



RE-THINKING WOMEN IN PEACEBUILDING

A case study of the 2007 post-election violence in Nairobi, Kenya.

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Abstract

The debate on the inclusion of women in peacebuilding has hit the scholarship field and received wide attention in the last years. There is a greater understanding of the significance from including women in the peacebuilding process. Most existing research focuses on the inclusion of women in the peace process. This thesis also took the same direction but diverged in using postcolonial theories to examine the inclusive nature of the peacebuilding. It dissected on the challenges hindering women from actively participating in the peace process. The thesis is based on a case study of the 2007 post-election violence that occurred in Kenya. The study has utilized qualitative method of research to help in answering its research questions. The study aims to contribute to the understanding of the roles women are playing in the peace process but also the efforts NGOs are putting across to ensure effective and active participation of women in attaining sustainable positive peace. The target group were women who were present during the post-election violence and peacebuilding organizations working with women towards peace achievement. Data was collected through Skype and WhatsApp call interviews complemented with secondary sources. Even though the analysis was done from a different geographical location, the voices of the Kenyan women are the ones speaking out and guiding this thesis. Through the findings, it was evident that the arguments made by feminist scholars like Mohanty and Spivak critiquing the representation of the “third world” subjects are proven by the interviewees. The findings also indicated that women are involved in all types of the peace processes both formally and informally. It also specified that even though women face several challenges, they use all the avenues and possibilities within the setting of “their roles” to be part of the attainment of the desired peace needed in the society.

Keywords: Re-presentation, Peacebuilding, “Third world women”, “Victim”, ‘saving’, West

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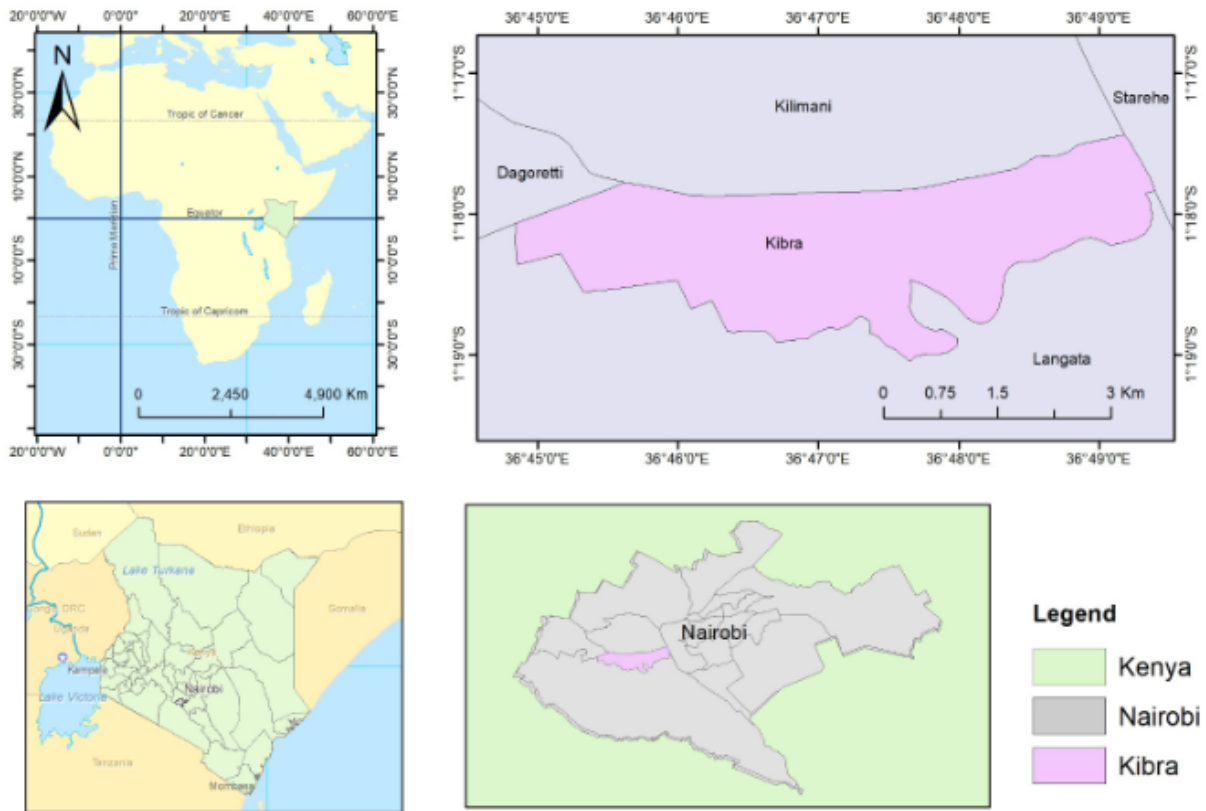
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COPAFRICA	Coalition for Peace in Africa
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GBV	Gender Based Violence
IEP	Institute for Economics and Peace
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
KAU	Kenya African Union
KPA	Kalenjin Political Party
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PENKENYA	Poverty Eradication Network Kenya
PNU	Party of National Unity
SRSG	Special Representatives of the Secretary General
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UN women)
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolutions
UP	University for Peace
WILPF	Women’s International League for peace and Freedom
WPD	World Poverty Data
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

Map of Kenya (Nairobi County and Kibra)



Source: Environmental System Research Institute (ESRI, 1993). Created by Sandra

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1. Introduction

The scholarly research and debates on the participation of women in the peace process have increased in the last few years. Further, it is not coincidental that much peacebuilding activity is targeted at postcolonial societies (Jabri, 2016). Kenya was hit by a post-election violence in 2007 that has impacted the country in various ways. Unresolved postcolonial issues, biased government and underlying societal inequalities are some but a few of the factors argued to have caused the violence (Oluwafemi, 2011). The country thereafter has been working to ensure an effective post-violence transition towards a more peaceful society. In reality, building peace in situations of internal conflict, are too complex and messy to be left to any sector (Anderlini, 2007: 3). Furthermore, the international community and those in the formal political sector need to understand the work of women, what impact it has, and what potential it could have if supported and sustained (ibid). As the debates on women in peacebuilding focuses on the importance of women's inclusion in the peace process, it can be productive to explore further on the roles women play and the obstacles they encounter in the peace process. This can be a useful addition to the body of literature challenging the exclusion of women in the peace process.

1.1 Research problem, aim and research question

Gender has been recognized as a key factor in conflict and peacebuilding processes. It is evident that both men and women get involved and affected differently (Myrntinen, Naujoks & El-Bushra, 2014: 7). The discovery signaled a new attentiveness on the importance of women's roles as indispensable stakeholders in the peacebuilding process (Shilika, 2016). Women's understanding and involvement in peacebuilding is not well accounted for despite the attention drawn to gender, conflict and the interest in the agency in peacebuilding literatures (Mueller, 2019). Due to structural patriarchal systems, women are perceived by various literatures to be victims rather than active actors in the peace process (Karam, 2000). In several occasions, the category of "women" is dealt with as a static and homogenous group (Mohanty, 1988: 337). Afshar (2003) points out that there is a commonality of experiences that universally marginalize women in the post-violence and construction phases.

According to Sharoni (1994) various feminists agree that taking women's experiences and their accounts into practice is not a matter of adding on the ones that were omitted, furthermore she insists that in order to avoid and transform the social and political structures excluding women's voices and perspectives from being recognized, feminists need to examine the background of how these exclusive practices occur and how they are validated. Understanding this will bring new perspective on how to foster the participation of women in all these spheres.

While much energy is directed to the victimhood of women emerging from the conflict, little attention and inadequate resources are allocated to strengthen the capacity of women in undertaking various roles as peacemakers, and of reconstruction processes. Whittington (2011) points out that targeted resources for gender equality must be deployed strategically to ensure that a new sustainable, rights based, equitable paradigm emerges in the aftermath of a conflict. Krause (2018) agrees, as she talks on the importance of including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the process of peacebuilding. To her, the collaboration with NGOs is necessary because they strive for gender equality and the inclusion of their representatives improves the agreements reached in the peace process. The NGOs pursue a broad public policy agenda that is often explicitly committed to multi-ethnicity, political compromise and reconciliation (Belloni, 2008: 96) hence standing a better chance of influencing the peace process.

With that said, it is noted that Kenya has a vibrant peacebuilding section with several NGOs committed to conflict prevention and working towards sustainable peace within the country (Reliefweb, 2018). They are known for adopting different strategies to safeguard women's participation in the various phases of peacebuilding. The aim of this thesis therefore, is to do an in depth study of the peace process in Kenya by navigating the involvement of both the NGOs and women. It aims to add to the body of literature entailing the importance of active and feasible inclusion of women in all the stages of the peace process. The following research questions will guide in addressing the purpose:

- i. *What role did Kenyan women play in the obtained peace from the post-election violence in Kenya?*
- ii. *How do organizations operate to facilitate women's participation in peacebuilding?*
- iii. *What are some of the obstacles hindering effective participation of Kenyan women in the peace process?*

1.2 Historical Background of ethno-politics in Kenya

Kenya is a multi-ethnic country having around forty-eight million inhabitants divided into approximately forty-two ethnic communities (GoK 2009) with different languages and cultures that all emerge to become the unique mix of Kenyan culture. Ranging in size from about seven million Kikuyus to about 500 El Molo who live on the shore of Lake Turkana, the five largest include; Kikuyu-22% of the population, Luhya-14%, Luo-13%, kalenjin-12%. Around 97% of Kenya's citizens are affiliated with its 42 major indigenous groups. Since attaining independence from the British colonizers on the 12th Dec 1963, the country is still struggling to establish governance based on democratic principles.

Along with other African countries, Kenya grapples with the responsibility of bringing together into one nation the diverse ethnic groups which have been segregated by geographical borders that were marked by the British colonizers during expansionism. For several scholars like Perani & Smith (1998), the British colonialism had a lasting, wide ranging and intense effects on the development of present-day Kenya. Crawford Young (1995:24) explains that the overall colonial legacy cast its shadow over the emergent African state system to a degree unique among the major world regions, insinuating that the continent can be understood well by untangling its colonial experience.

One of the most profound legacies of the colonial period has been ethnic conflict (Blanton, Mason & Athow, 2001: 474). Although ethnic divisions and conflicts existed prior to colonialism, the tensions were manipulated when the British powers imposed formal territorial boundaries, which were drawn with little consideration to the actual distribution of indigenous ethno-cultural groups (ibid). The boundaries were demarcated without consultation of Kenyan people, thereby leading to the establishment of a large territorial entity (Ndege, 2009: 2). The boundaries were for dividing single communities like the Somali among Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya, the Luo among Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya. They were drawn to define the different European spheres of influence (Griffiths, 1986). The fact that the administrative and ethnic boundaries were abutting, nurtured negative ethnicity while different communities competed over access to goods and services associated with modernity (Ndege, 2009; Oyugi, 1997: 42). Oyugi explain further that shared involvement in the colonial economy increased, thereby preparing a ground for the eventual

conflict based on inter-tribal competition. Furthermore, the strategizing and response by the ethnic groups proved later to be breeding grounds for future competition and conflict. The struggle for the control of the new state brought with it new competitors as well as new areas of potential conflict. Over the years, this conflict has tended to assume ethnic characteristics and intruded in the political sphere (ibid).

