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CONFLICT AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**



Master's Thesis

Women and Peace in Kenya: Deconstructing the Dominant Narratives of Women as natural Peace builders

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ABSTRACT

While there is considerable factual evidence on the role of women as peace builders, only rarely have the impacts of these widely accepted ideas been assessed. To rectify this oversight, this research analyses how an exclusive focus on women as peace-builders has impacted sustainable peace. Current literature on women has overstated women's roles in peace building in a bid to promote women's participation in peace building processes. Consequently, there has been a limited focus on women as perpetrators. This research critically assesses hegemonic narratives that have largely shaped women's peace activism in Kenya. Accordingly, it has employed discourse analysis, case study analysis, and hermeneutic analysis. The main finding drawn from this study research is that women play distinct roles in violent conflict and that these roles can positively impact peace building initiatives. Therefore, this thesis recommends that women should expand their diverse roles into peace building as this will enhance their roles as peace builders in order to promote hence sustainable peace.

Keywords: Peace builders, Perpetrators, Sustainable Peace.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

COTU:	Central Organization of Trade Unions (Kenya).
DDR:	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration.
DFID:	Department for International Development (UK).
DRC:	The Democratic Republic of the Congo.
FARC:	<i>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia.</i>
GTA:	Gender Transformative Approaches.
GIZ:	<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit.</i>
ICTR:	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.
ICTY:	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.
IRA:	Irish Republican Army.
LRA:	Lord's Resistance Army (Rebel group in Northern Uganda).
MENA:	Middle East and North Africa region.
NRA:	National Rifle Association.
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals.
SLDF:	Sabaot Land Defence Force (<i>militia; Kenya</i>).
UNSCR:	United Nations Security Council.
UN:	United Nations.
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund.
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development.
YPG:	People's Protection Units

Table of Content

Acknowledgement.....	i
Abstract.....	iii
List of Abbreviations.....	iv
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
1. Personal motivation.....	4
2. Statement of the problem.....	6
3. Guiding questions.....	8
4. Objectives.....	8
5. Relevance and Justification.....	9
6. Theoretical Framework.....	10
7. Methodology.....	12
8. Ethical Consideration.....	14
9. Structure of the thesis.....	15
CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	17
1.0 Introduction.....	17
1.1 Women, Peace and War.....	17
1.2 Conceptualization of the perpetrator.....	47
1.3 Conclusion.....	52
CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUALIZATION OF WOMEN AS PEACEBUILDERS..	56
2.0 Introduction.....	56

2.1 The concept of the perpetrator.....	57
2.2 Materialism as a conceptualization for peace.....	60
2.3 Media representations of women as peace builders.....	63
2.3.1 Media representation of men.....	65
2.3.2 Media representation of female perpetrators.....	67
2.3.3 Romanization of the role of women as peace builders.....	76
2.4 Conclusion.....	69

CHAPTER THREE: IMPACTS OF VIEWING WOMEN AS PREDOMINANTLY PEACE-BUILDERS.....83

3.0 Introduction.....	83
3.1 The effect of the women and peace hypothesis on the justice system.....	86
3.2 The impact of the concept of women as peace builders on women’s emancipation	91
3.3 The impacts of an exclusive focus on women as peace builders on wars.....	96
3.4 Conclusion.....	99

CHAPTER FOUR: FIELD DATA ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING A COMPREHENSIVE FOCUS ON WOMEN’S INVOLVEMENT IN PEACE AND VIOLENT CONFLICT.....105

4.0 Introduction.....	105
4.1 Data presentation and analysis	106
4.2 Discussion.....	108
4.3 Strategies for promoting a comprehensive focus on women’s involvement in peace and violent conflict.....	112
4.4 Media counter narratives and discourses	113
4.4.1 Alternative Media.....	113

4.4.2 Broadcast Media	116
4.5 Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA).....	117
4.6 Building strategic alliances with men.....	120
4.7 Coalition Building	122
4.8 Encouraging self-reliance	123
4.9 Incorporating resistance in women´s pacifism	126
4.10 Conclusion.....	128
GENERAL CONCLUSION.....	130
Recommendations.....	133
Future research.....	135
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	122
APPENDIX.....	159

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The end of the Cold War marked the beginning of a new era, an era that presented one of the biggest riddles in history. It was characterized by a spate of intrastate conflicts theorized to have been previously suppressed by hegemonic powers (Kaldor, 2013:1). Due to the high degree of complexity of these wars, there was no clear distinction as to who the combatants were therefore, as the duration of the wars continued indefinitely, the battlefield increasingly advanced into villages and towns resulting to unprecedented numbers of civilian casualties (Cooke and Woollacott, 2014:1). Women in particular were the targets of warring factions who systematically deployed sexual abuse as a form of terror to humiliate opponents into succumbing to their demands. Considering this, there was an increased focus on the plight of women during war, reinforcing the assumption that women were predominantly victims while men were aggressors. Along with this notion, was the stereotyped portrayal of women as peaceful beings and men as hostile creatures (Coulter, 2008:55).

Whilst indeed true that because women constitute a large majority of victims, they have an obvious interest in building peace, women in fact play diverse roles during violent conflict: as victims, peace builders and perpetrators. As victims they may suffer sexual violence and other forms of injury or death as well as the main burdens of reconstruction. As peace builders, they advocate and mobilize people to achieve peace through protests, demonstrations and other political actions as noted as early as Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* in which women refused to cooperate with their husbands and lovers by withholding sexual privileges as a means of forcing them to negotiate for

peace. And as perpetrators, they fight alongside men in militaries and rebel movements as in the case of the FARC women rebels in Colombia and the Kurdish YPG women fighters of Northern Iraq and Syria.

Although there is a growing realization that women indeed play diverse roles in violent conflict, legitimizing women's agency by appealing to age old gender stereotypes may have a disempowering effect, particularly on their equality and peace building efforts. For example, claiming agency as perpetrators on the basis of the traditional roles of the care and protection responsibilities of mothers reinforces the belief that women are concerned only within the scope of home and family, hence undermining their claim to key decision-making positions. Moreover, it reinforces the assumption that women fighting outside the scope of maternal instinct are indeed evil or mad, thus closing off exploration of the factors that may lead women into violent conflict. Similarly, relying on the stereotypes of powerless and passive victims with an obvious interest in peace, reinforces the perceptions that women are indeed in need of protection, hence are excluded from militaries and liberation movements.

Nonetheless, the dramatic increase and virulence of intrastate conflict over the years (Bosetti and Einsiedel, 2015: 3-5), has prevented a comprehensive focus on all of the roles of women during violent conflict. The emphasis on women as victims has led to a strong focus on women as peace builders along with the expansion of a powerful network of women campaigning for equal opportunities in peace negotiation tables, sparked by the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. The resolution acknowledged that women's involvement in peace processes can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. In addition, it recognized that increased participation in peace and security

matters is a linchpin to sustainable peace, and thus called for equal participation of men and women in peace-building.

Although the participation of women in formal peace negotiations is still marginal, society's perception of women in so far as violent conflict is concerned, has relegated them to mere victims struggling to bridge divides in conflict situations. This monolithic approach has led to women's exclusion from rehabilitative post-war initiatives, increasing the vulnerability of women engaged in violent conflict in Kenya and other parts of the world.

While there is considerable factual evidence on the role of women as the passive victims of conflict-related violence and the belief that women are natural peace builders, little research exists as to how these widely accepted cliches have affected peace building initiatives. To rectify this oversight, the main research question driving this thesis is: To what extent has the depiction of women in Kenya as primarily peace builders limited attention to their role as perpetrators of violent conflict? I believe that if women are to act as effective peace-builders, then they must be acknowledged as active agents and if they are agents, then, their agency can be and is applied in both positive and negative ways.

This thesis aims to explore a more nuanced understanding of the different roles that women play in conflict situations both as peace builders and as perpetrators of violent conflict using Kenya to illustrate, how women's agency has been expressed in order to consider how their agency can be better mobilized in the interest of peace-building. I shall employ critical skills acquired from the Peace Master's Programme and merge my understanding of the topic with different studies in the field in a bid to

provide meaningful contribution to the field of Peace, Conflict and Development Studies.

Therefore, this chapter will introduce my research and it will present my personal motivations in undertaking this study, statement of the problem, research questions and objectives, the relevance and justification of the research, a layout of the theoretical framework, the methodology and the ethical considerations.

Motivation

Prior to enrolling for the Peace, Conflict and Development Studies Programme, I had a skewed view of women's involvement in conflict emanating from my experience working in women grassroots organizations in Kenya. In view of this, my perception regarding women's involvement in war was generalized to include them being peace builders or mere victims constantly transitioning into peace builders. However, the theoretical framework of the masters' program stimulated me to critically analyze issues, particularly, the role of women in conflict from different lenses in a bid to holistically explore and reconstruct their role as peace builders.

My interest was furthered by the alarming rates at which women were engaging in conflict in Kenya. By 2010, there was a dramatic increase in the engagement of women in war in the Pokot and Sabaot regions. Reports showed the involvement of girls as early as 14 years old, training in Marksmanship in these regions (Citizen Television, 2010). In addition, increased involvement of women in terrorist attacks also triggered my interest in this topic. Precisely, the heavily publicized involvement of Samantha Lewthwaite also known as the White Widow in the Westgate Mall siege in 2013. Her involvement presented questions that I felt were not sufficiently answered thus sparking my interest in this topic. Furthermore, a growing trend of women battering men in

several Counties of Central Province in Kenya, and their involvement as fighters in ethnic militia groups such as the Mungiki and Sabaot Land Defense Force (SLDF), triggered my curiosity in this topic.

My interest in this research topic has also been motivated by women I have met in the course of my career development specifically in women empowerment. Their struggle for women's equality has inspired me to critically examine reasons as to why women's emancipation has deemed to be in vain despite numerous women empowerment efforts by grassroots and international organizations. In view of this, my approach to this topic, is aimed at eroding socially constructed barriers that have served and continue to serve as obstacles to women's emancipation. To be more specific, the association of women to peaceful beings concerned with life preservation and caregiving limits their avenues to the home and domestic work thus denying them opportunities in other arenas such as politics and decision making which are considered male domains. This thesis therefore, attempts to provide alternative approaches to women's peace building activities that are focused towards their emancipation.

On the other hand, I wish to provide alternative concepts that can be applied in understanding increased involvement of women in violent conflict. I feel like the current approaches have completely neglected women's agency as perpetrators and there is a tendency of portraying female perpetrators as 'extraordinary' either suffering from mental disorders or 'evil' thus ignoring the fact that women have the social capacity to propagate violence in instances of provocation. Moreover, acknowledging that women can indeed be perpetrators could be a breakthrough to women's emancipation. It is my belief therefore, that there is a need for better strategies in addressing this catastrophe for the development of positive peace focused on transformation of all individuals in the

community in post conflict situations. My goal is to provide new insights regarding women's involvement in conflict and develop better strategies of handling it.

Additionally, I wish to be a voice for women who have been silenced by ideas of women as natural peace builders and those whose resistance to gender roles have gone unnoticed due to these ideas. It is my belief that these ideas have prevented exploration of the factors that influence women to participate in violent conflict thus generating a cycle of violence against women. More precisely, in situations where women are involved as perpetrators of war, one often finds violence against women as well, therefore, while women would be resisting these situations, focusing on them as exclusively peace builders render their actions useless. In this regard, I wish to document experiences of women who have engaged in violence as perpetrators to explore the usefulness of the perpetrator role in women's peace building campaign.

Finally, I wish to pursue this research for career reasons. I hope that the completion of this thesis is a pathway into the working field where I shall further my research by working with female combatants to explore ways they can transition from combatants into peace builders.

Statement of the Problem

In a world marred by conflict and violence, peace building has increasingly become an important tool for preventing hostilities among conflicting factions. Following this realization, peace and conflict theorists have called for the inclusion of all stakeholders in the peace building process especially women who have always been sidelined, despite the dangers that violent conflict unveils on them.

Notably, by the end of the 19th century, the role of women in peace building was progressively realized. This is so because the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 calling for women's equal participation with men in maintaining peace and security escalated this process leading to a dramatic increase of women's movements in Africa campaigning for peace. For instance, an interesting example is the case of the Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace who non-violently reconciled the warring factions after a 14 year civil war (Theobald, 2012).

Furthermore, in the last 10 years, there has been a strong focus on women as peace builders which has been seen through the powerful and expanding network of women strategizing and articulating a global agenda for more inclusion of women in conflict prevention and peace building.

Notwithstanding the fact that women are peace builders, it cannot be denied that they are also perpetrators of violence. However, their role as perpetrators has always been disregarded. Moreover, there are some scholars who have posed the question as to whether carrying guns is the only way to get women into the peace table in an attempt to deconstruct the androcentric centered peace negotiations, suggesting that women's involvement in conflict is a way of campaigning for a place in peace building process. In light of this predominant narrative, women have been excluded in peace building initiatives in pre and post conflict situations such as rehabilitation of ex-soldiers and disarmament initiatives leading to a rise in the involvement of women in conflict in Africa.

Hence, great focus on the role of women as peace builders has led to increased disregard on their role as perpetrators, thus, leading to unsuccessful peace and

development initiatives that have not incorporated their experience and roles in conflict. Therefore, there is a need to scholarly investigate in a bid to deconstruct the dominant narratives of women as natural peace builders. This is done using the example of Kenya in order to propose sustainable interventions.

Research Questions

This thesis depended on four questions that served as a guide throughout my investigation.

1. Why is there much focus on women as peace builders rather than perpetrators?
2. What are the implications of an exclusive focus on women as peace builders?
3. What factors can drive or increase the vulnerability of women into engaging in violent conflict?
4. Which strategies can promote a comprehensive focus on women's involvement in violent conflict?

