which hold that a real man is strong and for en to be strong they thus engage in conflicts. Peaceful men ar viewed as weaklings in many societies in the African context. The participants indicated that this was a great stumbling block in their quest for lasting peace.

The participants indicated that religious affiliations also hinder their participation as they are urged to be submissive to their husbands and support them always. They noted that this leaves women at an awkward position as their husbands expect their wives to back them even when engaging in war. The participants noted that some of the religious leaders took sides in the conflicts thus complicating the conflicts. The participants however noted that religion also facilitated the participation of women as it offered them a meting chance as well through the teachings that we are all brothers and sisters.

The participants also noted that family relations affected women efforts towards conflict prevention and peace building. The participants noted that women were restricted by their roles in the family to participate in peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts. Women had to find time to undertake her family chores before thinking of engaging in conflict resolution and peace building activities. Women also had to seek permission to attend and participate in peace meetings and could not contribute as she would be deemed to be disrespectful if her husband was present. One participant indicated that a women contributing o a peace meeting would sometimes be even be labeled 'quarrelsome'. Family relations also sometimes hindered women to advice their sons on desisting from conflicts. Sons seen to be listening to their mother would be labeled 'mamas boy' and were seen as weak. To show that they are not 'controlled' by women men thus seek to engage in conflicts.

4.4.2 Political factors

Political forces were also said to inhibit the participation of women in conflict prevention and peace building efforts in the country. The provincial administration was said to frustrate women efforts in conflict prevention and peace building as they did not fulfill their mandate of maintaining law and order in the country. The participants felt hat if the provincial administration was thorough in accomplishing its mandate women efforts would be only complementary. They also indicated that the provincial administration has also been dominated n=by men until recently and this has contributed in the 'muting' of the women's voice in the affairs of the society. The participants also have been known to side with men in perpetuating a patriarch society where the voices of women are expected to be confined and restricted not to be

heard in public. The provincial was singled out as having not being able to protect women during peace rallies and thus they are easily shouted down.

Civic leaders/politicians were also seen as a great impediment in the efforts by women towards realization of lasting peace. The participants noted that the political landscape does not favour women leaders in Kenya and in Africa as well as in most parts of the world. "Politics is a rough game and people have to push shout and even fight", indicated one of the interviewees. Women being peaceful in nature and not having the strength to do these things are thus excluded from mainstream political system. This in turn makes the voice of the women to be very shrill and not effective in most matters including conflict prevention and peace building activities. This is because politicians largely influence the policies and are also influential in decision making at the grassroots. The participants noted that even peace rallies had to have blessing from the political leaders and any peace rally which is deemed to be undermining the current leader is usually frustrated. As noted earlier the fact the politicians are the main actor in conflicts also plays out in conflict prevention and peace building efforts by women as the politicians continue to pursue their vested interests at the detriment of lasting peace. Participants observed that political system are a main structural impediment towards any peace efforts in Kenya.

4.4.3 Ways of improving women participation in conflict prevention and peace building

The participants indicated that the society needs to be sensitized on the importance of women participation in the running of the society affairs. The notion that women belongs to the kitchen needs to be done away with if lasting peace is to be realized especially in the African

society and other developing as well as underdeveloped nations. The participants noted that information will play a great role in the transformation of communities in conflict zones. Women

4.5 Critical Analysis

Several issues emerge from the extensive literature review undertaken in this study. Several salient issues emerge which are the concern of this critical analysis. First, it comes out that women know the costs of war: what it means to be subject to sexual violence designed to destroy communities, what it means to be displaced, to flee their homes and property, to be excluded from public life and regarded as less than full citizens. This finding reinforces previous studies¹²⁸ which have found that conflicts affect women directly and indirectly. The studies have argued that women experience the effects of conflicts in the short run and also in the long run. Peace consolidation must include ending impunity for sexual violence and raising the political and economic costs to those who engage in it, making sure they are not rewarded with state power and high profile jobs as a result of negotiated peace agreements. While the impacts of armed conflict the world over have a shocking similarity characterized by death, disability, rape, displacement, family separation and economic destruction, women's experiences are not uniform. Testimonies reveal the views of women as fighters, participants, refugees, victims caught between warring factions, organizers for peace, rehabilitation care-givers, mothers,