Despite Kenya attaining its independence, it was later discovered that it was “independence of the flag”, Onyango (2015). He elaborated further that most of the colonial structures remained behind to be perpetuated by the new African elitist group. The colonial constitution which was meant to dominate the natives was inherited by post-independent elites and used for ethnic political patronage (Peter, 2018:2). Its institutions brought domination of power which protected the power and fortune of the elite whose capacity served the desires of a few, while repressing the needs of the many (Leibold, 2015: 10). In the book *Struggle for democracy* (2007), Murunga and Nasong’o argues that the use of divide and rule by the British colonizers influenced the political ethnicization, alignments and mobilizations in the post-independence. The policy was built around manipulation of ethnic differences and it planted the seeds of inter-ethnic exploitation, suspicion and animosity (Oyugi, 2003: 158). Instances of postcolonial marginalization and discrimination have led to antagonism and ethnic conflict (Murunga & Nasong’o, 2007), a trend that has been recurrent in the postcolonial era and contemporary Kenya.

Politics in Kenya tend to be associated with a particular ethnic group, while competitive elections have displayed a strong ethnic pattern of voting (Lynn, 2011:2). The ethno-political mobilization and violence in Kenya today stems back from the colonial preferential of administering structures of privileges (Wamewere, 2008). It was manifested earlier during colonialism, when the colonial authorities rejected the National political parties like Kenya African Union (KAU), and endorsed ethnic political parties like Kalenjin Political Party (KPA) among others (Oyugi, Wanyande and Mbai, 2003). The colonial constitution failed to foster nationalism and the principles of good governance hence the reoccurrence of violence in the country (Peter, 2018: 11). He further explains that the rising to power for an ethnic coalition means access to political power, services, opportunities and resources.

According to Oyugi (2003: 10), the political competition continues to be shaped and driven largely by ethnic interests and that political parties themselves are often seen as fronts for ethnic interests.

Being a multi-ethnic country, Kenya's pluralist elections are inevitably marked by ethnic strategizing and undertones. Since the rebirth of pluralist¹ election democratic politics in 1991, the country once known to be peaceful has repeatedly experienced electoral conflict (Wambua, 2017). During the general elections in 1992, 1997, 2007 and 2017, the country has been experiencing electoral violence that has affected the country enormously. Among the general election years mentioned, the 2007 election (which is the foundation of this thesis) recorded the most intense violence triggered by election fraud. However the explosions were caused by tensions fueled by grievances over land, privileges and inequality reflecting an underlying ethnic-identity favoritism (Oluwafemi, 2011).

The violence that flared up at the end of 2007 presidential election was triggered when the incumbent President Kibaki of the National Unity (PNU) party was declared the winner amidst chaos of election irregularities. From the unofficial figures regularly communicated by the media, the opposition leader Raila Odinga of Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) was believed to have won. The peaceful election took a turn with many Kikuyus (From Kibakis' tribe) being evicted from their homes and farms provoking a retaliatory attack against the Luos, Luhyas and Kalenjins who were supporting ODM. The violence left the country unstable in several ways; Over 1,000 deaths were encountered and up to 350,000 were displaced in a span of few weeks (Klopp, J. M., Githinji, P., & Karuoya, K, 2010).

Through the help of The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation, Africa Union and the late Kofi Annan, a power sharing document² by the contesting individuals was signed to seek both short and long term solutions to persistent conflicts. This raised hopes about further dialogue to promote healing and stability thereby welcoming a period of peace and reconciliation. As part of fostering peace, a number of civil society initiatives like COPAFRICA which is part of this research were established. Despite this, the peace process after the election is clearly linked to the challenges of dealing with the consequences of the same violence. Due to the unresolved ethnic issues and the challenges people face, tensions are again rising as the country is headed for another general election in 2022.

¹ A mark of multi-partism

² Agreement on the principles of partnership of the coalition government.

While everyone in society is affected by violence, the specific experiences of conflict differ for women. Elisabeth Porter (2007) expresses that the difference extends to the types of experiences, the depths of exclusion from political decision making and mostly from participation in peace-negotiations and what is required in practicing reconciliation and attaining sustainable peace. This might be one reason why the attained peace in Kenya seems to be shaken and a possibility of a recap of violence is predicted. Whittington (2011) points out that the neglect of an inclusive participatory strategy of peacebuilding stems from a lack of realization of the gendered dimensions of both conflict and its aftermath. By securing the inclusion of both men and women in decision making and in the reconstruction of the society, lasting peace is likely to be achieved. Resources meant for gender equality like mechanisms for allowing women to occupy the leadership positions and of economic stability, are to be distributed strategically. This will ensure that both the genders hold their positions and are involved in all the stages of conflict aftermath, hence marking the foundation of this thesis.

2. Previous Research

This chapter provides an outline of previous research, mainly focusing on peacebuilding and women's global position in peacebuilding. It looks at the concepts associated with peacebuilding and various feminist scholars writing on the roles women play in the in-formal peace process.

2.1 Peacebuilding in general

At the center of this thesis is the idea of Peace: One of the main topics affecting contemporary society. The use of the word peace may in itself be peace-productive, producing a common basis, a feeling of community of purpose that may pave the ground for deeper ties later on (Galtung, 1969). Galtung analyzes peace thematic by doing an extensive exploration of various kinds of peace and its processes. He posits that violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations. Furthermore, he expresses that peace and violence are interlinked such that "peace" can be regarded as "absence of violence". Further, he gives a distinction between negative and positive peace. He refers to negative peace as the absence of personal and structural violence while positive

peace as a synonym for all other good things in the community; restoration of relationships, particularly cooperation and integration between human groups, with a constructive resolution of conflict (Galtung, 1967: 12). Studies on negative peace focus on reducing-eliminating negative relations while positive peace studies focus on building more harmonious relations. This distinction helps in navigating the authentic peace, therefore this thesis encourages a circumstance where peace is present while people operate non-violently and are positively managing conflicts.

Looking at peacebuilding, peacekeeping and peacemaking³, a direct connection is unveiled which unlocks the close relationship they possess. Peacemaking is used to move towards the settling of armed conflict, while conflict parties are introduced to reach agreement voluntarily (Galtung, 1996). Peacekeeping, on the other hand, is used to contain violence and prevent violence from escalating to war, it consolidates and creates space for reconstruction after a war (ibid). Peacebuilding however, underpins the work of both peace-keeping and peacemaking by addressing the structural issues and the long term relationships between conflictants (ibid). It is good to note that reconstruction of the community can only be achieved in a violent free surroundings, therefore, these three terms are interrelated and can work best when integrated together.

For those living in conflict zones or divided societies, violence and insecurity are daily realities (Porter, 2007: 1). Even when violence fades, peace appears elusive. Safety and security seem out of reach, (ibid). This becomes even more true for women who are only given minor (or no) roles in the peace-process. Porter expresses the depths of women's exclusion from decision making and participation in the peace-negotiations, and moreover, women's interpretation of what is necessary to build peace and practice reconciliation. Nevertheless, when given a chance to participate, women in various occasions tend to contribute towards positive peace. O'Reilly (2016: 3) argues that when it comes to preventing violent extremism, there are numerous cases of women in Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) adopting effective nonviolent approaches rooted in cooperation, trust, and access to communities. Nonetheless, how women's participation may contribute to durable peace has not been rigorously and structurally explored. Sustainable and effective peace is based upon recognition and empowerment of the whole community. The concept of peace

³ Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding represent three distinct categories of UN Interventions.

therefore as used in this thesis is based on recognizing the inclusive nature of positive peace in both formal and informal stages of the peace process.

2.2 Global situation of women in peacebuilding

Women and peacebuilding topic is arguably an area of research which prior to the 21st century was unexplored (Shulika, 2016). In the past few decades, the conversations on women's participation in the peace process have increased. The development signaled a new attentiveness on the importance of women's roles as indispensable stakeholders in the peacebuilding processes (ibid). However, research and the international community (The UN) increasingly acknowledges a participation gap and the lack of systematic and in-depth research (UN 2015). Human rights advocates, feminists, women's peace movements and academics have all tried to fill this gap (Heathcote & Otto 2014). Addressing this gap is important because peace negotiations can be a window of opportunity for increasing women's political participation in a post-conflict state (Anderson, 2016). Even with this discovery, Heathcote & Otto (2014) argue that it is only relatively recently that feminist analysis has started to impact on mainstream developments in international relations theory and practice in this field.

2.3 Women, peace and security

In 2000, the United Nations Security Council passed United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). The resolution highlights the importance of bringing gender perspectives to the center of all United Nations conflict prevention, resolution and sustainable peace. Even though it was neither the first nor the only internationally binding document addressing these issues, the resolution has been perceived both as a culmination of years of extensive lobbying by CSOs and as a starting point of placing gender issues firmly on the peacebuilding agenda (Myrntinen, Naujoks & El-Bushra, 2014: 11). The resolution calls for increased representation of women at all levels of decision making to prevent, manage and resolve conflict. Porter (2007: 2) posits that this calls for increased numbers of women to become Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and realizes the need to expand the contribution of women in UN field-based operations.

While many of these interventions have had immensely great impacts, they often do not address more fundamental issues. This is mainly because this component is often understood in a narrow way, which treats women as a homogenous group, mostly focusing on technical rather than political approaches (Myrntinen, Naujoks & El-Bushra, 2014: 12). Due to this, more complex questions surrounding gendered societal power relations and identities are seldom addressed, and agendas of external intervenes may not match with those of local actors (Ibid: 12). Furthermore, Porter (2007) argues that despite the efforts put across by the UN, feminist researchers and NGOs to encourage women's participation in conflict prevention and resolution, women remain seriously under-represented in the institutional, formal mechanisms of peace negotiations and security enhancement.

2.4 Feminist theorizing

In her revolutionary book *Gender and International Relations*, Ann Ticker (1992) opens the first chapter by examining the few readings written by women to assign to her students. She also wonders why the subject matter of her discipline is distant from women's lived experiences. She finds it interesting to discover that in the past decade, women and feminists in the field of conflict resolution have been asking similar questions. These kinds of questions triggered various attempts to introduce feminist's views to the field of conflict resolution and peace studies (Sandole – Staroste, 1992). Nevertheless, Sharoni (1994: 1) insists that these recent attempts to bring feminist theories into the field of conflict resolution are not designed to just add another perspective to the already existing body of literature. Rather, they seek to challenge the exclusion and marginalization of women's voices and their perspective from conflict literatures.