Objectives

The general objective of the thesis is to analyze how an exclusive focus on women as peace builders has limited focus on their roles as perpetrators of violent conflict; the thesis has four specific objectives:

1. To outline reasons as to why there is much focus on women as peace builders rather than perpetrators with the aim of deconstructing hegemonic narratives around women as peace builders and enhancing debates on women's involvement in war within the Kenyan society.

2. To assess the implications of this one-sided view on women with the aim of encouraging women to expand their distinct roles during conflict into peace building initiatives.
3. To explore causes that drive/influence women to participate in violent conflict with the aim of crafting solutions aimed at addressing this phenomenon.
4. To propose strategies that will promote a comprehensive focus on women's involvement in violent conflict with the aim of enhancing the role of women in peace building.

Relevance and justification of the Thesis

This study is relevant because it is assessing how an exclusive focus on women as peace builders has impacted sustainable peace. Not only does it challenge our perceptions regarding women's involvement in violent conflict deeply rooted in frameworks aimed at enhancing women's participation in peace building agendas, but it also analyses how the role of women as perpetrators of violent conflict can be used positively to enhance the role of women as peace builders. Moreover, it narrows down to understanding factors that influence individual women to perpetrate violence. This multifaceted approach to women's involvement in violent conflict allows us to question aspects such as the effectiveness of women's pacifism which is hardly criticized within dominant narratives. This approach provides a holistic understanding to the role of women during war which is helpful in crafting strategies for post-war peace development initiatives.

Additionally, the central mechanism for understanding women's engagement in war has been studied based on age old femininity ideas. The notion is that women are inherently more peaceful than men, therefore, literature has been largely blind on

women's roles as combatants. In instances where women have been acknowledged as combatants, they have been labeled as 'evil' or 'mad' women and their agency completely ignored. This conceptualization has largely shaped socialization processes in the society thus denying women equal opportunities with men (Degroot, 2000: 34). In this regard, there is need for the reconceptualization of women's engagement in war through a critical and philosophical approach with the purpose of reconstructing and enhancing the role of women in peace building.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework used in this thesis are Systems Thinking Theory by Professor Jay Forrester (1956) and Human Centered Approaches to explore the complex interplay of factors that make women susceptible to engaging in violent conflict, and to recommend more effective strategies geared towards addressing this phenomenon. The basic idea behind systems thinking theory is that everything is interconnected, events do not occur in a vacuum but in relation to changing circumstances. Systems thinking theory therefore, endows us with the ability to see the consequences of our own actions. For example, if something happens we counteract it immediately, however, we do not see how that situation may have been influenced by things we did or contributed to doing in the past. Thus, actions devised by project implementers are often short sighted and result to unintended, adverse and sometimes devastating effects.

Therefore, the Systems Thinking theory explores factors that influence an event holistically. While traditional strategies are focused on individuals directly affected by a catastrophe, systems thinking theory emphasizes on transformation of the entire system hence is focused on shifting how we think, communicate and act. Considering this, systems thinking theory is an advanced way of conceptualizing an individual's problems

or phenomenon that can help you develop more creative and innovative ways of intervening and problem solving. To be more precise, systems thinking theory helps us understand the forces and interrelationships that shape the behavior of systems. In this case, women's engagement in violence is not the problem but rather there is a structure in the system that is causing this behavior. By understanding which structure causes this problem, then we can redesign the structure to cause people to behave positively as a natural part of everyday existence.

To complement systems thinking theory, this thesis employs human centered approaches to craft effective interventions aimed at understanding individual factors that make women vulnerable to engaging in conflict. The same event means different things to different people hence it is important to immerse oneself in the lives of those affected by a phenomenon. The human centered approaches consist of three phases. First, is the inspirational phase. Here, you learn directly from the people that you are designing interventions for. This stage is characterized by high levels of observation and engagement to understand the needs of the subject through exploring what they are seeing, feeling, thinking, doing, hearing and saying and come up with an actionable guiding statement.

Second, is the ideation phase. In this phase, you make sense of what you have learned, generate ideas, identify opportunities for design and prototype workable solutions. The process is characterized by mapping out complex relationships between factors to isolate the most, identifying points of intervention and interpreting their implications and crafting systemic, resilience-building approaches, generating ideas beyond the obvious to address leverage points in innovative ways and building rough prototypes to test/adapt ideas and mobilize relationships.

Finally, is the implementation phase. Here you bring your solution to life and test it. The solutions presented have a probability of high success because the people they are meant to serve have been put in the heart of the process.

On the other hand, systems thinking theory will also be used in assessing the impacts of an exclusive focus on women as peace builders. This theory dictates that system behavior results from the effects of reinforcing and balancing processes. A reinforcing process leads to the increase of some system however, if the reinforcement is unchecked by a balancing process, it eventually leads to collapse. In this case, this theory will demonstrate that although an emphasis of women being primarily peace builders is meant to enhance peace building initiatives and the participation of women in peace negotiation processes, this one-sided view on women actually serves to slow down the process even further.

Methodology

The methodology that was applied on this thesis is both secondary and primary data. The primary data was collected to provide evidence that women are indeed susceptible to engaging in violence, while secondary data was used to critically assess the data obtained. The raw data was collected in Nairobi County Kenya, Eastlands area specifically, Dandora and Kayole areas. Dandora is approximately 10.1km away from Nairobi city centre. It is a dense slum in best known for its toxic garbage dump. It was developed in 1977 under the site and service scheme for low income households, partially financed by the world Bank with the aim of providing shelter for the urban poor who could not afford decent housing. (Mathéy and Matuk, 2014)The area is characterised by high rates of unemployment, food insecurity, violence, poor health and environmental issues.

Kayole on the other hand is 10.8 km away from Nairobi city centre. It is the largest slum in Embakasi County with a population of 89,600 distributed in 22,400 households. Kayole was formed by the transfer of poor people from the city centre to the outskirts. The area has land tenure in the form of Allotment Letters (Lucy Njambi, January 2013) the sites were of a great concern since these regions are profiled to be among the most dangerous estates in Nairobi dominated by gangs and militia groups terrorizing residents all year round.

The target population were women aged between 15-30 engaging in gang violence in the two regions. The accessible women were women between these ages registered in Boxgirls international, a Non-governmental organization aimed at empowering women in the Eastlands area through teaching them self-defence skills. This was an age of concern since extensive research indicates that at this age there is increased vulnerability to violence.(A report of the Surgeon General, 2001)hence there was a higher probability of obtaining results.

To obtain a representative sample, 5women from different gang groups in Kayole and Dandora were stratified into three categories (age, education, social status). The sample of 2 girls was then obtained and considered adequate for the study.

The study employed person-centred research design, a qualitative approach whose main purpose is to document the life history of individuals over a period of time. The individual tells the stories in their own words and using their own personal times. It is therefore highly descriptive and the researcher has to keenly listen to the stories to be able to obtain accurate findings.

The research exclusively employed structured interviews in the collection of data. There was a list of 10 questions guiding the interview process which were

answered satisfactorily. In the analysis of the data obtained, the research utilized the empathy map and the social ecological model. The empathy map was used to describe the events from the interviewee's points of view. That is: what they are seeing, saying, thinking, hearing and feeling that makes them susceptible to engaging in violence.

After mapping out individual factors that make an individual susceptible to violence, the four level social ecological model was adopted to identify the complex interplay of factors between individual, relationship, community and societal factors that increase the susceptibility of an individual to engaging in violence. The overlapping rings in the model illustrate how factors at one level influence factors at another level.

Ethical Consideration

Before undertaking this research, I anticipated some difficulties particularly in conducting the research as well as in conceptual precision due to the sensitive of the research topic. One of the major difficulties was; research findings did not reflected the status of the whole country and therefore findings were approximated to other areas with caution.

Additionally, some of respondents feared being interviewed for fear that their stories might be used to prosecute them. In this case confidentiality was guaranteed and there was no disclosure of the names of the participants unless with the permission of the participant.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is organized into four chapters with a general introduction and conclusion. Chapter one presents an overview of the existing literature regarding

women and war. It critically analyses bibliography from feminist studies and other disciplines to highlight the distinct roles of women during war. In addition, it also highlights how scholars and their works have influenced the view and depiction of women's involvement in armed conflict. The overriding purpose of this chapter is to showcase the on-going debates on women involvement in conflict. This chapter reveals that there has been no agreement in the field thus leaving room for more debates on which role best works for the interest of women. To this end, principal authors used include: Joshua Goldstein (2001), Hilary Charlesworth (2008), Laura Sjoberg (2014), Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott (2014), Juliann Whetsell (2015), Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams (2013), Victoria E Collins (2015), Cynthia Cockburn (2009), James Davies (2008), Charlotte Lindsey (2001), Sandra I. Cheldelin, Maneshka Eliatamby(2011) among others.

The second chapter focuses on discussing the hegemonic narratives around women as peace builders. It takes a historical and contemporary approach where emphasis is placed on attempting to understand why there is too much focus on women as peace builders rather than as perpetrators of violence. In view of this, concepts such as materialism, conceptualization of the perpetrators and media representations on women as peace builders are discussed. The aim here is to deconstruct these narratives and enhance debates on the roles of women in armed conflict.

The third chapter attempts to assess the impacts of viewing women as primarily peace builders. It relies on different schools of thought to highlight the problems associated with this one-sided view on women involvement in violent conflict. It assess the implications of reinforcing ideas of women's inherent peacefulness on judicial processes, peace building initiatives, decision-making processes and wars. The

theoretical standpoint taken here is that, an exclusive focus on women as peace-builders is disempowering hence there is need to move beyond these ideas.

Chapter four looks more into the case study area, Kenya. The objective here is to explore the complex interplay of factors that drive women in Dandora and Kayole areas to engage into conflict with the aim of recommending strategies that will promote a more comprehensive focus on the roles of women in violent conflict. This is the reconstructive chapter of this thesis as it is aimed at proposing ways aimed at enhancing the role of women as peace builders.

CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the existing literature regarding women and war. The purpose of this review is to shed light on the involvement of women in conflict by highlighting how scholars and their works have influenced the view and depiction of women's participation in conflict both in the past and in the present. To be more specific, I explore and critically analyze discourses on women and war with the aim of identifying gaps within existing literature and proposing different approaches of viewing women as perpetrators, peace builders and victims during war.

1.1 Women, Peace and War

The premise of my main argument regarding discourses on women and war emanates from feminist theories on wars. Although Joshua Goldstein (2001) denies the existence of a feminist theory on war, he provides feminist arguments that explain gendered war roles. He further categorizes feminist theories into three main strands; difference feminism, Liberal feminism and postmodern feminism. Difference feminists believe that women and men are different hence encounter different experiences. In view of this, the problem is not that men and women are different but that sexist cultures devalue “feminine” qualities instead of valuing, celebrating and promoting them. Relevant to war, difference feminists argue that women are inherently more peaceful than men due to their greater experience in nurturing and human relations.

While some difference feminists attribute women’s pacifism to biology others attribute them to socialization but they all agree that women are more peaceful than

men. The leading scholar of this framework Carol Gilligan (1982) establishes an ethics of care that links women to peacefulness due to their concerns on relationship preservation. To Gilligan, women take a moral stand on relationships and see the expression of care as the fulfillment of moral responsibility. Moreover, she argues that motherhood endows women with an inclination for peace and preoccupation for others.

Similarly, Sara Ruddick (2004) in her book *Maternal Thinking as a Feminist Standpoint*, draws a connection between peacefulness and maternal practice and argues that a transformed maternal thinking could contribute to the peace. Ruddick believes that there are enough maternal practices that are sufficiently governed by non-violent principles to provide one model of non-violent action. Although Ruddick focuses on maternal practices, she also acknowledges that men are also caregivers at different times in their lives. Bearing in mind her emphasis on caregiving as one of the many practices that promotes peace, it can be argued that peace is not a feminine concept.

Maternal conceptual frameworks shaped the foundation of early women's movements. Amy Schneidhorst (2001) on her analysis on women activism observes that early women peace activists needed to use the idea that women were inherently more peaceful than men as a strategy to recruit members, prevent violent repression and also defend their political activities in male dominated politics as these were within the context of pre-feminist ideas of acceptable female behavior. For instance, scholars such as Dianne Otto (2006-2007:121) say that a case in point are The Women of The Hague congress For Peace in 1915 who emphasized that their drives for peace were natural and inherent in their positions as mothers. Otto (2006-2007:130) also observes that the association of women to peace was not only used in women movements, but was also reflected in calls for suffrage rights. For instance, Jane Addams argued that "*women* "as

sustainers of life” have a distinctive character for “rationality” which they should use as active citizens to promote the evolution of methods of governance that rely on the rule of law rather than force”.

Additionally, Hilary Charlesworth (2008) argues that these concepts are still largely prevalent and are constructed in international institutions and international law. She believes that the United Nations Security Council 1325 is an endorsement of existing stereotypes by the United Nations Security Council. Charli Carpenter (2005) in support of Charlesworth notes that in order to convince the Security Council to pay attention to women's rights, many actors employed “affirmative essentialisms” a concept by Elissa Helms that frames women as ‘peace building resources’ and puts emphasis on their abilities to organize for peace (Carpenter, 2005:298) Charlesworth (2008) further notes that the idea of women being inherently peaceful is now growing into an orthodoxy in international organizations.

Contrary to the difference feminists, Liberal feminists dispute differences in abilities between men and women and argue that the gendering of war reflects male discrimination against women (that is sexism). Liberal feminism focuses and places emphasis on individual rights. In this view, liberal feminists believe that women have the right to participate in all social, political and military roles without facing discrimination. They argue that although women have showcased their prowess in the battlefield, by showing their capacity to incur injury and also inflicting death on their enemies, they have faced persistent discrimination. They therefore argue that the best way to insure women’s equal treatment with men, is to render them equally vulnerable with men to the political will of the state. Liberal feminists therefore reject the idea that women are more peaceful than men by nature arguing that it attributes to discrimination.