¹²⁸ See UNESCO, *Women and Peace in Africa*. Paris: UNESCO Workshop; Helke Becker. *Women, Politics and Peace in Northern Namibi*, In UNESCO, *Women and Peace in Africa*, (UNESCO Workshop Paris.2003) p65; Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*, (Cambridge University Press, 2001) pg. 37, 39, 41; Leslie, H. (2002) *Gendering conflict and conflict management in the Solomon Islands*, *Development Bulletin* 60: 13-16.

relatives and partners of the deceased. Long after the conflict has ended its impact continues, with women taking on

Another emerging issue is that in regions and nations which have been under conflicts or where conflicts are ongoing there has been significant developments for women in these regions with increased participation in political decision making in transitional and post-conflict governments in the region. This has been achieved mainly through affirmative action mechanisms, especially quotas and co-optation systems. The constitutions adopted by the countries during the post-conflict and transition periods include provisions for quotas of a significant proportion representation for women in the state institutions as was the case of Rwanda. In Rwanda, Affirmative Action was met with fierce resistance in the mid-1990s, and women had to fight a long and difficult battle to finally have it adopted by the state. Women acknowledge that they would not have been able to make such significant gains in politics without Affirmative Action¹²⁹.

The respondents stressed the importance of alliance building, as well as lobbying and advocacy. There has been registered great successes where women have been able to lobby and associate with other people and groups involve in conflict prevention and peace building efforts.

¹²⁹ John Paul Lederach, – *Justpeace: The challenge of the 21st century*. Center for Conflict Prevention, Utrecht, 1999, p.3134; Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa*, (Cambridge University Press, 2001) pg. 37, 39, 41

This was also stressed by several authors¹³⁰ who argued that for the efforts of women in conflict prevention and peace building to be successful they have to reach out to all those stakeholders who can facilitate the processes and offer resources.

Despite these significant gains, the challenges women are facing are still enormous. For example, how to translate these gains into changes in women's status at all levels of society? How to ensure that the increasing number of women in political institutions is going to advance women's interests in legislative and policy changes? What is the role and position of women in political parties and party systems? What are the connections between women politicians and the women's movement, and the overall civil society? How to strengthen these connections? How can these women become change agents for their fellow women, so that their political participation translates into a broader victory for all women? How to maintain these gains, bearing in mind that genuine policies for gender equality are sustainable only if they are developed and implemented in a broader context of democratic reforms? And, most importantly, how will the increased participation of women in political decision making contribute to the return of peace and security in the region?

¹³⁰ see: Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace After Civil Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), Roland Paris, 'Peacebuilding and the Limits of Liberal internationalism', *International Security*, 22 (2) Fall 1997, pp. 54–89, Roland Paris, 'International peacebuilding and the "mission civilisatrice"', *Review of International Studies*, 28 2008; Shahar Hamieri, 'Capacity and its Fallacies: International State Building as State Transformation', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 38 (1) 2009, pp. 55–81; and the special edition on 'Liberal Peacebuilding Reconsidered' of *International Peacekeeping*, 16 (5) 200

Culture and tradition were noted to have great impact on women's political participation. The negative attitudes towards women's involvement in politics were noted to be deeply entrenched, leading to problems of marginalization and isolation. In the DRC and Rwanda, the Catholic Church contributed to discrediting and marginalizing women's participation in politics. Questions on how knowledgeable women are on issues of politics and whether voting is based on ethnicity, religion or political capability were raised. It was reported that there was lack of civic education and consequently women do not always vote from an informed point of view. In some countries where women seem to have knowledge of the issues, it was noted that they are always undermined and belittled when they show interest in running for political offices. While it is important for women to compete with men for political positions, lack of education is a big hindrance in many countries.

The study had set out to test the hypothesis:

H1: Women role in conflict prevention and peace building efforts is significantly hindered by social-cultural and political factors.

H0: Women role in conflict prevention and peace building efforts is not significantly hindered by social-cultural and political factors.

From the study findings the study adopts the alternative hypothesis as it has been proved beyond reasonable doubt that women's role in international conflicts is significantly hindered by socio cultural as well as political factors.