While women remain vastly underrepresented in formal peace negotiations, a large movement advocating for greater inclusion of women in peace negotiations emerging over the last decade has pushed the issue to the forefront of peacebuilding and security policy and practice (Palmiano, J, 2014:9). Palmiano's main research dissects the presence of women in peace talks by questioning the effectiveness of strands of current feminists academic and policy literatures. She investigates the advocacy campaigns pushing for greater representation and the participation of women at the peace table. Her findings propose on having incorporated policymaking and an aggregated gender analysis on women. A discussion on the peace process is designed to move the debates beyond discussions on only women, towards discussions on how having both men and women actively

participate in conventional peace processes (Palmiano, J 2014: 5. This can lead to broadened and more sustainable peace agreements (ibid). Porter, on the other hand, argues that it is not that men's contribution to peace is not significant. Rather, women's contribution to peacebuilding are usually informal, hence their voices often go unacknowledged (Porter, 2007: 1). Furthermore, she explains that the under-representation of women on the negotiation table, aggravates gendered inequality in peace processes. This in return undervalues the distinctive contribution that women in conflict societies and transitional societies bring to peacebuilding. Her aim is to do an explorative study on situating examples of women's actual experiences within gender-inclusive conceptual clarifications of the nature of Peacebuilding.

2.5 Why women's contribution to peacebuilding matters

Women and peacebuilding is built on various critical questions. For example;

- why are women absent in the peace process?
- Why does it matter for women to be part of the peacebuilding?
- what are the roles of women in peacebuilding?

It is not easy to address these questions considering that the field of conflict resolution, like most other fields of inquiry, has overlooked the voices and the experiences of women. Sharoni (1994) explains that just as other fields, the field of conflict resolution has ignored the potential contributions of feminist scholarship to the study and practice of conflict resolution. Porter (2008) reminds us that while typically women remain absent or are marginalized from the formal peace processes, they are conspicuously active in informal, grassroots peacebuilding activities. While reasons are given for women's absence from formal peace talks, women's organizations have found creative ways to be heard (ibid). Furthermore, a society can be judged on how they treat the women (ibid); this can be reflected in the leadership positions and through participation. Given that Kenya is a patriarchal society, the inclusion of the Kenyan women in the peace spheres can be a positive indication of levels of change and recognition. It is therefore prime for the gendered perspectives to be streamlined in the peace-process.

2.6 Women's participation in peace negotiations and durable peace

Preliminary evidence shows that post-conflict peace is more durable when women participate directly in negotiations (Caprioli, Nielsen & Hudson, 2010). McCarthy (2011) concurs that women are agents of change and possess unique and strategic abilities to considerably resolve conflicts non-violently. In light of this, the father of peace studies, Galtung (1996) agrees with essential feminists that women's general peacebuilding ability emanates from their innate peace-loving nature. However, this notion of associating women with pacifism has been criticized by various feminists like Jean Bethke Elshtain. Echoing Elshtain's arguments, Confortini (2006) writes that claims of women's natural or cultural superiority in matters of peace and war only serve to reproduce, if inverted, a world based on gendered dichotomies and power hierarchies (ibid: 334). Furthermore, she is critical of the assumptions about women's homogeneity insinuated when generalizing about women's peacefulness (ibid)

Also agreeing with this is Alison (2009) who observed that all women are not natural peace-makers; some of these women are aggressive combatants. Not all women have the intuitive capacity to build and maintain peace being that they also contribute during the war periods. According to Porter (2004: 3), women tend to be the prime nurtures in relationships, families and communities, they play a crucial role in peacebuilding, often in very informal and unofficial ways. She explains further that these roles often emerge out of the experience of oppression, knowing what it is like to be excluded and seeking a truly inclusive society. Women become mediators to help in addressing the root causes of violence, others becomes advocates for peace to help in solving conflicts in non-violent ways. Porter (2004), writes that women have been connected with reconciliation and peacebuilding, hence their inherent ability to influence peace. Nonetheless, this thesis stands by the fact that just as men, women are inviolable to human rights. Hence the ground for their participation and an opportunity to represent themselves in matters that affect their daily lives.

3. Theoretical Perspective

This chapter presents two theoretical approaches: The concept of peacebuilding and postcolonial theory (intertwined with feminist postcolonial theory). The theoretical concepts will be presented in this section and later applied in the analysis to help in answering the research questions.

The study is premised on postcolonial theory fused with the concept of peacebuilding. Peacebuilding in this case is used as both a concept and a theory. DR, C & McKay (2006) argues that peacebuilding is a gendered process; it is defined and perceived differently depending on one's gender. (En) gendering peacebuilding offers different degrees and approaches to which gender can be integrated into peacebuilding projects (Munro, 2000). He further explains that linking gender and peace can together influence peacebuilding positively both in practice and in theory.

3.1 The concept of Peacebuilding

To get a deeper understanding of how the term peacebuilding has developed, it is important to mention that it was initially coined in 1992 by UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, elaborating it as the action to recognize and support structures which strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict. Since then, the concept has been included in organizations and donor policies by covering a wide range of measures implemented in the emerging, ongoing and post-conflict contexts. Peacebuilding is frequently viewed in terms of post-conflict societal reconstruction without considering cultural context and gender (Rey, C, McKay, 2006: 141). Most INGOs and government entities think of peacebuilding as a reconstruction of the infrastructures and rebuilding of the institutions after post-conflict; this is what Kenya was focusing on after the post-election violence. For the sake of this thesis, it will make sense to look briefly into the context of gender and see what connection gender has with peace.

Gender involves men as well as women. The idea of sex roles has been used on several occasions to understand gender. Sometimes, men and women have been treated as simple categories (Connell, 2009). In the gender/sex dichotomy, sex is a biological categorization based primarily on reproductive potential, whereas gender is the social elaboration of biological sex (Eckert, P, Ginet, 2013: 2). Moreover, gender as opposed to the biological differences between men and women, refers to the socially learned behavior and expectations that distinguishes masculine and feminine social roles (Barandun, 1999). Gender is embedded so thoroughly in our institutions, our

actions, beliefs, and our desires that it appears to be completely natural (Eckert, P, Ginet, 2013). However, feminists like Judith Butler deconstruct the above notion and problematizes the existing assumptions that sex is biological. Referring to Simone de Beauvoir, Butler avers that one becomes a woman under a cultural compulsion and that the compulsion does not come from “sex”, (Butler 1990:12). She argues that, “if sex and gender are radically distinct, then it does not follow that to be a given sex is to become a given gender” (ibid: 142), meaning that there is nothing in a woman’s account that guarantees that the “one” who becomes a woman is necessarily a female and the same applies to a man. She concludes by saying that the sexual organs within our bodies do not have a meaning outside of discourse and they do not limit one to becoming any of the constructed gender (Butler, 1990: 9-10). Butlers’ deconstruction finds gender to be a result of constantly repetition of gendered acts and that it does not exist outside of these acts.

For the sake of this research, gender will be used to refer to the economic, social, political and cultural attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female (Munro, 2000: 2). On various occasions, men and women differ in the roles they undertake daily in the society. They include; participation in various spheres and in access and control of resources. Munro writes that three perceptions emerge when gender is combined with peacebuilding. First, it can be viewed as an approach like (en)-gendering peacebuilding or a gendered approach to development in a post conflict country. Secondly, it can also be viewed as an analytical tool, i.e can be used a tool in analyzing the causes of war. And lastly, it is perceived as a goal for example gender equality, improving the status of women or probably a sustainable peace. Besides, this thesis will use the gendered approach to address and guide its aims.

3.1.1 Gendered Approaches to Peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding is a gendered approach; approaches and decisions regarding the peace process are informed by gender identities and assumptions about gender differences. Women and men have different access to resources: men tend to dominate the formal roles in the peace negotiations. Power on various occasions is distributed unequally between women and men thereby blocking women’s visibility from participating in the decision making tables (Munro, 2000). Nevertheless, women still play unrecognized roles which is impactful in the overall peace process.

(En)gendering can also be viewed as a way of mainstreaming gender equality (Munro, 2000: 3). Mainstreaming is not a goal in itself, but a strategy to achieve gender equality (Strasbourg, 1998). It entails making the concerns and experiences of women as well as men an integral dimension of design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that both women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated (UNESCO, 2003). Munro (2002) argues that since peacebuilding is currently dominated by men, engendering peacebuilding will help in broadening the term *peacebuilding* to bring voices of both men and women into the approach with the goal of gender equality and sustainable peace.

Many peacebuilding programs and policies are formulated with little knowledge and understanding of the diverse society they operate on: basically, they are gender blind. Through gender analysis, the experiences and voices of both men and women can be brought to the tables. The changing roles before, during and after conflicts can as well be established. Furthermore, the analysis of conflict, peacebuilding activities and why/how conflicts end, gives planners key information to evolve extensive and secure communities.

Defining peace determines the approaches used to achieve peace. To some people, peace is having all the basic needs, equal distribution of resources, a fair and equal representation of various groups in all domains. Munro (2000) argues that sustainable peace can be achieved once the oppressive and unequal structures are eliminated and a free, gender equal society is established. From the above discussion, I argue that engendering peacebuilding builds a more gender equal community, where women participate, re-present, make decision and assume leadership roles which in return, opens up avenues for a more inclusive process.

3.2 Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial as a term proposes the resistance of colonial power and discourses that continue to shape different cultures including those whose revolutions have overthrown formal ties to their colonizers (Tyagi, 2014). Postcolonial theory therefore, destabilizes the colonizer's discourse that seeks to distort the experiences and inscribe the inferiority over the colonized group in order to exert full control over them (ibid). The theory does not only bridge the gap between margin and

center but also bring to the center the knowledge of or from the margins (Rukundwa & Aarde, 2007). Postcolonial feminist theory racialise mainstream feminist theory and insert feminist concerns into conceptualizations of colonialism and post-colonialism (Lewis and Mills, 2003). Parashar (2016) argues that the theory also offers a conceptual tool box to see multiple aspects of oppression and to reject universalism around gendered experiences of both men and women. It is mostly concerned with the representation of women both in the western locations and in the once colonized locations, with a specific exploration and reference on the female writers. This theory will assist this thesis in inserting the often “absent” (which in this research are the Kenyan women) subject into the dominant discourses and spheres in a way that subverts the authority of the colonizer. This will be done by expressing various feminists’ illustrations on the theory and show how it relates to the women and peacebuilding in Kenya. It will specifically express the silent voices of the women in the peace process and establish how the funded local NGOs working with peacebuilding relate to their funders and how that is affecting their involvement in the peace process.