Susan Franceschet (2004) on her research on social movement outcomes recognizes that in as much the politicization of maternal identities ultimately led to realization of some of their objectives, motherhood strengthened women's association with the family and care related activities thus limiting women's territories to homes, hospitals and schools.

Additionally, Goldstein (2001) dismisses any form of correspondence between sexuality and violence. He argues that these ideas were used to justify exemption of women from recruitment into the military forces in many countries. To Goldstein (2001), the association of women with peace and men to aggressiveness is a socially constructed phenomenon that enables war. According to him, men are not in any way disposed to war but are rather dragged into it through some cultural rites. To him, women are key in creation of male warriors. For instance, by shaming men into going to war, praising warriors for their bravery, raising boys that excel as men, cheering soldiers and healing them when they return and serving as substitute mothers to warriors. He therefore suggests the need to go beyond women's pacifism arguing that it reinforces dangerous gender stereotypes that motivate soldiers to fight.

To complement Goldstein's (2001) argument, Cynthia Enloe (1993), adds that militaries need men and women to behave in gender stereotyped ways. That women should behave in a maternal fashion, they should need men to protect them, and that their wartime experience should be sexualized. On the other hand, men should feel that in order to prove their masculinity they should fight and support their nation going to war. Men should take on exceptionally masculine behaviors and attitudes through their military training.

Similarly, Laura Sjoberg (2014) observes the invisibility of women in historical dramatization of wars and argues that narratives that make women invisible, have been

constructed to benefit some individuals in the community. According to Sjoberg, invisibility of women in history suggests that women were innocent helpless victims in dire need of protection. She notes that these narratives are now key part of the ways both soldiers and states justify wars and a key thing that war making parties fight for, and fight to protect.

The last strand of feminist theory, postmodern feminism, challenges assumptions by both liberal and difference feminists on gender war roles. Feminists within this framework emphasize that women have diverse experiences during wars, thus dismissing any claims of a single objective reality. Postmodern feminists argue that gender shapes the way men and women understand their experiences and actions in war therefore, there is need to analyze these roles rather than make assumptions. Judith Butler (1999) observes that gender has been constantly changing throughout history and it is dependent on racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. Therefore, it is impossible to separate gender from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained. She adds that accompanying the vision of a universal basis for feminism, is the notion that the oppression of women has some singular form discernable in the universal or hegemonic structure of patriarchy or masculine domination. She further writes that the urgency of feminism to establish a universal status for patriarchy in order to strengthen the appearance of feminism's own claims to be representative has occasionally motivated the shortcut to a categorical or fictive universality of the structure of domination, held to produce women's common subjugated experience.

Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams (2013) recognize that indeed women have different experiences in war. However, they argue that there is very little attention

on the involvement of women in political violence due to the underlying assumptions that women are inherently peaceful. Kaufman and Williams (2013) highlight this fact by showcasing examples of how the involvement of women in terror attacks in 2008 in Iraq in Diyala Province, and in 2010 in Russia on the Moscow subway was interpreted by the public. These incidences were attributed to their dead husbands whose deaths lured them into fundamentalism. Kaufman and Williams (2013) conclude that the use of violence as a means of political action should not be dismissed by women as it is a way of expressing agency especially to women who live in circumstances of political violence. They further assert that it might be the only way women can engage in politics

Similarly, Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin (1998) observe the diversity of women's experiences during war hence dispute any inherent difference between men and women in regard to their actions in real life and war situations. To them, categorization of men as militarists and women as anti-militarists contradicts with gendered war experiences of which history provides adequate accounts of men resisting to go to battle through draft evasion and protesting, and of women sending their sons to war to express their citizenship, fighting the war themselves and even being the backbone of the military in terms of arms production. Lorentzen and Turpin (1998) acknowledge the distinct roles women play in war thus concluding that while war making is heavily dependent on women's participation, women are also most often at the forefront of peacemaking efforts.

Cynthia Cockburn (2009) further acknowledges that arguments about women's peaceful natures are out of touch with facts on the ground. After researching on women's peace movements, Cockburn (2009) criticizes literature that overstate the presence of women in peace movements. Firstly, she argues that although women are

many they seldom outweigh men. Thus, suggesting an exaggeration on the contribution of women as peacebuilders. Secondly, she claims that she observed very few women while camping outside military bases, lobbying politicians or demonstrating for peace by invoking women's life-giving natures. She further adds that she has seen far too many women soldiers, abusive mothers and belligerent women political leaders to think that either nature or nurture can guarantee an antiwar impulse in women.

Miriam Cooke and Angela Woollacott (2014) urge women to acknowledge and document their diverse experiences during war arguing that war is an arena in which gender constructions and deconstructions are culturally encoded and therefore by women holding on to their traditional roles as innocent pawns in need of protection and caregivers, they lose out on an opportunity to obtain equality with men. Cooke writes of the importance of language in transforming experiences into consciousness and argues that it is the only way towards transformed feminist consciousness. However, Cooke acknowledges the difficulty in this process as she observes society's role in censoring those who are considered to be outside of what is considered to be their gender specific experience. For instance, men should not describe threatened masculinity. Cooke and Woollacott, further assert that in the aftermath of wars, the work of policy makers seems to mesh with that of the media and film makers and they both serve to reinstate social norms particularly as they relate to gender.

Precisely, while war challenges the binary structure that it originally put in place, that is, women as civilians and men as combatants, it becomes a terrain where gender can be negotiated. the language used to represent the lived experiences of both women and men in the battlefield often replaces lived realities thus constructions of women as peacebuilders and victims and men as aggressors continue. For example, in the award-

winning film, *Sometimes in April* illustrating events in the Rwandan genocide, male victim's experiences have been shaped to fit into the warrior category while women's have been shaped to fit into the peacebuilding and victim category. For instance, the experiences of the main character of the film Augustin Muganza which is full of pain and terror is represented very courageously. While it is indeed clear that he is a victim struggling with the losses he has encountered, the film depicts him as a courageous hero.

On the other hand, women are viewed as victims in dire need of protection from their husbands and sons and as peacebuilders. The role of Martine, in the movie is showcased as that of a poor victim who has not been able to come to terms with the horror she encountered during the war. Nonetheless, she struggles to bridge divides with between her current boyfriend Augustin Muganza and his brother Honoré Muganza who is facing charges at the International Criminal Court for participating in the genocide. Moreover, throughout the movie, efforts to bring peace capitalize on the fact that women and children are dying, there is no mention of male victims being killed although the movie showcases men being killed. In this regard, Cooke and Woollacott suggest that there is need for women to capitalize on the opportunities wars provide to them to stop recycling the same gender dichotomies that have served to subjugate women.

Juliann Whetsell and Jill Morse (2015) against the idea of women's peaceful natures being endowed in motherhood, provides accounts of women particularly mothers and grandmothers sexually abusing their children. They argue that while sexual abuse has been focused on men as perpetrators and women as victims, the idea that women are rarely sexually abusive towards children continues. They add that mothers

abusing their children is not a new phenomenon, However, literature has been largely blind on women's roles as their children's abusers as this goes against their traditional roles as comforters, nurturers and caregivers. Although there is a growing realization in this field, some scholars have portrayed women abusing their children as mentally ill. This is problematic because it pathologizes people with mental illness and excuses bad behavior rather than pointing to the real causes.

On the other hand, others have formulated theorizations based on unfounded facts. For example, the most predominant arguments on women abusing their children is that, only low-income women abuse their children and that mother to child sexual abuse is a onetime event hence should not be categorized as an issue of concern. In this regard, Whetsell and Morse (2015) argue that motherhood as a peace concept is a fallacy and should be re-analyzed.

Meanwhile, Jordi York (1998) analyses concepts justifying women's peace and men's war dichotomy and its evolution through time. To York, the evolution of these theories is based on the dangers the war unveils, and ways in which these wars are fought. He argues that although there is logic behind the different rhetorics for women's association to peace, there are so many gaps within their explanations that these theorizations cannot be relied on. To him, peace is a woman's issue not for biological or socialization reasons but for reasons related to justice. He notes that women's suffering begins even before war starts. He attributes the aforementioned to structural violence in institutions. He observes that women who are a majority of the poor, account for more than half of the world population and do two-thirds of the labor, make only a tenth of the money and own only one hundredth of the property. Furthermore, since the poor are majorly women and children, it is from their mouths that social spending is diverted to

fund “defense mechanisms. York argues that when war breaks out, women's suffering accelerates even further as they risk losing their lives; they lose their husbands who serve as breadwinners in the family and therefore they are left with no means of provision for the family in a period of scarcity; and suffer sexual abuse. In this regard, York concludes that although peace is not exclusively a women's domain, the fact that they bear the burdens of war provokes a particular interest in them to pursue for peace.

Cheryl Bernard (1999) provides an analytic overview of the debate on gender and conflict as a background to the discussion of women and peacebuilding. She observes that the association of women with peace is a social construct deeply rooted in historical, anthropological and sociological evidences strongly suggesting that women, by and large, are predisposed to be more mindful of dangerous consequences, less fascinated by violence, more interested in security, more disturbed by disharmony and more aware of the needs of people around them. Although Bernard believes that social influences and education are key determinant factors of gender specific behavior as opposed to biology, she notes that generally, women have significantly different perspectives from men, and that women's perspectives could play a transformative role in politics. Furthermore, she argues that besides women being more peaceful, women possess other qualities that could enhance state functioning. For instance, she believes that women are less corrupt than men.

On the role of women as peacebuilders, Bernard argues that there should be more focus on women as preventers of conflict rather than correctors. To Bernard, the role of the ethical voice and reconstructors of societies after conflict, fixes and improves the situation in the community. However, it does not change the position and situation of women in the community. In this regard, Bernard suggests the need for women to go

beyond their post-reconstruction capabilities and participate more on prevention of conflict.

On feminization of the military, Degroot (2000) observes that while the integration of women in militaries has played a significant role in challenging gender roles, it has not changed the position of women in the society. He argues that although feminists continue to challenge governments and military establishments for more participation of women in areas of combat, very few women actually aspire to be involved in this field thus real wars have been fought by proxies- women who want to serve in the military for the love of their country or because they are attracted to the thrill of war. These women have been considered freakish and have lost their most admired aspects of femininity but still, have been denied the status accorded to male heroes. Degroot observes that women who want to fight very seldom express their demands in feminist terms or seek advertently to advance the cause of women. In fact, these women are seen as guardians of tradition. That is, they want to fight because they are proud and seek to preserve the society in which they live. In this regard, he concludes that although women might be empowered through military service, their service as combatants does not offer any hope for their emancipation.

Martin Van Creveld (2000) on the other hand, establishes a hypothesis between influx of women in the military, and decline of advanced militaries. He argues that it is the shortage of men willing to serve in militaries that triggered the expansion of women's role in the military and not women's campaign to be included. Consequently, women's presence in the military was self-reinforcing as many female members of the forces, particularly officers, saw that their prospects for advancement were limited by the fact that they were excluded from 'nontraditional' roles including combat. Working

through the political process they demanded equal rights which were accorded to them. This in turn brought more women into the forces and created a vicious cycle that in most countries does not show any sign of stopping. In this regard, conscription of women may be viewed as an avenue for the emancipation of women. However, Crevelde notes that women started fighting when the enemy disappeared. He argues that, it was only after the prospects of large scale war disappeared, that barriers imposed on women's conscription were abolished and women began entering a substantial number of additional military occupational specialties which had previously been closed to them. Moreover, he observes immediate drastic cuts in the total number of troops following integration of women into the army.

Relating to combat, Crevelde argues that in areas where war is still at large, women take little or no part in the fighting. His analysis of the United States (US) military leads him to the claims that the US military has been turned into a safe-haven for very young mothers with an average age of 22-23. Many of them are single and receive housing, medical care, and child-minding facilities of a kind, at a price unavailable anywhere else. Nonetheless, should they be called upon to deploy in an emergency, this can give rise to problems. To Crevelde many women, particularly enlisted ones are entering the military precisely because they hope they will not be obliged to fight.

Maria Eriksson Baaz and Maria Stern (2011) escalates the debate further by arguing that while the influx of women in the military is as a result of political struggle for gender equity, it also reflects perceived needs of contemporary armies, the patterns of military engagement worldwide. They observe the transformation of many advanced armies from making wars to peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions. To them, the

aforementioned has triggered focus on the need for women in peacekeeping operations. In this case, women are assumed to be ethically regulating presences who extend their feminine traits to the men in their proximity. To them, the presence of women in armed groups diminishes the 'need' for rape of noncombatants. Their basic argument is that female combatants may serve as substitutes for rape of noncombatants. That is, female combatants may be raped or forced to marry noncombatants, and also, the fighters may be allowed to form consensual intimate relationships with each other. With regard to this, Baaz and Stern, argue that focusing the debate on the issue of peacekeeping rather than combat and warfare on the increasing presence of women in the military does not in any way unsettle the masculine identity of the army.

Furthermore, they argue that while the military is open to all kinds of males in the community regardless of education, human rights abuse records, physical ability and even age, women are an exemption with those included being denied equal opportunities as men in terms of accessing warring equipment. To Baaz and Stern, this is a strategy to frustrate women into quitting as observed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) military. Additionally, while women argued for their inclusion based on their prowess in the battlefield, male soldiers and officers tagged these women as 'exceptional', therefore they argued for relegating the feminine to a zone of 'exception' which arguably would reinforce the power of the norm of masculinity instead of undermining it. In this regard, Baaz and Stern conclude that a simple inclusion of women in the armed forces in order to render men less violent might not have the pacifying effect intended since the women included have to devalue their feminine (peaceful) natures in order to fit into the institution.