4.6 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings on the factors which hinder participation of women in conflict prevention and peace building efforts. The chapter was based on the primary and secondary data collected throughout the study.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives the conclusion and the recommendations derived from the literature reviewed and the study findings.

5.2 Conclusion

Reviewed literature on peace building and reconstruction demonstrates increasing recognition of the ways in which experiences of war, conflict prevention, peace building, and reconstruction differ for women and men. While this recognition may appear more rhetorical than real and varies in depth by agency or setting, this significant change in the general discourse influences expectations, redefines the margins of acceptable action, and creates new opportunities for defining interests and incentive structures promoting further change. By influencing perceptions and norms, this new policy discourse and the international will that it represents may make a real difference in the long-term for the integration of gender in conflict prevention and peacebuilding processes.

The study concludes that despite women's resolve and willingness to play an active role in preventing, conflicts as well as striving for lasting peace, there are numerous obstacles which are on their paths. These challenges are either socio cultural or political and are also largely intertwined.

Socio cultural factors are deeply ingrained in the society and removing them will require consistent efforts over the years. Children and generations to come need to be gradually trained on changing their perception about women and the role they can play in the society. Political factors and prejudices can be stamped with concerted efforts based on political goodwill of the politicians and the institutions running the nations. These can be changed through legislation and enforcement of such legislation.

The study concludes that there is long way to go before the efforts of women can be felt and appreciated in the arena of conflicts prevention, resolution and peace building despite their commendable efforts.

5.3 Recommendations

The study makes several recommendations:

- The study proposes that information will be the main catalyst of facilitating and enhancing the role and participation of women in conflict prevention and peace building. There is need to gather and disseminate information on ways in which women can be able to participate effectively in conflict prevention and peace building. Success stories need to be documented from which best practices can be borrowed. The information needs to be disseminated to all members of the society including men to facilitate the change of the existing mindsets on the role of women in the society.
- There is a need to mobilize men's support towards women's issues and concerns.

- The study also proposes the need for serious Affirmative Action to enhance representation and participation of women in the political frameworks and institutions.. Affirmative Action is important despite the challenges it faces in its implementation. Affirmative Action demonstrates existence of political will.
- Regular consultation and involvement of grass-roots women in planning and decision-making is critical. There is need for wide consultations between women parliamentarians and grass-roots women to discuss the district development plans.
- The study also suggests the need to research on the cases where women have successfully participated in conflict prevention, resolution and peace building. There is need to document factors which facilitated such a feat. It is also important to identify and document the country-specific best practices in the different countries for replication.
- All peace building initiatives must consider the gender impacts of, and incorporate women in, their policies and projects.
- Psychosocial, relational and spiritual peace building projects should be emphasized as a central aspect of any peace building initiative.
- Peace building is culturally specific. Local approaches to peace building should be recognized, honoured and built upon; this includes traditional peace building approaches and the peace building inventions of women-centred and local groups.

- **Outside organizations and personnel should work with and not for locals and build upon local expertise.**
- **Within the parameters of working with locals, peace building projects should be documented and evaluated.**
- **Improved communication and cooperation is needed among various organizations working in peace building and reconstruction, at all levels; the formation of networks greatly facilitates effective peace building.**

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Explain in details who are the main actors in Kenyan conflict and what are their interests?

What necessitates the women to be involved in conflict prevention and peace building efforts?

Which methods are utilized by women in conflict prevention and peace building efforts?

Which taboos hinder women participation in conflict prevention? How?

Which belief systems hinder women participation in conflict prevention? How?

Which religious affiliations hinder women participation in conflict prevention? How?

Which taboos hinder women participation in peace building efforts? How?

Explain in details the belief systems which hinder women participation in peace building efforts?

How?

Explain in details how the family relations and structures affect the role of women in conflict prevention and peace building efforts?

Explain in details how the provincial administration hinders women participation in conflict prevention?

Explain in details how the civic leaders/politicians hinder women participation in conflict prevention?

Explain in details how the provincial administration hinders women participation in peace building efforts?

Explain in details how the civic leaders/politicians hinder women participation in peace building efforts?

What strategies can be used to empower women and thus increase their participation and impact in conflict prevention?

What strategies can be used to empower women and thus increase their participation and impact in peace building efforts?