3.2.1 White Savior Complex

According to Hernán Vera & Andrew M. Gordon (Quoted in Rodesilier & Garland, 2019), the term white savior is defined as “the redeemer of the weak, the great leader who saves black people from oppression and rescues people of color from poverty and diseases”. Placing the white savior complex in a military setting, Nigerian-American novelist Teju Cole coined the term “white savior industrial complex” to refer to the confluence of practices, processes and institutions that unfold historical inequities to ultimately validate white privilege (Anderson, cited in Aronson 2017). Aronson (2017:36) writes that people are rewarded for “saving” the less fortunate and they are able to completely disregard the policies they have supported that have maintained the systems of oppression. An example of this is how the British colony felt good about supporting Kenya during the post-election violence, yet they are the ones who contributed majorly to ethnicity during the colonialism era. The narrative surrounding Africa as a continent of chaos, poverty, HIV infected communities, situates countries like Kenya as a place in need of heroism, hence white intervention. The local empowerment does not become the solution (Anderson 2013:13), because apparently, “the saviors” fill the void that is missing to make the two-thirds protected. Adichie (2009) sums this as the dangers of a single story in which Africa is

known for being a place with beautiful landscape and of people dying of poverty and senseless wars.

Writing on “White men saving brown women from brown men”, Spivak (1988: 92) expresses the relation between the colonized and the colonizers by analyzing the widow self-immolation in her article *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988). She explores the extent to which the women’s voices are represented in literature. She expresses that the English men are viewed as the savior of the oppressively patriarchal Hindu culture, while no one is paying attention to the silent voices of the women who seemingly are to be “saved” (ibid: 104). Echoing on the prohibition of “religious practice of sati”, she argues further that the British were redefining what was part of the Hindu culture by treating the rite as a crime. Roberts (1830) in her *India and women’s poem* portrays the *sati* as a plea for someone to “rescue” the women, and it is convenient that the British steps in to ‘save’ them from the disgraceful patriarchal Hindu practices. In the article, Spivak says:

The Hindu widow ascends the pyre of the dead husband and immolates herself upon it. This is widow sacrifice. (The conventional transcription of the Sankrit word for the world would be sati). The rite was not practiced universally and was not caste or classified. The abolition of this rite by the British has been generally understood as a case of “White men saving brown women from brown men”. White women—from the nineteenth century British Missionary Registers to Mary Daly – have not produced an alternative understanding. Against this is the Indian nativist argument, a parody of the nostalgia for lost origins: **“The woman actually wanted to die.”** (93)

However, referring to the quote, Spivak argues that the two lines (“White men saving brown women from brown men” and “woman actually wanted to die”) legitimize one another because both of them try to represent the voice conscious of the marginalized group (the subaltern women). She introduces essentialism to signify the perceptual dangers inherent to reviving subaltern voices in ways that might over simplify the cultural identity of heterogeneous social groups (Mellor, J, Ponzanesi, 2007). By using strategic essentialism, Spivak problematizes the representation of the two-thirds women. Nevertheless, she examines representation as a matter of subjectivity by asking questions like; Can women speak? Can they make decisions for themselves without being condemned? And how do we narrate the two-thirds woman without speaking for her? Her

explanatory model could be applied in this thesis because the same tactic of silencing the subaltern woman is evident in most of the Kenyan NGOs working with women.

The instances of “white men saving brown women from brown men” manifest in particular instances when the brown woman needs to be saved from their own brown men. The brown men are portrayed as a threat and as predators surrounding a victim. Overall this notion creates an impression of a dangerous inhabitant that people need to be protected and saved from.

The need to “save” women has been used as a cause for action both during and in postcolonial period in Kenya. Ware (1995) have tried to examine the white women’s involvement in empire as a way of sustaining, running and financing the colonial projects to help the local women. These women are imagined to be in a despairing need of civilization. The expressions being used to save women (White savior complex) from bad cultural practices without understanding the contexts, do portray these women as victims who need to be saved from their “unpleasant” men. And this paradoxically relinquishes them short of agency. Its practicality will be analyzed from the interviews I collected.

In regards to portrayal, Said (1978) paraphrases the writings of a French Journalist by introducing *The Orient* as a European intervention for a place of exotic beings, haunting memories and landscape and a place of remarkable experiences (ibid: 1). He analyses the “other” in describing the modern Western invention of the Orient. The Orient is the place of Europe’s greatest, richest and oldest colonies, the source of civilizations, languages and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the “other” (ibid: 9). Said argued that the desire to understand a different culture than our own in order to co-exist with it should have nothing to do with an exchange of power and dominance, as this has resulted into years of colonization (Mahault, 2017). Further, the “oriental” discourse still influences the way modern Europe perceives and treats its oriental counterpart (ibid). The interviews will be analyzed to help in determining how the oriental discourse has influenced the portrayal of the Kenyan women and how that has reshaped their narratives.

3.2.2 “Third world women” (As monolithic subject)

”How would “Under Western Eyes “the Third World inside and outside the West – be explored and analyzed decades later?” This is the question Mohanty is examining in order to bring to

attention her critique on the “Western feminist” scholarship on “Third World women” via discursive colonization of “Third World women’s” lives and struggles (Mohanty, 2003: 500). She does a reflection of how western scholars treat and perceive “third world women”. In her essay, she tries to expose the power-knowledge connection of the western feminists scholarship expressed through Eurocentric methodologies benefiting western feminism (ibid). She notes that the literature of western feminists on the third world women is based on the perception of the global hegemony of the western scholarship.

According to Mohanty (2003), western scholarships treat “third-world women” as a homogeneous group. Muscato (2019) elaborates that the “third world women” are seen by the western feminist scholars to be similar and the same. These women can be sorted into one single category that applies to all non-western women universally, thus creating a singular idea of the average “third world woman” and ignoring the diversity of experiences among these women. Mohanty (1984) argues that the bond linking these average “third world women” is the sociological belief of the similarity of the oppression. The average “third world woman” is assumed to be uneducated, tied by traditions, victimized, ignorant and unable to make autonomous decisions. The women are represented by western women as the “Other”. These characteristics are assumed to be the opposite of what a western woman is, which is educated, knows her rights, modern and empowered. She argues further that due to this categorization, these women cannot rise above this identity and find their agency to represent themselves and convince their patriarchal societies otherwise. Furthermore, being determined by this universal oppression, renders them ‘saving’ from the west.

With Kenyan women being invisible and under represented on various platforms of the peace process, this thesis aims at highlighting parts of their unheard stories, contributions and views that have been ignored. Just like Spivak, Mohanty (2003) also asks important questions like; who is representing the “third world woman” and from what geographical point are they positioned. She further suggests that the “third world women” should represent, produce their knowledge and rewrite their own history by themselves. Even though the analysis is done from a different geographical location, the voices of the Kenyan women are the ones speaking out and guiding this thesis.

Looking at marginality, Mohanty (2003) introduces the “western”/“third world”, “Global North”/“South” notions to unmask the power dynamic constructing the epistemologies of the

margin. She argues that the “global North”/“South” is used to distinguish between privileged nations and poor nations, where “global North” refers to the pathways of transnational capital and “global South” to the marginalized poor of the world regardless of geographical distinction, (ibid: 505). However, she appreciates Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash’s terminology of “one-third world” and “two-thirds world”. She explains further that the “one-third”/“two-thirds” reflects the global differences more correctly and that they move away from misleading geographical and ideological binarism, (ibid). Besides, what “one-third”/“two-thirds” misses is a history of colonization that the term “western”/“third world” draw attention to (ibid). This paper will therefore adopt the “one third”/two thirds” to refer to the global differences it produces. The “one third”/two thirds” will be used to highlight the fluidity and power of global forces that situate communities of people as social majorities/minorities in disparate form, (ibid)

4. Methodology

In this chapter, I present the methods employed in conducting my research. I introduce my secondary source and an in-depth exploration of my interview process. I do a reflection of the ethics followed by a wrap-up of limitations of my methodology in respective sections.

In order to grip the experiences and roles undertaken by women in the peace-process and the endeavors invested by NGOs to elevate the active and sustained participation of women in peacebuilding, I decided to conduct seven semi-structured interviews with four Kenyan women. They were present during the 2007 post-election violence and were engaged in the peace-process on the ground. Two local Kenyan women NGOs working with women and peacebuilding. And one international organization in Sweden where I interviewed a consultant on peacebuilding.

The thesis uses a qualitative approach which according to Creswell (2009:4), is a means of understanding the complexity of a situation by exploring the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social problem. He explain further that the focus is on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem. This can be achieved by putting emphasis on words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2016:380). Furthermore, the approach involves studying the meaning of people’s lives as experienced under real-world state (Yin, 2015: 9). With the aim of this thesis focusing on women and NGOs involved in the peace

process, Yin elaborates further that the approach provides a substantial environ that stresses on the understanding of the social world through an examination on the interpretation of that world by its participants through its driven nature and the desire in explaining social behavior.

A qualitative approach is mostly compatible and associated with feminist research, that is characterized by the sight that members of the oppressed groups, in certain context are epistemically advantaged; they are likely to generate knowledge that is less privileged and less distorted than those that are socially privileged (Harding, 1991:121). Focusing on the experiences and roles women played in the previously attained peace in Kenya, calls into question the distribution of roles and resources between men and women. This process of study acts as a resource by introducing new topics and themes to feminist researchers like myself.

The approach will enable a study of the involvement and participation of both the NGOs and the Kenyan women in the peace process. Studying these women's experiences is something I am passionate about. Yin (2016:3) encourages that a study like this will perfectly connect to my studies and allow a representation of the views and perspectives of the women participating in this study. Bryman (2016:399) concurs with him that the social world must be interpreted from the perspective of the people being studied, rather than as though subjects were incapable of their own reflections on their social world. By using the approach, the research looks critically into the colonial aspect and an opportunity for these women to speak for themselves and elaborate on the roles they undertook during the last peacebuilding. This research gives them a platform to air their roles, the factors hindering their participation and to shed light on their contribution to important aspects in the reconstruction of their community following the violence. However, Haraway (1988: 584) warns against the danger of romanticizing or appropriating the vision of the marginalized while claiming to see from their positions. Furthermore, she expresses that researchers should not be lured into taking the standpoint of a group whose oppression they do not fully understand. As a feminist I currently research and write from a different context; I am currently in Sweden but I was present during the 2007 post-election violence. I do not dispute the power dynamic between myself and my research group. Nevertheless, I also identify myself as being part of the group at that particular moment and I am at an advantage of being shaped by the experiences and the oppression of my study group.

4.1 Research Site

It is worth mentioning my research site since almost all of my participants are located in Kibera, Nairobi County. Kibera is considered to be one of the worlds’ largest slums with an estimated population of 190,000 (Stellmacher, 2011) this is due to its proximity to the city center while providing cheaper ground for people from rural areas who move in search of employment opportunities (Mutisya & Yarime, 2011). It is characterized by lack of basic needs and poor infrastructure like drainage, poor sanitation and many more. It was considered to have been one of the hot spots of the 2007 post-election violence.