Francesco Bertolazzi (2010) dismisses Baaz and Stern's claims and argue that women can indeed create a pacifying effect. However, their numbers in the peacekeeping force are still very limited in this case, their presence does not produce the intended effect. He observes that by 2008, out of 77,117 military personnel in United Nations peacekeeping, only 1,640 were female, which is around 2 per cent. In addition, most of the women were undertaking support staff roles such as cooking, cleaning and secretarial tasks thus had no interaction with locals. Bertolazzi puts emphasis on the significance of women's integration into peacekeeping operations arguing that women often have easier access to female members of civil society. In some circumstances, female soldiers may have a comparative advantage to interacting with the local population on matters such as sexual exploitation, abuse and violence, among other issues. Women can also help at security checkpoints, where they may be better positioned to speak with and search local women without provoking hostilities among populations. Furthermore, he adds that all societies are made up of both women and men. In this way, they can serve as an example to the society on how men and women can work together rather than depend on constructed roles which serves as an obstacle as it prevents the society from fully exploiting individual's capabilities, particularly women.

Findings from his interviews reveal that male peacekeepers acknowledge the presence of women in peacekeeping missions affirming that women bring in different perspectives and attitudes to the field. However, while many supported integration of women, they warned that women should not be integrated because there is need for integration, but rather they should possess the necessary skills, attitudes and behaviors that are transformatory.

John Mueller (2000) dismisses any claims of a pacifying effect being produced by feminization of armed groups. In reference to ex-combatant data surveys of Sierra Leone armed groups, which revealed that although many of the fighters were abducted, many were willing volunteers. He concludes that violence-seeking women and men join groups that permit them to perpetrate violence. A critical analysis of ethnic conflicts and genocides particularly in Yugoslavia and Rwanda leads him to the affirmation that the occurrences of these incidences were spawned not so much by the convulsive surging of ancient hatreds or by frenzies whipped up by demagogic politicians and the media, but rather, many of these participants were groups of well-armed thugs and bullies encouraged by, and working under rough constraints set out by, official security services. Moreover, analyzing the Rwandan genocide he observes that only a small number of specially trained Hutus, allying themselves with often-drunken criminal and hooligan opportunists, went on a murderous rampage coordinated by local officials acting on orders from above. By contrast, the vast majority of Hutus seem to have stood by in considerable confusion and, often, indifference. In this case there should be much focus on transformation of individual behaviors and particularly those of gangs in societies, rather than focusing on feminization of these groups.

Shifting from feminist theory arguments, Jean Elshtain Bethke (2007) explains the origins of associations of women with peace. She traces this hypothesis to the Mediterranean tradition which emphasized and linked women with peace. These ideas were represented through female deities venerated in the regions. Elshtain (2007) argues that "peace deities were seen as fertile, childbearing prosperous yet subordinated at the same time. For instance, The Roman Pax was represented as a fertility icon or "a *Terra Mater*", figuring a woman with a youthful face surrounded by fruits, children, sheep

and oxen and holding an olive branch in her hand (Elshtain, 2007). In this regard, it can be argued that women's inherent peacefulness is a social construct hence should be re-analyzed.

James Davies (2008) offers a new approach of understanding war through analyzing views of human nature. He reviews how violent accounts influenced different philosopher's views of human nature and concludes that; people's views of human nature are shaped by general attitudes towards their fellow human beings and that these general attitudes are derived more from experiences than from learning. To Davies, experiences that produce views often begin at birth and continue through to adulthood. However, Davies acknowledges that human nature is not innate, it is subject to change and it should be observed as such even though it changes very slowly. In relation to violence, Davies argues that individuals who have experienced minimal domestic violence at an early stage in life, and later experience violent interactions, may more easily retain or re-establish a less violent view of human nature. Conversely, individuals from a stable, relatively non-violent culture may go to war and kill. These killers are not usually regarded dangerous when they return to civilian life. In this regard, Davies dismisses any claims of women's inherent peacefulness and men's aggressiveness and emphasizes on the need to appreciate attitude formation in understanding people's involvement in violence and peace building.

On the impact of war on women, Sumantra Maitra (2013) critically assesses the role of women during war and argues that although women challenged gender stereotypes on war by fighting them, during wartime they were mostly victims. She asserts that women warriors were dehumanized, ridiculed and killed or executed due to their rebellion not only against authority but also against a traditional role. To Mantra

(2013) women were at a disadvantage when it came to allocation of roles as they were compared to men's physical abilities which they did not match. Men were therefore the stronger beings who were more suited to fight and protect. Consequently, effectuating two kinds of responses: on one hand, men felt more protective and took more risk to save lives and honor their women while on the other hand, women were treated as spoils of war. Mantra (2013) therefore suggests that the aforementioned views, might trigger spite among male soldiers who respond indifferently or aggressively towards female combatants.

Susan Brownmiller (1975) on the subject of women and war and particularly war rape claims that women are solely victims during war. She argues that war provides men with the perfect psychological backdrop to give vent to their contempt for women. She writes that “*the maleness of the military—the brute power of weaponry exclusive to their hands, the spiritual bonding of men at arms, the manly discipline of orders given and orders obeyed, the simple logic of the hierarchical command—confirms for men what they long suspect—that women are peripheral to the world that counts*” (Brownmiller, 1975: 22). She further argues that a female victim of rape in war is chosen not because she is a representative of the enemy, but the fact that she is a woman makes her the enemy.

Jennifer Turpin (1996) on the other hand provides a comprehensive account on the impact of war on women. She argues that women suffer war in many ways; they are direct casualties during war and account for most deaths during war, they lose their loved ones, and homes and end up being war refugees thus exposing them to more challenges of seeking food and safety not only for themselves but also to their children

who are also in need of healthcare, shelter and education. Additionally, they also suffer torture and sexual violence particularly through rape and forced prostitution.

Turpin (1996) goes further to give an insight on how external factors impact women. She explains how the interlinkage of these factors with sexual division of labor place increased burdens on women roles. On one hand, she identifies a link between militarism and environment and argues that war not only destroys the social and economic infrastructure, but it also leads to environmental degradation thus the role of women as food providers and caretakers becomes strenuous. With huge tracts of land and forests destroyed, and severe contamination of water it becomes harder for women to forage for food. In addition, they also have to walk long distances in search of clean water for usage. On the other hand, Turpin (1996) establishes a connection between military spending and women and argues that increased military spending has displaced social spending. Therefore, women who are often left to care for children in the advent of post war situations, are forced to work harder to meet social needs of their respective families. She acknowledges that although military spending provides jobs to women, these jobs tend to be low paying and barely cater for the needs of the family.

Judy El-Bushra and others (2000), in support of Turpin (1996) argue that conflict can indeed be disempowering as it tears families apart and places increased burdens upon women. However, El-Bushra and others also recognize the empowering capability of war and go on to argue that, the fact that conflict erodes gender barriers, makes it empowering. To them, the need for women to cope with the new burdens placed upon them makes them more independent, effective and more outward looking. While they acknowledge the empowering capability of war on women, they also observe its impact on the society. They observe that once peace is restored, women are

pushed back to their traditional roles without savoring the newly found freedoms. Consequently, a wider social crisis is produced. They speak of a spiral effect created by tensions between the underlying gender relations and the new relations generating conflict. To be more specific, while men return home with violence, fear, and domination, women are less likely to accept their subordination after they have experienced relative autonomy and respect, and this leads to increased violence against women during peace times.

Victoria E. Collins (2015) analyses the impacts of state perpetrated violence on women and concludes that the victimization of females by states, state policy and agents of social control far outweigh the victimization by men during war. She argues that state penetrated violence occurs even during situations of peace where women are not accorded the same protection as men by the state and in some situations, they are even persecuted by the criminal justice system for their victimization by men. For instance, by being sentenced to death for being raped or being punished for pursuing education. Collins therefore suggests that women's victimization should be explored further and not just restricted to during times of conflict as this fails to acknowledge larger issues of power that not only impact patterns of violence that disproportionately impact women and children but also affect female criminality and the construction of control structures that have been implemented to prevent varying forms of violence.

In regard to the women's peace and men's war dichotomy, Collins argues that establishing victims and criminals are not exclusive categories for both men and women and that becoming an offender is equally distributed across all genders. Collins analyses the role of women in commissioning state crime and argues that although state crime is considered a male domain, women are also key players. She observes the delinking of

women involved in state crime to the traditional roles and a tendency to blame their character on the nature of politics. Against this idea, Collins argues that female perpetrators of state crime are willing consumers of dominant ideologies that sanction violence against women. To her, the complicity of women in the maintenance of the state sanctioned patriarchal status quo persists due to the veil of democracy which allows the state to appear vested in the advancement of women's rights while simultaneously being complicit in the maintenance of dominant belief systems about gender relations.

Meredeth Turshen and Clotilde Twagiramariya (1998) assess the role of women in African countries during war and ascertain that women are indeed victims during war. Although they reject the monolithic victim and pacifist representation, they observe that African women are indeed targets of war. To them, the fact that society's honor in the different African cultures and traditions is tied to women's sexuality and womanhood, women remain targets to warring factions who dehumanize them particularly through sexual violence either to dishonor their enemies, or to destroy their enemies cultural and social structures.

However, Turshen and Twagiramariya also acknowledge that women are also perpetrators of violence. Turshen and Twagiramariya observe that during liberation struggles women resisted and fought back as combatants, acted as spies for the warring factions and also fought among themselves. She therefore argues that women do not just struggle to survive during war, but they also work to transcend both the physical and psychological trauma resulting from war conditions and their aftermath. Furthermore, women survivors fight to protect the new power they have gained from the destruction of patriarchal structures caused by war and use it positively for self-empowerment and

engagement as active decision and policy makers in the process of rebuilding social orders. They therefore suggest that there is need to holistically analyze women's involvement in conflict rather than relegate them to innocent pawns lacking any form of agency.

Joe and Chesney-Lind (1995) move away from the battlefield and analyze gender victimization in gangs. They conclude that women turn to gangs as a means of protecting themselves from violence. Their conclusion lies on the basis that intolerable victimization provokes them into being perpetrators. This concept is highly visible in many war situations. Halef Afshar (2003) observes that the invasion of Israeli governmental authorities into Palestinian communities and homes resulted in unprecedented levels of victimization thus provoking women into joining the war including a minority as combatants.

Contrary to Joe and Chesney-Lind (1995), Olivia Bennett and others (1995) inscribe testimonies of women's diverse experiences in war around the world and argue that women's participation in war is not based on the level of victimization but on the perceptions of the type of war it is. They suggest that where it is viewed as a struggle for some perceived justice or liberation involving the mass of society or as a legitimate defense of home and community, women tend to be in favor of the war just as much as men. Nonetheless, when women see the war as a struggle over things they cannot access such as political power, they are rarely supporters. For instance, while Ugandan women interviewed saw the war in Northern Uganda between the Lord's Resistance Army and the government of Uganda as a senseless battle between greedy men to get rich and therefore did not support it, Tigray women had participated in the struggle against the

Ethiopian government and saw it as a struggle for political justice and social progress including equality for themselves.

Regarding the impact of war on women, Olivia Bennett and others (1995) acknowledge that indeed women are victims of war basing on Turpin's (1996) analysis on the impact of increased military spending and environmental degradation on women. They argue that "war" is what happens afterwards. They support this claim with a testimony from a woman from Lebanon who said: "*war is what happens afterwards, the years of suffering hopelessly with a disabled husband and no money, or struggling to rebuild when all your property has been destroyed*" (Bennett and others, 1995:267). They therefore conclude that there is need to move towards deeper analysis of these issues, without valorizing the use of violence or ignoring women's agency within victimization.

Caroline Moser and Fiona Clark (2001) note that there is extensive literature on political violence and armed conflict both analytical and operational. However, this literature is largely blind, with women's participation simply not identified. They argue that political violence and armed conflict have been designated as male domains, executed by men, whether as armed forces, guerrilla groups, paramilitaries or peace-keeping forces. According to Moser and Clark, these ideas shaped later analysis which had a tendency to portray a simplistic division of roles where men are perpetrators in defense of their nation, wives and children, while women are victims, particularly of sexual abuse and abduction.

Following this realization, Moser and Clark (2001) assert that association of women to peace (passivity) and men to war (aggression) is socially constructed. Behind this assumption is the idea that women are helpless victims in times of war, whereas,

men, even when victims on the battlefield, are depicted as omnipotent masculine heroes. They claim that this misrepresentation of the gendered causes has implications for conflict and development assistance.

Chris Coulter (2008) in agreement reminds us that being a victim of violence does not mean that one has no agency. She argues that humanitarian discourses and conflict research often present a clear distinction between victims and perpetrators of violence however, there is a tendency to slip from victimization to victimhood where the victim's actions and experiences are concealed and they are portrayed as powerless entities lacking any form of agency. She goes further to provide a case study of Sierra Leone where members of various rebel movements kidnapped girls and women, some of whom came to take an active part in the armed conflict alongside the rebels and concludes that predominant notion of women being weak vulnerable victims that need protection is a myth.

Additionally, she also analyses the lives of this women after conflict and observes that when these girls and women returned to their home villages after the cessation of hostilities, their families and peers viewed them with skepticism and fear, while humanitarian organizations saw them primarily as victims. Neither view was particularly helpful in helping them resume normal lives after the war especially since they were excluded from demilitarization and demobilization processes carried out by the international community in the wake of the war. Many of these women found it extremely difficult to return to their families, and, without institutional support, some were forced to turn to prostitution to eke out a living. In this regard, she recommends that policymakers, practitioners, and activists need to expand the inquiries into what

women do in war and to critically analyze women's roles as perpetrators of war and conflict.

Hannah Baumeister (2013) in concurrence with Coulter adds that the categorization of a victim is problematic in itself as it is constructed in a dichotomous relationship with the perpetrator yet during conflict, victims and perpetrators are not easily distinguishable. She identifies free will and coercion as the diverse ways people get involved in conflict. To Baumeister, women, normally assumed to be coerced into participating in wars as forced wives are not only victims and witnesses of violence but they were also perpetrators who exercised merciless authority over subordinate abductees, participated in looting campaigns and in direct combat. She argues that for survival, women used patriarchal ideas and images for survival. They reconstructed existing notions of gender roles: being wives and mothers during and after the conflict. A Ugandan ex-forced wife reports that young women were considered a shame to the household to which they were given. However, when they get married and especially after they give birth, their status within the group and their access to resources increases. To Baumeister, these women remain silent because dominant discourses encourage women to be victims in order to garner support hence women, aware of their multiple roles, duly remain silent in fear of recalling their experiences, being misunderstood, stigmatized or persecuted in legal proceedings.