4.2 Sample design-Snow bowling

Sampling involves decisions not only about which people to interview but also the actors, the setting, the events and the processes, Miles and Huberman (1994: 30). Putting this into consideration, my research has adopted a traditional snowballing by sampling initially a small group of women and NGOs who are relevant to my research questions. The sampled group proposed other participants who have had the experiences relevant to my research (Bryman, 2016: 424). Noy (2008) recommends this as the best way to reach participants when there sample frame is absent. It seemed to be the best way to reach my target group since I am not in the country, hence everything was carried out online.

4.3 Target Group

Four women belonging to women’s group were targeted, two local NGOs working with women and peace and one Swedish INGO supporting different activities on women and peacebuilding. This brought my research group to seven in total.

4.4 Data collection methods

Data serves as the foundation of this research with its relevancy coming from examining materials and interviewing the participants. At the initial stage, I was considering traveling to Kenya but due to time and resource constraints, data has predominately been collected through Skype and WhatsApp interviews supplemented by secondary sources.

4.4.1 Secondary Sources

Secondary data is the analysis of data that is collected or gathered by someone else for other purposes to be reused for new research questions (Boslaugh, 2007: IX). One of the greatest benefits

I have encountered using secondary sources is cost efficiency; because someone had already collected the data, I did not have to devote resources to this phase of research (Boslaugh, 2007: 4). Even though some documents needed purchasing, its cost was assuredly cheaper than travelling to Kenya to assemble data from scratch while also saving time on the already collected, cleaned and stored data in the system (ibid). This method therefore, permitted more time for analysis free from the use of technical mechanisms. A few of them included organizational reports.

Even though secondary sources are assumed to be a great way of accessing underlying reality, it is argued that documents should be viewed as a distinct level of reality in their own right (Bryman, 2016: 555). With this in mind, I will borrow his idea of examining my documents in terms of the context in which they were produced to be significant in achieving their purpose and to the audience they were written to. Atkinson & Coffey (2004) elaborates that documents have a distinctive ontological status forming their own reality, furthermore we cannot learn through written documents how organizations are operating day by day. Therefore for the sake of this research, I have employed interviews to compliment my research in order to obtain an objective outcome.

4.4.2 Semi-structured Interviews

Besides the secondary sources, I carried out semi-structured interviews with Kenyan women based specifically in Kibera. They belong to various women groups and were present during the post-election violence. I also managed to come into contact with two local organizations, which are also based in Kibera. An INGO; a Swedish organization that happened to be where I carried out my internship and worked with issues related to peacebuilding. Even though the participant's number was low, it complemented well with my secondary sources.

The research used two separate interview guides; one for the women and the other for the organizations. The interview guide helped in integrating a determined set of open questions and created up an opportunity to explore particular topics which according to Yin (2015: 145), does not bias the conversation by presenting a specified item of interest much less a distinct theme. The questions defined my topic but also enabled my interviewees and myself to discuss the themes into detail which made it easier for my interviewees to respond to questions with ease. The interview guide adopted contained key words tailored to the topics which were considered to be relevant to my interview. It served as my conversational guide that guided relevant lines of my conversation.

I got a chance to ask questions that were not initially included in my guide following our conversation with the interviewees. This made it easier for participants to express their views in their terms and words. The interviews which were carried out via WhatsApp and Skype calls were recorded with each lasting for at least 30 minutes. I finally transcribed them to avoid any misapprehension.

As much as my interviews were quickly done and at a very cheap cost, I encountered some factors that posed a challenge to my research. I could not get hold of some organizations back in Kenya who suggested a meet-up in their offices. To some extent, the method seemed like a sales call rather than research study. It was hard noting the participant's body language as some of the calls were done through WhatsApp. It might have been cost-effective for me, but for them being that they pay for the internet, it might have appeared as an expensive alternative, which led to a number of them withdrawing their participation. Language might have been a barrier to some participants being that English is a third language to most of the Kenyans. It became hard for some to express their opinions in some instances but I was able to capture and understand a bigger percentage of the experiences and the ideas. I also translated two of the interviews that were carried out in Swahili. The low number was also as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic; the country is currently on lock-down which made it hard for women and NGOs to organize an interview. All the same, the small number was just enough and the method manifested to be the most effective for this study regarding the factors at hand.

4.5 Data Analysis

The research adopts a qualitative content analysis that classifies textual material, while reducing it to more relevant, manageable bits of data (Weber, 1990: 5). The method subjectify an interpretation of the content of text data through a structured classification process of coding and the identification of themes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005: 1278). Following Yin (2015: 184); Zhang & Wildemuth (2009) phases of analysis, I transcribed the data I collected before beginning my analysis. Afterwards, I dissembled and put them into units of analysis. Thereafter, I reassembled by putting the data into categories and coding using substantive themes to help in recognizing the pieces in various groupings (Yin, 2015: 187). Moreover, the data were interpreted to form my new analyzed data thereafter rounded by a conclusion. The qualitative content analysis was useful in

supporting and extending my existing theory, however, Zhang & Wildemuth (2009) warns against the informed but strong bias that the researcher approaches the data with. Consequently, I was open in examining both the supportive and unsupportive data towards my existing theory and applying the auditor review in order to increase the accuracy.

4.6 Ethical Consideration

This research recognizes how important it is to protect the participants by implementing relevant ethic guidelines that are considered to be part of any kind of research. Ethical issues are assumed to apply only during the data collection however, they expand in scope as inquiries become more sensitive to the needs of stakeholders in various phases (Creswell, 1998). The respondents were informed of what was expected of them, duration and the purpose of the research. Their confidentiality and anonymity have been preserved even though they gave the go-ahead to be mentioned in the thesis. Data analysis were carried out concurrently with the collection of data. The data was transcribed, analyzed and later on shared with the participants to see the final product as agreed.

5. Research Results and Analysis

This chapter presents the findings from the field research intertwined with an analysis of the experiences, voices and contributions of women and the (I)-NGOs from Kenya and Sweden. The segments of the interview and the results of this analysis are presented in this chapter. Further, the chapter analyses the theories discussed in chapter three to further find a connection in answering the research questions.

For the purpose of the analysis, participants have been given pseudonyms for the flow and aid of the analysis. The first four women belonging to women's group are: Kadogo, Aisha, Chiku and Zuri respectively. The two local organizations in Kenya are represented by Kristina who is the CEO of her NGO and Mia who is the head of programs at their organization. Lastly I have Amani representing a Swedish organization. Amani is the Peace Advisor in their organization.

5.1 The meaning of peace

Apart from being a gratifying term, peace can also refer to a calm and peaceful community. Being used in extensive and big platforms, peace can mean different things depending on the context it is applied. Many scholars like philosopher Spinoza do not concur with the meaning of peace as the absence of violence. To him, peace is not the mere absence of war, but a virtue that comes from the vigor of one's soul and mind (Orlando, 1999). Further, peace is something that encompasses desirable characteristics like environmental health and social cohesion. The pillars of peace not only describe the optimal environment for peace to flourish but also the optimal environment for many other forms of human activity to flourish (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2013). Amani agrees with the concept that peace calls for an attempt for freedom without fear of the need. Giving an encounter they had when talking about peace with other women, Amani states:

We have done a recent study where we ask women peace-builders what they understand with peace as well? We asked the same question and I think I largely share their understanding that peace basically is if you want to use John Galtung language, it is the state of positive peace, where individuals can thrive without the fear of want or the fear of need. (Amani)

Agreeing with the quote is Barash & Webel (2002) denoting a strong correlation between people's satisfaction with their access to basic services and the peacefulness within the society. Referring to peace as the freedom without the fear of need, Kadogo concurs with Barash & Webel (2002) that the availability of needs for healthy life, access to clean water, medicine, food, clothing, shelter, healthcare and the feeling of being safe as a woman walking at every part of the society at all-time should be the defining factor of what a positive peace is. The Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP, 2011) echoes similar sentiments by stating that peace entails the evenness of a broader development process, which looks into whether people have access to basic needs like healthcare, transportation, education or access to just legal processes. Furthermore, this notion is shared among many of the interviewees referring to positive peace as a healthy environment where opportunities are exploited fully by all genders. Zuri believes that peace occurs beyond violence and conflicts and, it is associated with factors that balances the structure and make it equal and free for everyone in society. Zuri says:

I believe in positive peace which transcends inequalities we have in society today. It is peace associated with good environment, good economy which should be reflected in times like this that we have pandemics; so generally I would say this peace is associated with beneficial system which is worthwhile (Zuri)

Kadogo adds that:

I think also justice determines peace, because most people in our society use unjust methods to attain peace; we tend for example in our last violence to take people who committed crime during the election to prison. Yes we are doing away with the violence by keeping these people into the cell but it does not mean that we will have peace because the “peace” we might have attained was attained by some kind of injustice that was perpetrated in the first stage. (Kadogo)

Generally, Kadogo and Zuri believe that a true lasting form of peace is the one constructed entirely on justice for everyone in the society, it is the peace constructed only through peaceful and just means (Geeta, 2016). Peace is achieved when people are managing conflicts with no violence while focusing on inclusive change process that improves the status of the living situation in society. Kadogo’s idea is aligned with Geeta’s that peace requires a positive and constructive world order, where individuals, groups and nations eschew the desire to dominate or exploit each other and live in operation and mutual aid (ibid). Moreover, they both agree that if one feels that one has not got justice, the inner feeling of injustice will not allow the individual or nation to be in real peace (ibid). Anderlini (2007: 9) extracts from women’s stories, their desire to attain peace that is free from violence and that is defined not just in military security but also in terms of human security. However, Galtung (1969) refers to peace with the absence of violence as negative peace, and that this is not a sustainable peace. Through their experiences, women in this study desire peace with basic needs and with no form of any violence. They strive to engage in formal processes even though in most cases, peace literature only highlights examples of women in informal peacebuilding (Porter, 2008). This understanding is rooted in a commitment to social justice, fairness, and equality for all (ibid). Many positive outcomes can arise where there is effective governance, such as capable implementation, and sound policy processes (IEP, 2011). Applying in the Kenyan case, political instability and corruption are lower when rule of the law and legal

processes are more robust and equitable (ibid). Therefore from this, creating good institutions, attitude and conducive environment models a more peaceful society which in return enhances positive growth for other structures to thrive. This hence enables good conditions in the risk areas before even the violence materializes thereby establishing a solid foundation for positive peace.

5.2 Women's participation in conflict resolution

While typically women remain marginalized in formal peace processes, they however, are very active in the informal activities at the grassroots level (Porter, 2008). Several interviewees gave an in-depth description of the activities they have engaged in during-after the violence and how their participation has impacted society. Deriving from the interviews, the interviewees have reduced violence by healing trauma, transforming conflict and performing justice where necessary, and finally participating in women capacity building. Their participation at different levels has motivated governance that is more accessible and representative. It is more natural that when women have access to productive materials, they weave them together to change society to a more desirable state. Following the post-election violence, Kristina explains how they have been working together to help other women through the recovery process and also to establish a more stable ground for peace processes that is more inclusive. Further, she expresses the genuine nature of women's concerns with the family. To her, women talk about building schools, dispensary or a grinding mill which is not the same when you just involve the men who are politically oriented. Always discussing who gets what position. Chiku and Mia also expresses how they contributed after the 2007 post-election violence.

For instance now because we are working on countering violent extremism, initiatives that are taking place, three quarters of the participants must be women, either women who were affected by the violence extremism as a result of their sons or daughters joining the groups like Alshabaab, or women who are affected as a result of the stigma that they now are going through now that their families are part of those terrorist groups, or women who are working with women. We have women counselors, women peacebuilding organizations that are doing a lot of trauma healing work, so we focus on the ones that are really led by women and those that are concentrating on ensuring that beneficiaries are women, three-quarters of them. (Mia)

After the conflict, I was able to join a women's group here in ⁴“mtaani” (The streets). We mostly work with young women by encouraging them to take part in the general elections. This will allow them to pick the right leaders for them. We challenge them to take leadership positions on local governance. I would say personally the conflict made me realize that I had something in me all along that the society needed. I am not saying conflict is good but just I needed a little push and challenging. (Chiku)

This finding is consistent with what Bouta and Frerks (2002) noted on the roles women play during conflicts. According to them, women act as combatants by participating directly and indirectly alongside their men. They participate in peace talks and signing of peace agreements, further they adapt to their existing roles and activities within their conflict environment (ibid). Primarily women find it useful to utilize skills and opportunities available for them and transform them creatively for productive operation in the peace process. In elaborating roles women have assumed in the peace process, Amani also describe how the women they are working with have learnt to use their domestic spaces to discuss more issues that are related to peace. She concurs with Porter (2008) that while excuses are given for women's absence from formal peace talks, women's organizations have found creative ways to be involved.

And of course I think what's unique about how the women we work with operate is that they have learnt to use their private space or the domestic space as the space for these projects, so in Armenia for example, they use the coffee gathering to discuss issues related to peacebuilding in their context (...) they have grasped how to utilize their domestic space to prioritize peace discussions in their informal settings. (Amani).

There is a growing approval in understanding the significance of having to include women in the peace process. Anderlini (2007: 9) argues that women seek to bring the voices of the marginalized and the underrepresented into the political arena. They do this by advocating for policy of inclusion, equality, freedom and plurality (ibid: 9). Besides, in listening to other's perspectives and being empathetic towards victims, women's participation in peace processes is not only more compassionate but more healing (Anderlini 2000). Nevertheless, their capacity and experiences go

⁴ Swahili word meaning th streests in English

to waste if they are not included in the peace process. Three of the interviewees agree that women alone make up to more than half of the population, excluding them from these platforms is like ignoring the larger weight and knowledge the society needs. Amani specifically argues that women's involvement is part of larger inclusivity of the peace processes and that any peace agreement cannot stand any sustainable chance with their exclusion. Besides, in her (Amani) perspective, the warring parties might come to sign an end to the violence or sort a peace agreement but the sustainability of these peace agreements comes from how the inclusivity of the process, how much people's priority and aspirations were reflected in the negotiation. A peace agreement will determine how long the peace would last. Furthermore, gender sensitivity is shown when the agreement terms include women and their various groups in the Peacebuilding process. Krause & Bränfors (2018: 987) findings show that peace agreements signed by women include a higher number of agreement provisions and a higher rate of provision implementation ten years after the agreement compared to those not signed by women. Therefore, to them, there is a relationship between women signatories and the durability of peace.

It is worth noting that conflicts affect both genders differently. Its impact can be both empowering and disempowering. Women are forced to be head of households, being the bread winner and taking the roles that traditionally are meant for men in their absence, (Bouta and Frerks, 2002). During the conflict, women assume new roles that in most cases overlap past the conflict. De Alwis (2002) elaborates more on this changing nature of women's roles after the conflict which he describes as shifting from "traditional roles" to "non-traditional roles". In his study, women claim that their primary nature of roles which are "traditional" remains unchanged until the time of conflict when they assume the men's roles, "non-traditional" (ibid). They are removed from their traditional roles to substitute in more challenging roles which changes their responsibilities completely. In addition to domestic roles, these women take on the tasks previously performed by men, both in agricultural production as well in the more public roles related to trade and local politics (KC, Haar & Hillhorst, 2017: 182). This quote below from Kadogo confirms the above assertions:

My brother who is a single parent could not take some time off during the post-election violence because he works with the police. So I went and took his children to stay with me.

Apart from taking full responsibility, I was also looking after the farm while operating a mboga (vegetables) shop so we do not run out of money. (Kadogo).

Kadogo and Chiku both agree that the violence that occurred in Kenya opened opportunities for women's liberation and was a foundation for various women group organizations. Most women got entry to the political sphere, peace activism, movement and public spaces which before the violence were not easily accessible due to the patriarchal nature of the Kenyan society. These roles emerged out of the experience of oppression, knowing what it is like to be excluded, that they sought a truly inclusive society (Porter 2007: 3). They felt it was an opportunity for them to access these impenetrable fields. However, on various occasions when peace is restored, women are expected to go back to their traditional roles, they are neglected in post-violence circumstances (Okyere, 2018). Aisha goes deep in this line by elaborating how women have been ignored in the post-violence reconstruction and in the demobilization projects.

When the conflicts are over and our men come back home, they are used to leading and exercising power but they forget that women also assumed roles while they were fighting. We as women find it hard to tolerate their behaviors especially after realizing that I can also lead, protect and also provide for the family. This then brings disagreements that result to violence within the families and especially towards the women. (Aisha).

Many times, women have not been allowed to take an active part in the post-conflict reconstruction process (Okyere, 2018). Aisha's arguments align with El-Bushra (2007) that the results of the tension between the underlying gender relations and the new relations that the conflict makes necessary have a spiral effect which in turn might create a wider social crisis. Okyere (2018) writes that even though they assume the role of a bread winner, it would just be for a while and they would return to their state of nature. This is as a result of factors such as poor policies (and their implementation) to support women's roles in peacebuilding (Domingo, Pilar-& Wood, 2013).

Their newly acquired power, skills and status, which emanated from taking new responsibilities as heads have an impact. As much as women get empowered during and after conflicts, they stand a chance of experiencing violence even after peace has been restored due to the change in the gender roles during conflicts. According to Sideris (Quoted in Bouta and Frerks, 2004: 38) after war men are left with either an eroded sense of manhood or the option of a militarized masculine identity with the attendant legitimization of violence and killing as a way of maintaining a sense

of power and control. Writing about the conflict in Uganda, El-Bushra (2003) argues that the desire to reclaim one's cultural identity may constitute a peoples definition of durable peace, which in this case might be the empowered women, while the thwarting of that desire maybe a key factor behind violent resistance especially for men who lost power during the conflict. She explains further that even though women might be empowered during war time, the ideological basis sustaining traditional gender relations seems resistant to change even when its outward manifestations are reordered. Therefore, the interventions aimed at taking advantage of rapid change in conflict may be unrealistic (ibid: 261). According to Chiku, the inequalities are deep-rooted in patriarchal societies which generally results in disproportionate impact with women crawling back to their oppressed corners. These women potentially could have so much to offer especially on the economy and in the sustainability of peace in the community, however, the society ignores the disintegration and roles change.

It is difficult to describe women's involvement in political participation in Kenya prior to the conflict, but that is because they are only a few of them that are recognized. Access of women's participation in various platforms in the society may increase after a conflict, this is due to a decrease in stereotypical gender divisions of labor, the absence of males and women's frustrations with male politicians, Bouta & Frerks (2002). On the other hand, the existence of traditional structures is still powerful in the early stages of the conflicts to encourage women's political participation. Furthermore, comparatively very few women in Kenya managed to get in the formal peace institutions. Despite all the challenges, women still demonstrate resilience and agency in the post-conflict context (Domingo, Holmes, Menocal & Wood: 2013).

5.3 The Eurocentric power

5.3.1 Donor relation

Peacebuilding activities in Kenya are dependent on donor funding from the West. Mia avers that despite the huge volume of international funding they receive in supporting their Peacebuilding projects, there are challenges they face that jeopardize the effectiveness of the intended project at the local level. This is because most of the NGOs are fully dependent on donations, this makes their survival unpredictable whenever there are hiccups with the donors (Agere 2014). Agere further explains that, the availability of funds is critical to service delivery of the local

organizations while the unavailability of the funds play a crucial role in the effective operation of the NGOs (ibid). Whilst the donor funding has helped establish multiple women peace group, the donor fund sees aid as possessing power for exercising control over those being funded, says Mia. Women representing organizations were open about the challenges they face when dealing with donors.

The donor always dictates the projects. So for right now they are telling us the only thing they can be able to fund is the countering of the violent extremism (....) And you will find that the smaller grassroots organizations do change the proposals to correspond into what the donor wants and what the donor wants might not be what the community is reaching out to. (Kristina)

Knowing the problem to solve at the local level becomes complicated when you need the funds to carry out the activity. It's even harder for upcoming organizations as there is a high dependency of donors and a tendency to shift interventions to follow the money and allow donors to dictate the scope and direction of their activities (Viravaida & Hayssen, 2001). Mia was quick to point how it is to operate with their donors. Their organization gets funding as long as they are willing to work with the donor's suggestion. However she warns that excessive dependence on foreign aid can cause an increase in inefficient and unproductive investments (De Wall, 1997: 122). Their organization initially wanted to focus on community dialogues but the donor's suggestion was on violent extremism. This is because these funds have been classified in key thematic areas by the donor. It becomes harder for established organizations to venture into something different as it is believed that the projects they are assigned to are in the best interest of the locals.

Critically, rather than opening up a dialogue with local people as a step in defining and meeting local needs, donors have instead used the mantra of "participation" to push their agendas (Campbell, 2008). Postcolonial theory highlights the power relationship between the one-third and the two-thirds by displaying the dependency between the donor and the recipient. Mwega, Colclough & Webb (2009) expressed that the former colonial power in Kenya (notably the UK), were keen enough to maintain an allegiance (ibid). One way this has been maintained is through donor funds where by consequence, total aid to Kenya rose steadily after the independence (Colclough & Webb, 2010). Nyikal (2005) expresses that the policies enforced by the

organizations have chained them to continued dependence on the west. Moreover, the same policies seem to favor a trade imbalance to the already wealthy Western economy over the struggling recipients especially in Africa (ibid).

To have effective projects, De Wall (1997) suggests that coordination should not be only among donors, rather it should be inclusive by allowing recipients to be part of it (ibid: 122). Mia admitted that they almost lost funding for trying something new they thought would be more inclusive. Furthermore, she acknowledges that donors are very good at specifying goals and what they hope to achieve with the aid, but they may not know where aid is required, who it is needed by, what location and in what quantities, Geoffrey, Kungu & John (2019).