Simona Sharoni (2001) adds to the debates by arguing that viewing women explicitly as victims of war overlooks women's power and agency. To her, women are a heterogeneous group and therefore the general idea of them being powerless does not allow us to theorize them as either benefactors of oppression nor perpetrators of catastrophes. Her assessment of the Israeli-Palestine and the Northern Ireland conflicts

give her reason to believe that conflict does not always have negative implications for women. On the contrary, in some situations conflict may be a springboard for women's emancipation.

Ronit Lentin (1997) analyzes the impact of the notion of victimization and argues that the predominant perception of women as victims serves as an obstacle in addressing and responding to the effects of women's violence alongside men's violence. To Lentin, this is an obstacle as it makes attempts to peacebuilding or post-conflict reconstruction less effective as women are excluded from rehabilitation, demobilization and integration initiatives. Also, since women are viewed predominantly as victims, factors making them susceptible to violence remain unexplored, therefore, their campaign for peace activism does not serve to end their subjugation. In other words, in situations where one can talk about violence of women in the example of female combatants, one often finds violence against women. In this regard, Lentin denotes that there is need for a greater understanding and acknowledgement of women as combatants for the attainment of peace.

Similarly, Kelly Liz (2000) Discussing the concern about how focusing on women solely as victims of violence can constitute a denial of women as agents/actors capable of deliberate decision making, argues that this perspective can lead to the denial of women's agency in resisting and coping with personal victimization but also through collective opposition to interpersonal violence and war. She maintains that this restrictive notion of agency is unjust and dangerous and that agency can come to be seen as only residing in the perpetration of violence.

Miranda Allison (2009) criticizes hegemonic discourses arguing that they erase any kind of agency in women who commit heinous acts of violence particularly when it

is done to other women and children. When women are perpetrators of violence to fellow women and children, Allison observes that hegemonic discourses erase any form of agency from them because women are really victims not perpetrators. She observes the depiction of women perpetrating violence as mad or evil by dominant discourses (Berrington and Honkatukia, 2002) to delink them from 'real' 'women who suffer violence. Alison (2009) argues that narrating women who have suffered violent or abusive events in war as victims is disempowering, inaccurate and constitutes further victimization. On the other hand, she argues that presenting female combatants as free agents making totally independent and rational choices is simplistic and can lead us to a trap.

Lois McNay (1992) in addition to the impacts of female victimization, McNay argues that the tendency to regard women as powerless and innocent victims of patriarchal social structures hampers many types of 'feminist analysis'. She believes that an insistence on women as passive victims of male oppression oversimplifies the complexities of women's subordination by placing too great a stress on both the universal nature of oppression and the common, undifferentiated enemy of patriarchy. Furthermore, when addressing the relationship between feminism, power and difference, McNay emphasizes that the universal subordination of women cannot be assumed, nor can it be interpreted straightforwardly from symbolic and cultural representation. Rather, what must be considered and questioned is the role of women in a particular society with regards to their access to resources. The amount of economic and political autonomy they have and how these factors are articulated within specific definitions of femininity also influence this debate.

Charlotte Lindsey (2001) on the impact of war on women, argues that in public perception, there is a tendency of classifying women in the single category of “women and children”. Conversely, men have been largely forgotten as civilians and have been categorized as combatants albeit the civilian population constituting of many men and boys who have refused to fight and are exposed to the risk of being ridiculed, imprisoned or even killed for their lack of courage and masculinity, and elderly men who should not be recruited because of their age and specific vulnerabilities. To Lindsey (2001), this assumption has led to the preexisting notion that women are more vulnerable in armed conflict than men.

Furthermore, Lindsey (2001) argues that women have different needs, experiences and roles in war that differ from those of children and this should be considered as such. She goes on to argue that although women should not be perceived to be more vulnerable, they are susceptible to marginalization, poverty and suffering engendered by armed conflict, particularly if they are already victims of discrimination during peacetime. To Lindsey (2001) men and women are equally vulnerable, However, their vulnerability differs based on their exposure to a given problem and their capacity to tackle it. She notes that while men are often singled out as a group for detention or summary execution, women and girls are exposed to sexual violence. She therefore suggests the need for a gendered approach in understanding the experiences of individuals in armed conflict.

Additionally, Lindsey (2001) provides a legal perspective to the debate by analyzing effectiveness of the law in addressing the needs of women in situations of armed conflict. She notes that the law falls short in the protection of the lives and dignity of women during armed conflict as the warring factions do not observe these

laws. However, she also acknowledges the relevance of different bodies of law in addressing women's issues particularly issues related to documentation and detailed regulation of property rights. In this regard, she advocates for the use of various law mechanisms such as International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights Law, International Refugee Law and National Law. Lindsey notes that although law is meant to protect both men and women, it grants women additional protection during situations of conflict. In this regard, one might argue civilian men are victims; despite their susceptibility to death and torture and sexual abuse during armed conflict, they also lack adequate protection from the law.

Sandra I. Cheldelin and Maneshka Eliatamby (2011) recite a number of stories of the diverse experiences of women during violent conflict and argue that there is need for reconstruction of the current dominant narratives that portray women as weak victims. While they acknowledge that women and children are adversely affected by war and its aftermath, they also recognize the limitations and misconceptions that tag along with this idea. Chief among them, the idea that men are spared victimhood and women limited to it. In this regard, they argue that men are prodigiously the casualties of state directed gender- selective killings through history. They justify their claim by providing an example of the Bangladeshi genocide where the Pakistani army responded with the intention of getting rid of all the boys and men who they feared would become freedom fighters.

Significantly, Cory Freivogel (2010) provides a comprehensive account of men's victimization during war. According to him, while sexual violence has been reserved for women during war with the aim of expressing control over the enemy, women are not exclusive victims of sexual domination during conflict. He notes that throughout

history, men have been targets of equally disgusting acts of sexual exploitation employed for the strategic purpose of 'feminizing' the enemy. Freivogel speaks of war as being socially constructed as a masculine pursuit, in this regard he claims that just as war is about power, so is masculinity, therefore stripping a male of his masculinity through sexual violence can and has resulted in perceptions of femininity and weakness on the part of the victim which can be truly traumatic. Additionally, he observes that even in homophobic countries such as DRC, male rape still takes place at unprecedented levels and is in fact more effective as the victims are ridiculed and ascribed labels such as 'bush wives'. Furthermore, there is a tendency of the community treating them as such particularly in recovery centers where they undertake activities such as basket weaving (what most women do at the ward during recovery). He notes the increased rates of sexual violence against men during wars and concludes that despite its pervasiveness it is indeed an effective tool in war. He suggests that if there is any potential for this sexual violence to end, it must first be widely acknowledged.

Michelle L. Meloy and Susan L. Miller (2010) attempt to reconstruct the problematic assumption of women being victims by analyzing victim culture and victim empowerment as two competing ideologies in shaping ideas on the concept of victimization. To Meloy and Miller, the problem lies within the victim culture which harkens back to a victim blaming culture. Victim culture portrays female victims of male violence as fragile and hysterical who often exaggerate harm inflicted upon them. Meloy and Miller associate victim culture with the media and argue they often lack empirical data to back their claims yet proceed to disseminate inaccurate information to the public hence continue to shape views of the public on victimization. On victim empowerment, Meloy and Miller assert that the proponents of this framework neither

construct women as innocent pawns nor accept simplistic depiction of victims as responsible for their own victimization. Empirical evidence guides their conclusions. Meloy and Miller therefore suggest that victim empowerment proponents (scholars with published findings) need to do a better job at getting their voices heard through disseminating their findings to larger audiences.

Drew Humphries (2009) contrary to Meloy and Miller's (2010) idea of the media not being well informed, argues that media content is revealed through systematic analysis hence it is accurate. However, obtained findings are interfered with as result of the routine judgments institutionalized in journalism curricula which emphasize newsworthiness hence tend to focus on incidences of people whose circumstances stand for larger social issues, to add to the appeal of the crafted story lines, and incidences that easily fit into simplifying devices. For instance, focusing on women perpetrators as mad or bad women. Literary conventions also affect information conveyed by the media. Literary conventions often defined by police procedures, express antipathy to the fate of female characters hence tend to rule out or manipulate information obtained to tap into this idea.

Finally, Humphries (2009) identifies publishing standards as the last factor that influence information disseminated by the media. Here, she observes that academic publishing recognizes a wide range of scholarship including mainstream and specialty contribution. That is, texts showcasing women's violence appeal the broader audience and tend to increase adoptions by professors charged with teaching broadly defined sizeable survey courses. Likewise, the media capitalize on this opportunity with the need to receive awards and recognition. Humphries therefore suggests the need to

endow students with critical thinking skills so that they can be able to critically analyze media content.

1.2 Conceptualization of the Perpetrator

The term perpetrator has been generally understood to refer to a person who commits a crime or does something that is wrong or evil (Ehrlich and others, 1986). A further elaborated definition of this term categorizes it into three parts – direct perpetrators, indirect perpetrators and joint perpetrators (Bryan A Garner 2014). A direct perpetrator is defined legally as a person who realizes the statutory elements of a criminal offence. The individual commits criminal offence usually on his or her own by an action physically carried out by him or her, possibly using tools or even animals. On the other hand, an indirect perpetrator is the person who realizes the statutory elements of an intentional criminal offence by using a person who cannot be punished for this offence due to infancy, mental disorder, coercion, threat or mistake. Lastly, joint perpetrators are persons who jointly realize the statutory elements of international criminal offence in awareness of each other's activities. Joint perpetration presupposes an intentional participation of each perpetrator, which is called 'united intent'. United intent consists of two requirements: First, the intent of each participant must cover the objective elements of the criminal offence they are committing jointly; second, the perpetrators must be in awareness of each other's activities (Karsai and Szomora, 2010:27).

Basically, the term perpetrator is so often associated to mentally disturbed sadistic individuals, who by no means intend to conform to the laws guiding the community. Furthermore, these individuals also possess the capability to inflict harm or torment upon others hence their presence serves as a threat to the entire community.

With this perspective grounding our understanding of the concept, we have been limited to view the perpetrator as an 'evildoer' who should have expelled from the community for the sake of peaceful coexistence.

However, this understanding is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, it lacks the explanatory power to provide justifications as to why certain actions were performed or why these actions were performed by certain agents rather than by others. Philip Cole (2006) asserts that the concept of evil is often employed when we lack a complete explanation for why an action was performed. He argues that, saying that an action is evil, suggests that the action resulted from supernatural forces or that the action is a mystery. This does not provide any genuine explanation because attributing actions to supernatural forces or categorizing it as a mystery suggests that the action cannot be explained (Cole, 2006, 6–9). The latter has been manifested in many literary writings whereby, rather than exploring reasons as to why women participate in violent conflict, they are effectively labelled as 'evil' to avoid any form of confrontation with the phenomenon.

Secondly, the association of perpetrators of violent conflict with evil, often implies that, that person acted out of malice (Kekes, 2005). This is very misleading because, 'evil' actions result from different kinds of motives, including good ones. Given this ambiguity, it might be unclear whether an attribution of evil attributes despicable psychological attributes to an evildoer, and this ambiguity might result in an overly harsh judgment (Card, 2002). This perception has led to many defendants particularly women, denying claims of their involvement in conflict with fear of being harshly persecuted. This continues to serve as an obstacle to understanding women's involvement in conflict.

Finally, the concept of evil when misapplied may serve as a danger to sustainable peace in the community. It reinforces harmful prejudices against a particular group of people consequently disrupting the stability of the community. Cole (2006:21) denotes that *“it is likely that by calling terrorists ‘evildoers’ and Iraq, Iran, and North Korea ‘the axis of evil’ former US President George W. Bush made it more likely that suspected terrorists would be mistreated and less likely that there would be peaceful relations between the peoples and governments of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea and the peoples and government of the United States.* Similarly, a reflection of this statement is observed in the twenty first century where communities linked with terrorism are always under suspicion and face the highest levels of marginalization and mistreatment from governments and their populations resulting in increased rates of radicalization of both men and women into violent extremism.

While it is true that sadists are integrated in armed groups, it is highly unlikely that the hundreds of thousands who perpetrate violence are all sadists or evil. Although their actions are despicable, it should be understood that perpetrators believe and are seen as solution bearers who choose violence as a tool to advocate for their demands. Considering this, there is need to critically assess the usefulness of this concept rather than limiting it to an unexplainable category. Moreover, historical accounts highlight the importance of violence in emancipation of marginalized and minority groups thus showcasing the need to go beyond the ‘evil’ category and exploring it further.

Paul Levine (2016) the Director of Education in the Uppsala Programme for Holocaust and Genocide studies observes another facet of problems in the perpetrator concept. He notes that while the central mechanism for understanding the perpetrator concept has gradually leaned towards the ‘how’, there has been a growing tendency to

focus on the victims hence the ‘why’ question has been neglected. Although, the latter is laudable as it drives incentives for humanitarian aid to the victims, understanding the perspective of the victim is not the only way forward in teaching and understanding the concept of perpetratorship, since it perpetuates the idea that perpetrators are indeed evil hence their motivations, actions, feelings, fears and post-facto feelings remain a critical pedagogic challenge and dilemma. Additionally, contrary to victims, perpetrators at all levels often understand what is happening, why things are happening as they are and what they have to gain from it hence there is need to explore their thinking, motivations and actions if we are to prevent a recurrence of the same actions.