5.3.2 The language of victimhood

While asking the question on the portrayal of women as victims in the Kenyan society, it became clear in the narratives that the way issues are defined, determine the way we respond to them. It is evident to Kristina that when you talk about a victim, the first thing that comes to mind is somebody who is weak, one who needs protection, and one who cannot speak for themselves therefore, they need someone to bring out the issues about them. Giving an example with the last post-election violence, she explained that, women were and are still portrayed to be unable to speak for themselves, they are struggling and they need protection. The only thing they can get out of the peace process is probably talking about their protection against Gender-Based Violence (GBV). In the same vein, Amani states that when we are constantly faced with messages that we are victims, we internalize the victimization identity and this generally has an impact on the women's involvement in the process.

White savior complex of western feminism is definitely contributing to victimizing or like to actually making women's agency in the global south invisible. (Amani)

You know even when they are given roles you will find that they are not given prominent roles, they are given very minor ones like maybe say a prayer before we start the process or you will close with a prayer, they are the ones serving the refreshments. They are given unsubstantial roles and it's a result of the low status. You find that even when women participate, then they are not able to raise issues that would be of importance within them because those lowly positions do not give them that space to talk (Kristina)

The quotes above illustrates how these women are not considered capable enough to undertake any serious role. “How can you for example put someone in charge if they have been deemed to be needing help”? Asks Kristina. They get roles befitting best their invisible corner as mentioned by Kristina. This invisibility therefore, calls for “help” from the West to get these women back on their feet and in order for them to find their own space. According to Kadogo, victimhood creates a relationship of dependency and “looking up” for help whenever we are considered to be down. Looking at the role of “victim” in the discourse of victimology⁵, McLeer (1998: 41) argues that when dealing with trauma cases, the word “victim” is painted as being helpless and failure, which indicated the lack of subjectivity. “Victim” is perceived as disempowering and negative.

According to Mohanty (1984), referring to women constantly as “victims” freezes them into subjects who need to defend themselves. The assumption of the ”third world” women as an already constituted group is therefore developed. The ”third world woman” has been labelled “powerless”, “weak”, exploited, sexually harassed by feminist scientific, legal and sociological discourses (ibid: 338). Further, this illustration constructs the “third world woman” as a homogenous “powerless” group often located as implicit “victims of particular socio-economic systems awaiting to be saved by a kind white foreigner (Adichie, 2009). Three of the interviewees (Kadogo, Chiku and Zuri) concluded that when they use the word “victim” all they see is the expected failure and helplessness extending beyond the recovery period. This therefore, consumes all the energy that is not to be recovered by the victims. They however, agree with McLeer (1998: 45) that instead, they should embrace the usage of ‘survivor and “recovery” which indicates a process of empowerment and subjectivity after and as well during the violence.

5.3.3 (Mis)representation (as the “other”)

The concept of representation has come to occupy an important place in the study of culture. This is representation in a sense of using pictures and language to represent the two-thirds to various audiences. In most cases it exaggerates and distorts differences of cultures in the two-thirds. In discussing the relationship between the colonizers and the position of women in the peace process, Amani believes that colonialism exacerbated women’s current challenges in various ways. The

⁵ The study of the criminal-victim relation.

draconian laws invented by the colonizers have been coupled with the customary laws that makes countries in the global south look at the western “big brother” as the source of help.

Regarding women in decision making and the peace process, a number of African countries where the centrality of the community and creating community consensus is basically getting weaker because we look at the western solution as more important, that these are the serious solutions so I think we lost quite a lot the ability to tap into the local cultural heritage in contexts ridden with neocolonialism due to the Eurocentrism of power (Amani)

We have been brought up to believe that we are not good enough and someone with good articulation can eloquently speak for us because they know how to express what we are. In some cases you find like we are not well educated to understand why some things happen the way they do but there are a group of people who are well educated and have solutions for most of our problems. So, it is difficult to think or come up with something good enough for the world (Aisha)

Aisha gave an example of how things are taken seriously for example when they are broadcasted on the western media compared to the local ones. This is because there is a source of power somewhere only that, that somewhere is still not in the two-thirds. There are various articles and reports⁶ on women and peacebuilding that have been published by the two-thirds women that are considered to represent the African women appropriately. However, Bahri (2004: 199) expresses that the publications by the two-thirds women are not good enough as “third world” women only exist as a product of language and the exchange, circulation and consensual acceptance of what we might call received wisdom (ibid). This is the knowledge that the west has been spoon-fed about “third world” women. They are represented according to the perceived knowledge the west has of them. It is hard therefore to find an authentic “third world” woman that is yet to be discovered. Rather, the “third world” woman is what inhabits the language games and discursive practices of the social world (ibid). The knowledge produced by these Kenya NGOs are considered not to be “the correct knowledge”, unless the knowledge production is from the West because that is where power emanates from. The status and the appearance of the “third world” woman,

⁶ There are various articles and reports on women and peacebuilding that have been published by the two-thirds women that are considered to represent the African woman appropriately, for example by Kristina and her organizations.

therefore, comes down to who is holding the power and what interest regulates these discourses. In relation to this, Mohanty (1984) introduces western feminists' self-representation. She expresses how western feminists alone become the true 'subjects' of the counter-history while the "third world woman" on the other hand never rises above their generality and their "object" status (ibid: 351).

Borrowing Said's (1978) idea of orientalism, Chiku and Zuri argue that there is a binary division between the West and the "other". According to Said, the "Oriental other" can be considered the perfect "other", not only because its construction opposes Western ideals but also because the same western ideals were constructed in opposition to this otherness (Mahault, 2017). Chiku and Zuri express that the representation they are normally given as the "other" makes them inferior to the British colonial rulers. They feel that western scholars have given them a representation of submissiveness, uneducated and uncivilized in their writings. Furthermore, most of the writings from the two-thirds are deemed not good enough and cannot receive a recognition that a western scholar gets. This is attributed to the fact that Western writings are viewed to be "the correct" version worth exploration. Further, Ouardi & Sandy (2019: 130) argues that the failure to view and represent the "third world" women as they deserve is due to the fact that the western feminist have approached and theorized third world women from a western perspective and values. This is where power lies, power controls the narratives, Spivak (1988: 295) sums the muting of the subaltern woman as a misrepresentation or misunderstanding by those having the power to control the narratives. According to Said (1978) this power by the west over "other" is dependent on the construction and the representation of the "Other". This has specifically made the western scholarship very powerful over the "other".

To Mohanty, the construction of the "third world woman" as the "other", permits the presence of Western scholars and developers to "represent" and to be the savior of the "third world woman". All the same, the interviewees do not think this will change soon, they are determined to find solutions in changing their narratives by themselves. To them (mis)representation and how they are viewed is quite important as it gives a reflection of who they are, what they stand for, their standards and it dictates the approaches they undertake with the future plans as an organization or as an individual peace actor. They both concur with Mohanty that they should be the ones producing their knowledge and rewriting their history on their own terms. Aisha concludes that

they have joined different women groups to get an opportunity for their stories to be heard and to produce their knowledge.

5.4 Gender equality and peacebuilding

Research on women and post-conflict reconstruction tends to focus primarily on women as victims and passive targets for aid rather than conceptualizing peacebuilding as a process where greater participation by women may help increase the prospects for success (Gizelis, 2011). Peace is essential in promoting gender equality, while gender inequality could be a drive to conflict and an undermining factor to peace. There is very little literature that looks explicitly at the casual linkages between gender inequality and conflict however, the few that exists indicate a correlation between them (Domingo, 2013). Deriving from the interviews, both Kristina and Amani agree that gender equality is essential in peace achievement. Amani believes that:

If you don't achieve gender equality then the inequalities will undermine the sustainability and brings us back to the first question, security for all, for women and men to be able to live in an inclusive gender-equal society. (Amani)

When a woman has her own money then she will not shy away from coming for that meeting, because she has her own fare and she is not afraid that her family will lack food while she is away because maybe she has some money at the bank or she will be paid at the end of the month, so they go handy when a woman is empowered she participates fully. (Kristina)

It has been evident that more gender-equal countries are more peaceful. This is illustrated by the Global Peace Index (2019) where Europe remains the most peaceful region, furthermore, European countries are ranked higher when it comes to gender equality. Gender equality is the number one predictor of peace, more so on a state's wealth, level of democracy or religious identity (WILPF, 2015). Further, the societies and communities where women enjoy a relatively higher status have greater prospects for successful peacebuilding, as cooperation by the local population which peacebuilding policies and activities increase (Gizelis, 2011). Just as Kristina denotes in her quote, Gizelis does an analysis indicating that women's status can be an important aspect in increasing the local population's cooperation or decreasing the probability of conflict responses towards

activities in peacebuilding missions (ibid: 537). She argues further that women's status which is attributed by a gender-equal society has a direct impact with the post-conflict reconstruction.

5.5 Obstacles women are facing in peacebuilding

In analyzing the obstacles, the availability and support of women taking part in the peace process did not pose to be the major challenge. Rather, the challenges are embedded in the cultural beliefs and norms where gender inequality is part of the norms and the negotiation table is seen as not fit for discussing such issues. In order to understand these challenges, one needs to make a connection between the challenges women face during the conflict and when peace has been achieved. Below is a list of challenges hindering the effective participation of women in the peace process as expressed by the interviewees.

Patriarchy proved to be a common obstacle across all the interviewees arguing that it is one of the oldest and deep-rooted key challenges when it comes to the participation of women on any platform. Patriarchy and violence are mutually reinforcing systems of dominance where deviation from the established gender order is punished through violence (Abrahamyan, Pervana & Sophio, 2018). Violence in most cases deepens the already existing ridge between men and women, by emphasizing women as “objects who defend themselves” while men as ‘subjects who perpetrate violence’ (Mohanty 1986: 339). These relations are contingent on systems shaped for the benefit of a few select with power to shape and maintain the systems, Abrahamyan, Pervana & Sophio (2018). The interviewees agree with Abrahamyan (2018) that these dominant hierarchical systems of oppression maintain unquestionable power that represses subjects that ‘steps out of the line’. Stepping out of expected gender norms and roles results in being a subject of violence. Aisha expressed that defying the cultural norms to venture in peacebuilding roles “meant” for men may call for bashing from the whole society. This in return hinders women from actively participating in the peace process. Talking to Kristina about the obstacles, these were the thoughts:

Kenya is a patriarchal society and we have roles that are demarcated along gender lines and roles to do with politics and peace, those ones are considered to be men's roles, so you will find that communities are not open to having women participate in peace processes and even when they participate they do not want them to take prominent roles because at the back of their mind they feel this is not a woman's duty, she should not be

seating here or assigning these agreements but she should not be raising issues that they should address as women. (Kristina)

Patriarchal relations are dominant and men are expected to be the lead providers and women are expected to ensure care and provisioning (Domingo & Wood, 2013: 50). Kristina expresses that women have been cornered into thinking that they do not have a place at the tables, and that they shy away from the technical roles because they feel that they do not understand how things are done. High levels of illiteracy and woman's general lack of awareness of their rights and what they are capable of perpetuate this exclusion (El-Bushra, 2012). When their voices are heard, their contribution is frequently limited to symbolic roles of being victims (Myrntinen, 2016). On the other side, Kristina argues that men will appear to handle even the unknown because that is what is expected of them. Men fail to understand why women need to be present in negotiations while they can be represented easily, Anderlini (2000: 10). Aisha think that "adding women to the tables poses a threat to the power that the men hold and men fear anyone challenging their power especially a woman". Kadogo and Mia agree that the patriarchal challenge in Kenya is interwoven so deeply that it forms the basis of the norms regulating society. This makes it a huge hindrance to the active participation of women in the peace process.