Furthermore, over-emphasis on victims while studying the perpetrator concept, generates education ‘fatigue’ which prevents any learning from occurring. That is, while many are moved by victimization stories, it is difficult to draw conclusions as to why an event happened and even propose effective strategies aimed at addressing victimization. Additionally, the monotony of these stories prevents further exploration of the subject since there is tendency to conclude from previously made inferences. On the other hand, perpetrators are always a puzzle hence it is very interesting to study them. Evidence suggests that individuals particularly students and scholars are fascinated with evil rather than victimization. Levine (2016) argues that learning about the disgusting details of a perpetrator motivates students to learn more in order to understand the why question, this way they can be able to make a difference in their own lives and the society that they live in.

Similarly, Simone Schweber (2016) a Professor of Education and Jewish Studies at Wisconsin University, analyses limitations accompanying the understanding of the perpetrator solely from the victim's perspective. She argues that the exclusive focus on

the victim, in an attempt to understand the perpetrator, prevents us from envisioning or viewing ourselves as perpetrators. In a much more fine-tuned way, emphasis on victimhood, positions us to identify ourselves as potential victims and not perpetrators. Moreover, high levels of sympathizing with victims has resulted in the dehumanization of the perpetrator hence it becomes difficult to align ourselves with their actions. In view of this, Schweber (2016) suggests a shift, arguing that it would enable a new generation of students and scholars to challenge the national narratives that mask our culpability as perpetrators thus enhancing our potential in peace activism.

Schweber's (2016) argument can be reflected in our understanding of women's involvement in violent conflict, depicted in literary writings and media. While women's involvement in armed conflict has been focused on the victim's perspectives – predominantly women and children, women have completely delinked themselves with the perpetrators, denied any form of agency in this arena and continuously identified themselves as potential victims or peacebuilders. Consequently, it has been difficult to identify women's needs in post conflict situations. That is, the ending of a war might be interpreted as the end of or relief from victimization hence their fear of being victimized is reduced. On the other hand, with extensive evidence suggesting that the spate of intrastate conflicts unleashed in developing countries is as a result of growing inequality, it becomes clear that men involved in battle are struggling to fight oppression. On the contrary, women's peacebuilding initiatives might be interpreted as a sign of being content with previously existing conditions hence they are excluded from power positions in post-conflict situations.

Notwithstanding the acknowledgement of the simplicity of these ideas, there is reluctance within the public sphere to engage with the complexities of the figure of the

perpetrator. Perhaps it is as a result of the paradox presented by the perpetrator figure. One facet of this paradox is the oscillation between the need and desire to try and understand the motivations behind these people's actions, on the other hand, is the desire and need to try not to, because understanding motivations of their actions might simply imply forgiveness which is considered unjust to those afflicted. Another reason not to may also be because to face the real motivations means critiquing the system and that is too threatening to the established powers. Consequently, the perpetrator has been reduced to a figure of blame and society left unreflective of how their actions influenced the actions of the perpetrator (Lacey and Pickard, 2013:14). To this end, there is need to reconceptualize the concept of perpetrator, not only to understand the involvement of women in violent conflict, but for successful peace transformation processes.

1.3 Conclusion

In summary, as previously stated, the overriding purpose of this chapter is to lay a foundation/backbone for my discussions. To accomplish this objective, my chapter was divided into two parts. The first part was a theoretical review highlighting traditional views on women during violent conflict. This section of the chapter focused exclusively on the ongoing debates on women participation during war, particularly on their role as peace builders, victims and perpetrators of violent conflict. An overview of the different theoretical approaches is key in the identification of existing gaps in the ongoing debates on women participation in war, in a bid to prevent replication of similar ideas.

As highlighted in the literature review, women play three key roles during war.

1. As peace builders: advocating for peace through activism.

2. As victims: Experiencing sexual violence, torture and death. In addition, they are also bearers of overwhelming responsibilities accompanied by war and militarization.
3. As perpetrators: Killing and torturing fellow women, children and men.

While it is indisputable that women indeed play distinct roles during violent conflict, the fact that most research on women and war focuses on women as inherently more peaceful or merely as victims, there has been a reproduction of ideas that women lack agency as perpetrators. Significantly, active figures in this field have been effectively labelled, to dissociate them from those who are considered ‘normal’ women. Although this has dominated and shaped our understanding of women's involvement in war, it has not provided room for emancipation as women continue to be sidelined in peace negotiation tables and in politics. Thus raising the question as to whether there is an opportunity for women's emancipation through acknowledgment of their agency as perpetrators of violence.

The second section of this chapter explored the concept of perpetrator. Prior to the realization of an existing possibility that the acknowledgement of women's capabilities as perpetrators may serve as a tool for their emancipation, there is need to reconceptualize the perpetrator concept. The definition of a perpetrator that guides our understanding, as interpreted by the dictionary and by law, is that of an evil, sadistic individual. While this has been the basic understanding of a perpetrator, women have significantly alienated themselves from this figure/image and embedded on their peace building roles. However, it should be noted that, perpetrators are not always evil, in some cases, they may serve to be heroes in the community as observed during the decolonization period where by frequent guerrilla attacks by the colonized groups

facilitated acquisition of independence. In view of this, the second section of this chapter suggests the need to go beyond a simplistic understanding of perpetratorship and explore its usefulness.

This section placed emphasis on the need to understand the perpetrator concept through critical analysis of the perpetrator. That is, through analyzing motivations for their actions as opposed to the current mainstream approaches which are based on understanding the perpetrator through the victim's perspective thus generating a cycle of violence. In other words, by exploring the concept of the perpetrator from a victim's perspective, the community is reluctant in understanding on how their actions motivated the actions of the perpetrators thus increasing likelihood that the event might recur. In this view, I suggest a need for reconceptualization of the perpetrator concept arguing that it may serve as an avenue for transformative peace.

Additionally, the reconceptualization of this concept may also serve as a stepping stone towards the acknowledgement of women as perpetrators and possible emancipation of women. More precisely, while it has become more clear that inequality of power and marginalization are major factors influencing the spate of intrastate wars, the invisibility of women in this struggle and their focus on peace building activities particularly during war, may be interpreted as a sign of contention with previous existing conditions hence exclusion from political positions following successful secessions. Although the situation might be different in some countries like Rwanda where women are a majority in parliament despite their invisibility in the genocide, it is observed that these women have very negligible effect on policy. They are therefore viewed as easily manipulable puppets, recruited to fulfill normative feminist agendas (Devlin and Elgie, 2008). I also identify the current conceptualization of the perpetrator

as one of the reasons as to why there is so much focus on women as peace builders rather than perpetrators which is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF WOMEN AS PEACEBUILDERS

2.0 Introduction

Notwithstanding the global acknowledgement of women as peace builders, and the progressive role of women in peace building initiatives, the world continues to be a hotspot for violence as indicated in the report by the Institute for Economics and peace themed: *Ten years of measuring peace*. The report not only reveals that the world is slightly less peaceful than it was ten years ago, but also, reveals peace instability in previously conflicting countries as a result of the high rates of inequality and poverty (Global Peace Index, 2016: 2-3). This report not only highlights the global complexities of peace, but also raises questions as to whether the initiatives implemented are working towards the creation of war resilient communities.

Whereas, there are many logical reasons to believe that the increased rates of violent conflict may be as a result of the marginal participation of women in male dominated arenas such as politics and military, this thesis argues, that the stereotypical assumption and portrayal of women as predominantly peace builders, may also be a contributing factor to the deterioration of peace. In more specific terms, an exclusive focus on women as solely peace builders, has led to the exclusion of ex-female fighters in post-war reconstruction initiatives such as disarmament and rehabilitation, amongst others. Consequently, failed peace initiatives have resulted in leaving ex-female fighters susceptible and vulnerable to the perpetration of violence.

Despite increasing acknowledgement of the problematic nature of this view, women have affirmed the ideas of their inherent peacefulness particularly, in their

campaign for inclusion in politics and peace building processes, sidelining themselves even further from the idea of being perpetrators; accordingly, these ideas have become more widespread and dominated mainstream discourses reflected through literary writings and media through the romanization of women's pacifism. While it is indeed true that women have showcased their prowess in peace building, it should not be assumed that all women possess similar capabilities. Moreover, ideas of women's inherent peaceful natures as highlighted in the literature review are based on social constructs hence need further exploration. In light of the fact that, an acknowledgement of the role of women as perpetrators might be a stepping stone towards their emancipation, and also a step towards holistic reconstruction of women as peace builders, there is a need to critically reanalyze the proffered narratives that have led to the neglect of the role of women as perpetrators hence limited understanding of the factors that influence their engagement into violence and contributed to the generation of a cycle of violence.

This chapter of the thesis is aimed at critically analyzing the concepts that have been used to legitimate women's inherent peacefulness. In this chapter, I argue that, for the development of sustainable peace, social constructions associating women to peace and men to war should be done away with. Rather, there should be a strong focus on the complex interplay of factors that make both men and women susceptible to engaging in violent behavior.

2.1 The Concept of the Perpetrator

As discussed in chapter one of this thesis, the concept of perpetrator is very problematic. Our current definition of a perpetrator is that of a sadistic and aggressive individual who by no means intends to conform to the laws of the community. While

this has provided a basis of our understanding of the concept, age old social constructions of women's pacifism and men's aggressiveness have guided our ideas of who the perpetrators are. Consequently, perpetratorship has been considered a male domain and women have been completely sidelined from the idea. This has been evident through the labeling of women involved in violent conflict as evil or mad to highlight that they are indeed extraordinary women lacking in feminine traits.

Additionally, studying the concept through the victim's perspective has also reaffirmed assumptions that men are indeed the perpetrators. To be more precise, bearing in mind that the nature of wars fought in the world today are predominantly ethnic, women have been considered victims particularly in African communities where society's honor is tied to woman's sexuality and womanhood (Turshen and Twagiramariya 1998). In view of this, they remain targets to warring factions who continuously dehumanize them through sexual violence to either dishonor their enemies or to destroy their enemies cultural and social structures.

Furthermore, Turpin (1996) also acknowledges that women are more vulnerable to death and account for most deaths during war. She adds that women are not only victims during war but also after war where increased burdens are placed on them following the death of their loved ones. She argues that with huge tracts of land and forests destroyed, and severe contamination of water, it becomes harder to for women to forage for food. In addition, they also have to walk long distances in search of clean water for usage. Therefore, women who are often left to care for children in post war situations are forced to work harder to meet social needs of their respective families. While the concept of perpetration has been studied from the victim's perspective, it has

increasingly been acknowledged that women are the victims thus reaffirming assumptions that men are indeed perpetrators.

On the other hand, studying the concept from the victim's perspective has also revealed the heinous acts committed by aggressors to their victims. These inhuman acts go against ideas of motherhood such as nurturing and caring which have been ascribed to the women by the society. Therefore, women have continuously denied any association with these concepts arguing that it goes against their natures.

These concepts have not only delinked women from the idea of perpetration but have also prevented exploration of the motivations of the perpetrator. In other words, since society perceives men as aggressors, the fact that they are actually exercising violence does not incite any necessity of exploring what drives them into violence. Although there is a growing focus towards understanding factors that drives individuals into violent conflict, this thesis argues that an increased involvement of women in violence particularly in Rwanda, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) could be one of the factors influencing this move. However, the field is still very new and faces massive challenges hence ideas dissociating women from perpetration of violence are still widespread.

While it is undeniable that the number of men engaging in violence globally outnumber the number of women in the field by far, it should be noted that perpetratorship is not exclusively a male domain. Furthermore, increased acknowledgement of the fact that structural and cultural injustices are root causes of violence in the community, has led to the realization that both men and women fall susceptible to the perpetration of violence. In view of this, denying that women are perpetrators not only threatens the continuity of the community by increasing its

vulnerability to violence through exclusion of women from pre-and post-conflict initiatives but also suggest that women are not victims of structural and cultural injustices.

While many scholars particularly difference feminists may argue that it is due to the fact that women choose to address their concerns peacefully, Bernard (1999) observes that women's peace activism begins during war. She argues that women are an ethical voice and reconstructors after conflict and not before. She therefore urges them to go beyond their post-reconstruction capabilities and focus more on the prevention of conflict. Although women have made great strides in the prevention of conflict over the years, ideas that they are primarily peacebuilders have led to failed peace initiatives accounting for the increased rates of unstable peace.

Despite the unprecedented increase in the engagement of women in violent conflict, women have adhered to ideas that they are primarily peacebuilders, perhaps it is because this is the only way they can further their agendas in peacebuilding and get into political positions. However, these ideas continue generating a cycle of violence hence there is need to go beyond them. The reconceptualization of the perpetrator concept to acknowledge that both men and women are susceptible to violence and incorporate both parties in pre-and post-reconstruction initiatives would be a milestone towards achieving sustainable peace.

2.2 Materialism as a conceptualization for peace

The origins of materialism can be traced back to the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century, when middle class women from prosperous social backgrounds in western societies began to organize themselves in the name of

social reform, reclamation and moral purity (Koven and Michel, 2013: 10). These women used the ideology of 'domestic true womanhood' and religious activism to build political movements which expanded women's roles beyond the domestic sphere to support labor reform, suffrage and peace (Buhle, 1980: 55-64). A case in point is the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, one the largest women's organizations for peace in the united states which mobilized mass numbers of women to support labor and prison reforms, suffrage and peace under the conservative slogan 'For Home, God and country.'

Swerdlow (2012:110) observes that the use of the materialist ideology was the only way that women could campaign for peace in the regressive political climate in the twentieth century. Additionally, even though many women were now well educated and some of them had even been active in several movements campaigning for social justice, they had been victims of historical amnesia that beset the first wave of feminism particularly in the United States where all mention of women's rights struggle was eliminated from public discourse, in left wing circles and written out of historical record (Swerdlow, 2012:112). Women had to therefore fall back into campaigning for peace by emphasizing on their traditional roles. By the same token, emphasizing on their traditional roles, influenced many women into joining peace movements.

As observed in the Women Strike for Peace Movement in the mid-twentieth century, where visualizations of women as concerned mothers, provoked thousands of women to march out of their homes to protest for peace, following threats from the United States government to respond to Russia's nuclear test on the American landscape with a series of explosions on its own. Slogans of the strike addressed issues of particular concern to women. The most widely used were 'Let the children grow 'and A

placard hanging from the neck of a little girl sitting on a wheel chair which read 'I want to grow up to be a mommy'. According to the *Los Angeles mirror*, slogans expressing maternal consciousness, not only attracted women who were confined to domestic roles, but also militant women who joined in the strike in unprecedented numbers, puzzling the media and public officials.

The use of maternal ideologies in campaigning for peace was very progressive in the advancement of women's political agendas. More precisely, after campaigns for peace, women developed some level of self-esteem therefore, it was not easy for them to be pushed back into their domestic roles since they wanted more. Moreover, through the campaigns, they were convinced that there was need for the qualities of motherhood to be embraced in politics, for peace to prevail (Swerdlow, 2012:122).

Consequently, there were often huge numbers of women willing to volunteer in the movements to push forward women's agendas, which in turn transformed small movements into national movements pushing for women's involvement into politics. While the basic premise behind women's peace activism was that women refuse to accept war as a solution to solve conflicts no matter how complicated they may be, particularly because war is dangerous for their children, ideas of women's inherent peacefulness associated to their caregiving natures began to dominate attracting feminists such as Sara Ruddick (1980) who introduced the concept of maternal thinking and Carol Gilligan(1982) who wrote on 'Care Ethics' thus creating an even wider scope. Anne McClintock (1993:74) observes an application of maternalism in African struggles, where African women embraced, transmuted and transformed the motherhood ideology in a variety of ways, working strategically within traditional ideology to justify untraditional public militancy.

Whereas motherhood became an activating factor in the politicization of women, there was an increased focus on the socio-biological role of women as ‘caregivers and nurturers, upholders of traditions and customs and reservoirs of culture’ (Chadya, 2003:153–57). The images of women as mothers became political symbols of the nation. Yuval-Davis (1997) argues that a woman as a mother ‘symbolizes in many cultures the spirit of the collectivity’, this excludes women ‘from *direct action* as national citizens’ and ‘subsumes]’ women ‘symbolically into the national body politic’. Thus, the women themselves are not active participants in the conflict; they are subordinately held as an idealized subject. (Yuval-Davis, 1997:45). This positioning keeps women out of active participation and associates women with peace.

Notwithstanding, the fact that the definition of motherhood has changed overtime following technological and legal advancements, thus questioning ideologies that caregiving and nurturing qualities are exclusively feminine traits, maternalistic ideologies are still largely prevalent and are growing into an orthodoxy in international organizations. (Charlesworth, 2008:14). As a result, women have increasingly been viewed as peace builders and their agency as perpetrators continuously denied.

2.3 Media representations of women as peace builders

Whilst it is indeed true that maternalistic ideologies and the concept of perpetrators are key in shaping ideas of women's inherent peacefulness, these ideologies would not have been prevalent without influence particularly from the media and publications. Yuval Noah Harari (2012) observes that human beings behaviors, attitudes and ideas are dependent on stories. In other words, as societies grow larger and get beyond sizes that people know each other, they need structures and common stories in order to cooperate. Although the roots of most of these stories can be traced way back in

history, where they were employed as strategies to mobilize or fight against certain injustices. Although sometimes lacking some credibility, these stories are often vital for the survival of a community as they condition people to behave in ‘acceptable’ ways, therefore they need to be transmitted from one generation to another. To this end, media serves as a powerful tool not only in transmitting these stories but also in counteracting the information that we receive in regard to women's involvement in conflict in order to maintain developed ideas, attitudes and behaviors of individuals.

Significantly, the media has succeeded in convincing the globe that women are predominantly peace builders. This has been accepted in the mainstream discourses and has been acknowledged globally through the adoption of United Nations resolution 1325 which recognized that the involvement of women in peace processes can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. Additionally, the resolution also recognized that increased participation of women in peace and security matters is a linchpin to sustainable peace, thus called for equal participation of men and women in peace building. While it is inarguable that women are indeed powerful architects of peace, the fact that their capabilities are based on age old femininity ideas rather than the skills they possess is problematic. As this has served to justify their exclusion in decision making positions such as politics. Furthermore, it has also led to failed peace initiatives as ex/female combatants are excluded from rehabilitation initiatives based on the ideas that women are predominantly peace builders.

Whereas, ideas of women’s inherent peacefulness have increasingly been acknowledged as being problematic, the media continues to perpetuate these ideas. A further leading to the neglect of women's roles as perpetrators. This has resulted to a

limited understanding of the factors that influence women engagement into violent conflict thus generating a cycle of violence. Three themes describe how media transmits ideas of women's peaceful natures.

1. The depiction of men as aggressors.
2. Labeling female perpetrators as 'extraordinary', mad or evil to indicate that women have no agency in this field.
3. Romanticizing the role of women as peace builders.

2.3.1 Media representation of men

Of the many influences on how we view men and women, media is the most pervasive and one of the most powerful. Woven throughout our daily lives, media insinuate their messages into our consciousness at every turn. All forms of media communicate images of the sexes, many of which perpetuate unrealistic, stereotypical, and limiting perceptions. A primary way, in which media distort reality, is through the depiction of men as villains, aggressors, perverts and philanderers. Jim R. McNamara (2006) observes that Seventy five percent of all mass media depict men in this light (McNamara, 2006:14). For example, television programming for all ages disproportionately depicts men as belligerents. Highly popular films such as; *Mission Impossible*, *The Guardians*, *Security*, *Dexter* and many others, star men who embody the stereotype of extreme masculinity thus reinforcing long-standing cultural ideals of masculinity.

The media has also portrayed men as the dominant gender hence men have been urged to exemplify the qualities that justify their superiority/dominance such as aggressiveness and sexuality. McNamara (2006) observes that the representation of women as subject to men desires by the media has served to justify male dominance. A

thorough analysis of current media trends leads him to the realization that media condones men's abuse of women. He reports that cinematic presentations of rapes, especially acquaintance rapes, are not presented as power-motivated violations of women but rather as strictly sexual encounters thus legitimizing violence by making it appear sexy. A case in point is *Fifty Shades of Grey* the story of an innocent young woman who gets exploited by a millionaire. While the man is clearly abusing the girl, the story is made to appear like it is an adventurous sex encounter for the woman. Furthermore, McNamara (2006) observes that male dominance and sexual exploitation of women are themes in virtually all R-and X-rated films, which almost anyone can rent for home viewing. These media images normalize men's violence against women.

The normalization of masculinity in the media has been equally been observed in academy awards. It is not a coincidence that most of the men who have won academy awards played the role of aggressor. A case in point is Leonardo DiCaprio who won an Oscar award for best actor in 2016, following his belligerent role on *The Revenant* (Donnelly, 2016: footnote). Similarly, there is a strong connection between women who have won academy awards for best actresses, and their roles as victims or subject to men's desires. Lupita Nyongó presents a good example as she won an academy award for best supporting actress in 2013 following her role as a victim in the historical drama *12 years a slave*.

Equally interesting, is how men have not been depicted. Jane D. Brown and Kenneth Campbell (1986) provide a comprehensive report on the aforementioned. They report that men are seldom presented doing housework or caring for others. They are often shown to be uninterested and incompetent at homemaking, cooking and childcare. Particularly in advertisements where cooking and cleaning supplies include several

caricatures of men as incompetent buffoons, who are klutzes in the kitchen and no better at taking care of children. (Brown and Campbell, 1986:42) They further note that while children's books have made a limited attempt to depict women engaged in activities outside of the home there has been little parallel effort to show men involved in family and home life. This perpetuates a negative stereotype of men as uncaring and uninvolved in family life.

Significantly, these images have influenced or reinforced our perceptions of both women and men in regard to war. Men being the tough and aggressive gender, have been viewed as the warriors and protectors of the society, while women have been portrayed as passive victims. Furthermore, women have also been associated with pacifism following their roles as nurturers and caretakers. Accordingly, young boys and girls have also been socialized to behave in this way (Pettman, 1996: 115-116). The irony behind this, is the fact that, the same qualities that men are urged to exemplify such as aggression and dominance, are the same qualities that are linked to the abuse of women. While the media has been on the frontline denouncing violence against women, it is also the same institution that perpetuates ideas that have generated a cycle of violence against women through the recreation of limiting perceptions thus influencing generations and generations of young men and women.

2.3.2 Media representation of female perpetrators

Throughout history, women have been generally excluded from any debate on belligerence, and war has been perceived as the prerogative of men (Amone, 2014: 1). The general belief has been that women only get involved in violence as passive victims or as peace builders working tirelessly to rebuild the peace that has been lost. While it is indeed true that women get involved as both victims and peace builders, it should be

understood that women are not a monolithic group hence they experience violence in different ways.

Significantly, there are women who have defied the patrilineality of warfare and taken up arms to fight thus questioning well established concepts of women's natures and experiences in war that the society has created. However, since these women do not fall within the constructs that society has created, they have been perceived as extraordinary and their femininity stripped away from them in order to maintain the 'order' of the society by getting women to behave 'appropriately'. The media therefore has been actively involved in tainting the images of women involved in war as combatants by representing them as evil or mad to highlight the fact that women are not supposed to behave in this way.

This section of the chapter analyses case studies of women who went against the age-old ideas of women's peacefulness by openly participating as combatants or advocating for war. The main focus of this section is to highlight the active role of women as perpetrators in liberation movements on one hand, while analyzing how the media depict them on the other. I employ two case studies to illustrate the aforementioned.

The first case study is that of Countess Constance Markievicz, an Irish royal who rebelled the separation of Northern Ireland by mobilizing and teaching young youths how to fight in order to defeat the British. She also fought side by side with warriors for the liberation of Ireland. The second case study is that of Alice Lakwena a woman who waged a brutal rebellion against the Government of Uganda from 1986 to 1988. These two case studies are interesting because they present women from diverse cultural backgrounds, class and also race thus illustrating the complexity of women's

participation in violence, hence implying the need for further exploration to understand factors that cause vulnerability to violence.

2.3.2.1 Case Study 1: Countess Constance Markievicz of Ireland

http://images.huffingtonpost.com/2016-05-15-1463351972-3000534-Countess_Markievicz-



thumb.jpg

Taking a glance through history, we can clearly observe the association of men with fearless characteristics particularly in social and military affairs. Sexual division of labor has played a great role in defining the boundaries of propriety and congruence (Mazrui, 1977:69-81). Women have been seen to have a permanent place in the kitchen, and the iconic image in war is always a young man armed with a rifle. However, this has not always been the case because women have also been active in armed liberation movements. A case in point is Countess Constance Markievicz, a wealthy noble committed to the struggle of Ireland's independence from British rule.

Countess Constance was the first of the five children of Henry Gore Booth, the fifth Baronet of Sligo. Like any other noble, her childhood and most parts of her life

were remarkable and filled with privileges. She enjoyed painting, drawing and hunting. When she was older, the Countess went to Paris to continue with her studies to fulfill her aspirations of being a painter. In Paris, she met her Husband Countess Casimir Markievicz with whom she got married to and had a child with. In 1903, the countess and her family moved to Dublin where her luxurious life continued.

The unpredictable pattern of her subsequent career began in 1906. Having rented out a small cottage in the Countryside she obtained old copies of a revolutionary publication entitled 'The Peasant and Sinn Fein. 'The contents of this publication related to the push for independence from the British rule. The countess was propelled to action by the revolutionary text. Significantly, within two years, her life became immersed in nationalist Irish politics. She joined Sinn Fein and a woman's movement by the name of Inghinidhe na hEireann (Daughters of Ireland). She also contested the Manchester constituency in 1908 but was defeated. Nevertheless, she was still committed to Ireland's independence.

In 1909, her drive for independence led her to establish Fianna Éireann. Fianna Éireann was a form of boy scouts but with a military input, including the use of firearms. The basic idea behind this group was to train the young youths of Ireland so that they would fight Ireland's fight when the time came. Countess Constance Markievicz, fascinated with the sudden growth of Baden- Powell boy scouts, saw this as a platform for her radical ideas for acquiring independence (Lawlor, 2009). Markievicz also joined the Irish Citizen Army (ICA) a small volunteer force formed in response to the lockout of 1913 to defend the demonstrating workers from the police. These two armed movements took a more radical approach in 1916 in an attempt to abolish the Home rule.

The Home Rule was a period in Irish history when Ireland's autonomy in the within the United Kingdom was limited following a request from the Irish nationalists who were concerned about the prospect of Home Rule being granted as they would be a Protestant minority in an independent Ireland with a Catholic majority. This period was characterized by high levels of migration of English and Scottish protestants to Ireland especially after the imposition of an official English policy of 'plantation' which disempowered Catholics by denying them the right to take leases or own land above a certain value, forbidding higher education and entry to the professions, and imposing oaths of conformity to the state church, the Church of Ireland. Consequently, many Irish nationalists were left dispossessed and poor. Meanwhile, a sectarian conflict between the Irish nationalists and a rival militia known as the Irish volunteers also emerged.

While the conflict was always characterized by protests, in 1916 the Irish volunteers and Irish Citizen Army took a more radical approach and decided to fight against the Irish nationalists in what came to be known as the Easter Rising. One of the key figures involved was Constance Markievicz second in command to the Irish Citizen Army. She commanded an army of men and women in a six day shoot out with the Nationalist Army. However, they lost the fight and were all captured and executed except, Constance and the other women involved whose sentences were reduced to life imprisonment on the basis of being a woman. Constance was released from prison in 1917, along with others involved in the Uprising, as the government in London granted a General Amnesty for those involved in the Easter Uprising.