Another obstacle identified is poverty, which results in an economic challenge that women face. Kristina who in most cases organizes women's gathering expresses that, one will understand how low women are economically especially when you call them for the peacebuilding meetings, but they cannot show up because they lack transport means. Women might not even have the money to travel from their homes to the town Centre where the peace process might be taking place. El-Bushra (2012: 13) admits that women are strongly represented within the ranks of the extremely poor.

You will find that in the rural areas most of the time women are the bread winners of the family, also when they are told to go for workshops on peacebuilding processes for two or three days then it means that they have no economic, they do not have food on the table for those 3 days so that one basically puts off women from participating from those kinds of processes. (Kristina)

Backing up the quote is Amani arguing that, when women try to organize themselves politically, they have no way of accessing funds to be able to engage in political work. On one hand, they cannot register as a political party in their context. They lack the financial capacity to engage in the peace activities and so they are only left with one option, backing out to go back and take care of what they can handle. On the other hand, Domingo & Wood (2013) note that economic empowerment can be a critical pillar in buttressing peacebuilding

Lastly, Amani mentioned corruption as an important aspect of both political and economic exclusion. This factor is closely related to poverty, where women are willing to do a lot to make sure their families have something to put on the table. In working with the women in the Bosnia and Herzegovina conflict, Amani explains further that when women win an election and become MPs, in most cases their main parties offer them more secure jobs and give their seats to their male counterparts. Women tend to have less financial resources to offer bribes and limited access to and ability to mobilize male-dominated patronage in order to get elected or to exert influence in the office (Castillejo, 2016). Further, it is one of the reasons why the closed sphere is dominated mostly by men, it stood out to be an exclusive field and women who do not have what it takes (money or fame) cannot access these platforms.

Corruption also affects women's opportunities to be able to access the labor market, economic discussions and of course in complex the part of peacebuilding is economic recovery. (Amani)

The marginalization of women in political parties in post-conflict contexts inevitably reflects broader patterns of political, economic and social discrimination, inequality, and insecurity that limit women's ability to influence the direction of peacebuilding (Castillejo, 2016). Due to their accepted sense of weakness, interviewees believed that women's presence in any forum especially at the negotiation is bad energy which is deemed a failure. Kristina argues that society does not appreciate when women work in groups because they feel that the process is being diluted. In some post-conflict contexts, women also lack political skills and experience and may face social stigma for taking on public roles and confront a range of structural barriers to political participation (Castillejo, 2016). Considering the Kenyan case, it is clear that both structural, cultural and practical factors are hindering women from effectively getting involved in the peace process. Referencing the research questions, Amani (together with the organization) are applying

Mohanty's Strategic coalition in facilitating excursion with various women from different countries to learn and support each other. They also support women financially to travel to Geneva to stay and consult with peace actors.

6. Summary and conclusion

This chapter summarizes the discussion followed by a conclusion that is drawn from the findings of this thesis.

Throughout the analysis, it was clear that a preferable peace is a positive peace encompassing desirable characteristic such as economic outcomes, good security, levels of gender equality and environmental performance where people live without the fear of need or want (IBP, 2016). It is summed by the interviewees to be the institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies. Considering the Kenyan case, this was not achieved as there are fears of a probability of another violence in the next general election. This is due to the unresolved inequalities that are built in the community structures (Bouta & Frerks, 2007: 7). The interviewees agree that positive peace should help in providing a framework to help in resolving these kinds of inequalities the country faces.

Gender has been recognized as a key factor in both violence and Peacebuilding, Myrntinen, Naujoks & El-Bushra, (2014). Both men and women are involved differently and are affected by the process (ibid). Drawing from the interviews, women played different roles during and after the violence that occurred in the 2007 post-election in Kenya. They acted as combatants by actively participating in the conflict, someone like Kristina was and is still a peace activist who has helped organize women in groups to help in ensuring their safety and to safeguard their basic necessities (ibid). Furthermore, they have been involved in the formal peace politics, even though there are only a few of them, they were able to form coalitions bridging deep political, ethnic and religious divides (ibid). Kristina worked with religious leaders to help bridge the gap between the Kalenjin community in Uasin Gishu County. Women assume household heads while their husbands are out fighting. Kadogo took care of her brother's kids by taking over responsibility for different activities that are supposed to be performed traditionally by men. Generally, they have been agents, active participants and they have taken new economic roles often as heads of household (Stewart, 2010).

In looking at the peace process, it is increasingly acknowledged that the participation of women in conflict management and the peace process is of paramount importance for the development of a war-torn society (Bouta & Frerks, 2000: 42). However, they are largely neglected once peace occurs, they rarely participate in formal peace negotiations; they are too often ignored in post-conflict politics and economics. While potentially they could greatly improve the peace process, the sustainability of peace and post-conflict society and make an important contribution to the economy (ibid). Regarding the interviews, it was clear that women face numerous challenges that act as barriers to their active participation in the peace process. Numerously, they are considered victims rather than active subjects. They are considered to be weak, powerless, exploited and to be needing protection. They are rendered helpless and reduced to a singular monolithic group that need ‘saving’ from the west (Mohanty: 1984). When their voices are heard, they are limited to merely symbolic roles and a homogenous category of victims (Myrntinen, 2016)

A key barrier that was determined by all interviewees is that Kenya is patriarchal society. Political participation and particularly issues of war and peace have historically been viewed as male domains and are continued to be viewed as such (Myrntinen, 2016). The societal structures are embedded in the cultural norms that ensure the inequalities making men superior over women are sustained. According to the interviewees, the men are meant to be the breadwinner while the women assume supportive roles. This overlaps with the conflict situation and to the peace process, where women are given supportive roles like opening a meeting with a prayer or bringing water for the men discussing important matters. Given the pervasiveness of patriarchal practices, efforts at mainstreaming gender in conflict-ridden or militarized areas are often open to ridicule, backlash and even forms of neo-patriarchy (University for Peace, 2005), therefore, women prefer to stick to their lanes. According to Kristina, women at the local level are known to be poor, it becomes hard for them to leave their families hungry while engaging with the Peacebuilding activities furthermore, they do not have financial resources and fame to bribe their way along in receiving the prominent positions (Castillejo, 2016). What matters to them according to Amani, is their families and the stability in income hence they get pursued easily in leaving the political arena into more ‘safe positions’.

6.1 Conclusion

Guided by postcolonial theories, the purpose of this study was to look into the involvement of both women and NGOs towards the process of peacebuilding. The Kenyan case was chosen since the country experienced big post-election violence in 2007 that changed the country in different ways. The country has been having election violence each time a general election is carried out. It is headed to another general election in less than two years, hence the objective of the thesis was to look into the involvement of women and NGOs during and after the violence. The findings demonstrated the (in)formal participation of women in the process. It is evident that the inclusion of the women in the process could have influenced the peace process positively. However, there are various challenges that women face that hinder them from effective participation in the peacebuilding process. These obstacles according to Porter (2007) exacerbate gendered inequality in peace processes and undervalues the unique contribution that women in conflict societies and transitional societies bring to peacebuilding.

The finding showed that the (mis)representation of the two-thirds woman has robbed them of what they strive for by stigmatizing and stereotyping their true identity. Besides, the knowledge produced by the two-thirds women are deemed not "good enough" compared to the one-third which has been celebrated to be the "correct" depiction of what a two-thirds woman is. Consequently, the centrality of the power (which in this case is the one-third) relation between the one-third and the two-thirds dictates "the correct knowledge" production of the two-thirds. Deriving from the analysis, the misrepresentation has given the Kenyan women an identity which has created a sense of dependency in terms of Aid and a need for 'saving' from the one-third right from the time of the British colony. Adichie (2009) sums mis-representation by expressing that stories can break the dignity of a people but that same story, can repair the broken dignity. I, therefore, concur with Mohanty that the two-thirds woman should represent and own their narratives by producing their own knowledge.

It is worth noting that this thesis has no intentions of arguing against the oppression that the women face and it does not contradict that there are victims or make the use of "victim" any lesser setting than what it is, rather it argues against the (mis)representation of the two-thirds women by the one-third scholars. It argues against the constant reference of recovering women as "victims" who

needs ‘saving’ because as Kristina mentioned in the interviews, this has a way of affecting the recovery process. I concur with Anderlini (2007) that in acknowledging women’s experiences of violence, we cannot overlook or ignore their resilience, sense of self-dignity, desire of survival and struggle to move beyond passive victimhood.

Looking at the way forward and drawing from the findings, building an inclusive, sustainable and positive peace in societies affected by violent conflict requires analyzing and addressing the underlying inequalities in the society (Myrntinen, Naujoks and El-Bushra, 2014). Further, a comprehensive peacebuilding activity requires an economic component, this is because one gets to deal with communities whose economic structures have been destroyed completely by the violence and one cannot go back home to start with no shelter or food. Addressing the economic aspect should be gendered because Myrntinen, Naujoks and El-Bushra (2014) remind us that gender identities are intricately linked to access to economic possibilities as well as the performance of economic roles. Furthermore, the incapacity to fulfill these expected roles like the “caring mother” or the “male breadwinner” can threaten gender identities (ibid: 18). I, therefore, argue that the economic component is one of the most important aspect of the peace process as it enhances gender equality which seeks effective and active participation of women in the peace process. Being that 17 percent of women in Kenya live under extreme poverty compared to the 16 percent of men, (WPD, 2020), empowering women economically improves their economic conditions which is reflected in the development and in the effectiveness of peacebuilding. Through this, women are able to focus their resources both at home and out in the peacebuilding activities without the fear of need or dependency.

Well, where does this leave us? Anyone calling for peace talks, should start by applying a gender stance in their frameworks. More importantly, the framework should be questioning the obstacles mentioned above and addressing the structural, social and economic inequalities which privilege masculinity over femininity so that peace can be accomplished by everyone regardless of one’s gender. The obstacles, flaws and gaps in the security and peace that are established in this thesis do not solve anything. Rather, they add into the body of literature that asks the right questions that need to be addressed or looked into for inclusive and positive peace.

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