However, her experiences did nothing to dampen her involvement in politics. In 1918, she was jailed again for her part in anti-conscription activities. While in prison she was elected an MP standing as a Sinn Fein candidate. The Countess refused to take

up her seat as it would have involved swearing an oath of allegiance to the king. In 1919, she was the second woman to become a European cabinet minister as minister for labor in the first Dáil. The countess continued to campaign for the independence of Ireland until her death in 1926.

Notwithstanding her commitment and contribution to the liberation of Ireland, and her fearless characteristics, the countess's reputation has been thwarted and she has been portrayed as an extraordinary woman who never embraced her femininity in many articles and journals. A case in point is in the *Rejected Princesses*, a blog dedicated to celebrating women of history who were too awful and offbeat for animated princess treatment, Constance Markievicz is described as a person lacking maternal characteristics because she did not conform to maternal duties of caregiving and nurturing. The author writes that Constance was not cut out to be neither a wife nor a mother basing on the fact that she chose to fight for her country (Porath, 2012).

Similarly, Steele (2007) observes Markievicz's contemporaries such as William Butler and Sean O'Casey memorably, rebuking her revolutionary spirit by terming it as 'Ignorant good-will', her mind as a bitter, an abstract thing, and her voice as soaring into a still born scream. Additionally, she also observes attempts by biographers and historians to tarnish her image by perpetuating earlier protracted myths. For instance, D.J Smith viewed her as a laughable "lady amusing herself with a talent for scene stealing (Steele, 2007: 106-107). Thus, suggesting that her actions were not really genuine but were rather for her own self-interests which is unwomanly.

Murphy (2016) a History Professor at University College Cork's Emeritus also observes the misguided image of Constance Markievicz in the media particularly in regards to the Easter rising. Analyzing an article by the Irish times of 22 October 2004,

which described Markievicz as “eccentric” and “with a strong sense of her own self-importance”. And basing on W.E Wylie's press statement in regard to Markievicz’s court proceedings following her involvement in the Easter Rising, which he revealed his disgust to Markievicz actions, claiming that she had been preaching to silly boy’s death and glory, die for your country, etc., and yet she was literally crawling. In this regards Murphy (2016) argues that Constance has indeed been the target of systematic misogyny (Irish times May, 2016:4).

2.3.2.2 Case Study 2: Alice Lakwena of Northern Uganda



<http://www.ikuska.com/Africa/Historia/biografias/lakwena.jpg>

Alice Auma was born in 1956 among the Acholi people of northern Uganda into a poor and uneducated family. Her father Severino Lukoya was a catechist for the Church of Uganda in Bungatira while her mother was a housewife. At a very tender age, Alice was married off in Patiko. However, the marriage did not last as the husband separate from her following the realization that she was barren. Alice later got married to Alex Okello but again separated from him after three years of marriage for the same

reason. After two failed marriages, Alice returned to her father's home and engaged in trade in Opit where she earned a living as a market vendor (Nyanzi, 2007:footnote). Prior to the defeat of Tito Okello, Alice Auma was one of many spirit-mediums working near the town of Gulu as a spiritual healer. Arising from the heavy losses of the rebel force, the Uganda People's Defense Army (UPDA) in battle against the National Resistance Army (NRA), Lakwena reportedly received divine instruction to form the Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) to fight evil and end the bloodshed (Amone, 2014:footnote). Evil manifested itself in two ways. Firstly, was as an external enemy represented by the government army, and secondly as an internal enemy in the form of impure soldiers, witches and sorcerers (Behrend, 1999:1).

Lakwena emerged as a significant figure in Northern Uganda war in 1986, after the thirty fifth battalion of the NRA that was sent to Kitgum took this as an opportunity to loot, rape and murder innocent civilians (Gersony, 1997:27). Out of rage, she moved to Kitgum took over 150 soldiers from the (UPDA), purified them of evil in a complex initiation ritual and taught them the "Holy Spirit" tactics a special method of fighting invented by the spirit Lakwena. Afterwards, she started attacking various (NRA) units in Acholiland of which she achieved stunning victories. Lakwena's success electrified not only soldiers from other rebel groups to join her but also by peasants, school and college students, teachers, businessmen, a former government minister and a number of girls and women (Behrend, 1999:2).

While her success attracted many followers to her group, her ideas were also appealing to the population. Lakwena sought to counter the political marginalization of her people. She called for an end to violence anywhere in Uganda, that any area experiencing insecurity, oppression, or exclusion under the NRA would provide willing

recruits. Her ability to also correlate existing problems with issues of spirituality attracted many. Hackett (2001:189) notes that Lakwena creatively linked the healing of an abused natural environment with Christian ideas, thus affirming the credibility of her ideas in relation to spiritual powers.

Significantly, the Holy Spirit numbered to over 50,000 fighters and were also the most successful in fighting the NRA. It was amazing that a woman could lead a rebellion with a following from a wide spectrum of society. Particularly because, in traditional Acholi society, women simply had no role in warfare except feeding and entertaining the warriors. However, Lakwena had not only disregarded this role but was successful at doing it. However, in 1987, the Holy Spirit movement was decisively defeated. She fled to Kenya where she sought political asylum until her death. Despite her death, the war in northern Uganda still continues and her name has been used in its continuity by the subsequent leaders of the movement. However, the movement does not have popularity as it did when Lakwena was its leader.

Alice Auma Lakwena first caught the attention of both local and international media at Corner Kilak after inflicting severe losses on the government army. While many anticipated her praise in the fight against the NRA, an agenda Tito Okello had failed, the press created images and stereotypes that shaped a bad image of the Holy Spirit movement. Lakwena was designated as a rebel or voodoo priest, a witch and a former prostitute (Behrend 1999:2-3). For example; Catherine Bond an academic and journalist concluded that Lakwena was a voodoo priestess and a former prostitute. Also in *New Vision*, a Ugandan newspaper loyal to the government, Lakwena was called a witch doctor (21st March 1987) and her movement depicted as a bizarre, suicidal enterprise which hordes armed with stones and sticks were conducting a senseless

struggle. The newspaper read; ‘The extraordinary casualties rate suffered by the rebels is largely explained by their continuing reliance on witchcraft as a means of primitive mobilization.’ This news was followed by a series of reports portraying Lakwena as an extraordinary woman. A case in point was a report on the 3rd of April by the *New Vision* Newspaper which described in detail the event of Lakwena murdering a child and feeding its liver to the soldiers.

Lakwena has also been given the stereotypical image of a victim and all agency as a perpetrator taken away from her. With reference to the Late Alice Auma and her movement, Yoweri Museveni talks of Alice being a victim of the predecessors of Uganda People’s Defense Army (UPDA), and of primitive and primordial sentiments and perverted local religious traditions. He says that: “The poor girl Lakwena was being manipulated by criminals” (Museveni and others, 1997:116). These case studies make Lakwena the most interesting case study when researching women involvement in violence. While it is indeed clear she wanted to overthrow the government using her own strategies which was relevantly distinct, her activities were relegated to fit into generally accepted stereotypes. First and foremost, her image as a prostitute shows that she is indeed not an ideal woman in the society. Secondly, she is also depicted as a prophetess suggesting that she is not normal. Finally, her depiction as a victim is indeed what is acceptable in the society and help to explain her involvement in the violence.

2.3.3 Romanization of the role of women as peace builders

Although there is a growing body of feminist discourses moving away from the one-dimensional ideology of the women and peace hypothesis, the media has continuously transmitted ideas associating women to pacifism thus reinforcing these

notions even more. The latter was catalyzed by the official acknowledgement of the role of women as key stakeholders in the peace building process in 2000, through the adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security. The resolution reaffirmed the importance of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and urged all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations Peace and Security efforts. This progression not only led to a considerable increase in the number of women's peace activist organizations at grassroots, regional, national and international level (El-Bushra, 2007:137) but also led to an increased focus on the role of women as peace builders in a bid to move beyond the rhetoric and get women into peace negotiation tables. Significantly, there were increased texts and representations of women as peace builders in the media and literary writings.

While this advancement was internationally applauded and seen as a milestone in women's involvement in peace building, it should be noted that, its inception was guided by problematic constructions that emphasized on the differences between men and women (Charlesworth, 2008:350). The basic idea behind it was that women were inherently more peaceful than men. Notwithstanding the fact that empirical testing has repeatedly failed to confirm the ideas of women inherent peacefulness, the media and mainstream discourses have constantly romanticized women's roles and generally identified women as peace builders regardless of their experiences in violent conflict. Consequently, women's roles as perpetrators have been neglected thus increasing their susceptibility of engagement into violent conflict.

Whereas women's roles as peace builders has been hailed and overrepresented by the media, it is important to note that during war, women, particularly in African

countries are targets to warring factions who dehumanize them through sexual abuse to either humiliate their enemies or to destroy their enemies cultural and social structures (Turshen and Twagiramariya, 1998). In view of this, it is quite difficult for women to emerge as peace builders in an environment which is dangerous for them without assistance from other like-minded stakeholders particularly men. However, women have always been represented as entities that have overcome all these challenges without assistance in their campaigns for peace.

Cockburn (2009) analyzing women's role as peace builders argues that women's representations in the media are from what exists in reality. She argues that although women are many, during war they seldom outweigh men. In addition, she also notes that Therefore, for successful peace building, they need help from all available entities including men. Amy Swerdlow (2012) adds on to the debate arguing that women's peace activism is dependent on politics- a male dominated arena. In other words, Women peace activism can only be possible or can flourish when key political figures allow for it to happen. Although women are perceived to be free from political influence in their peace activism, it should be noted that wars are highly politicized and therefore if key players in the war do not want peace, then women would not be provided an avenue to campaign for peace. In Spite of the aforementioned factors influencing women's roles in peace building, the media continuously represents peace building exclusively as a women's affair thus overstating their presence.

While it can be argued that these representations serve to enhance the participation and inclusion of women in peace building processes, it should be noted that the acknowledgement and inclusion of women in peace building processes is not a milestone in sustainable conflict resolution but rather expanding the different

experiences of women into peacemaking is. (Mazurana and Mckay 1999). In more specific terms, acknowledging that women are peace builders and enhancing their participation is not a guarantee to achieving peace. In Fact, it might threaten peace. Bearing in mind that women are not a monolithic group, the assumptions that they are primarily peace builders, might and has served to exclude them in pre and post conflict initiatives such as rehabilitation and disarmament of ex-fighters thus increasing women's vulnerability to violent conflict which in turn continues the cycle of violence. In light of the aforementioned, there is need to move beyond the women and peace hypothesis and provide accurate accounts highlighting the roles played the roles of different stakeholders during wars rather than romanticizing the role of women for the sake of recognition.

2.4 Conclusion

In a nutshell, this chapter presented an overview of why women are predominantly perceived as peace builders and not perpetrators of violent conflict. It explored the perpetrator concept and the concept of materialism which remain strong conceptual frameworks that enable women's groups to politically mobilize for peace from antiquity to today. Also, it analyzed the representations of women as peace builders in the media. The theoretical position taken in this chapter of the thesis is that, the notion of women being primarily peace builders is a social construction based on stereotypes associating women to peacefulness, as such there is need to move beyond these ideas if we hope to achieve sustainable peace. While it has been argued that depiction of women as peace builders serves as a milestone to their acknowledgement in peace building and peace negotiation tables, this chapter argues that the acknowledgement of women as peace builders is not key in the achievement of

sustainable peace but rather expanding the different experiences of women into peace building.

As noted in the chapter, the current conceptualization of the perpetrator is problematic hence it suggests a need for reconceptualization. It argues that while the current conceptualization defines the perpetrator as an aggressive individual, social constructs of women's pacifism and men's aggressiveness have been reinforced thus men have been perceived as perpetrators. Meanwhile, women have been excluded from any debates of belligerence. With this guiding our understanding of the perpetrator concept, there has been a limited focus in exploring factors that influence individuals into engaging in violent conflict. Perhaps, it is due to the fact that men have always been perceived as aggressors therefore, their involvement in violence reaffirm their behaviors hence no need to study. Although there is a growing field of study dedicated to exploring factors influencing individuals into violent conflict, it can be argued that the increased involvement of women in violence particularly in Middle East and Northern Africa and also other parts of Africa as well such as Rwanda and Uganda are among the factors facilitating these developments. However, the field faces a lot of challenges one of which includes social constructions ascribed to both men and women in regard to the involvement of war.

The chapter also explored the concept of materialism which has not only justified women peaceful natures through ethics of care ascribed to motherhood, but has also served to mobilize women into peace activism. This section acknowledges that although materialism was the only way women would mobilize and campaign for peace in their early years of peace activism due to the political repressive climate, there is need to go beyond ideas associating motherhood to peace. Firstly, because as Cockburn

(2009) notes, there are too many women soldiers, abusive mothers and belligerent political leaders to think that motherhood makes us peaceful. Furthermore, she adds that she observed very few women while camping outside military bases, lobbying politicians or demonstrating for peace by invoking women's life giving natures. Secondly, if indeed motherhood is a guarantee to one being peaceful then not only women are peaceful. To be more specific, the definitions of motherhood have changed overtime due to technological and legal advancements, as a result men have also been endowed with the responsibility of motherhood. In this regards, if motherhood indeed makes one peaceful, then it is not exclusively a women's domain.

The final section of this chapter analyzed media representations of women as peace builders. It argues that although women have showcased their prowess in peace building, their roles have been romanticized for the purpose of increased acknowledgement and participation in official peace negotiation deals. The adoption of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security escalated their overrepresentation. In light of the fact that the resolution reaffirmed the importance of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and urged all actors to increase the participation of women and incorporate gender perspectives in all United Nations Peace and Security efforts, it was expected that responsible actors would move beyond this rhetoric and increase women's participation in peace negotiation tables.

Consequently, there were increased texts and representations of women as peace builders in the media and literary writings. While most of these accounts might be indeed true, it should be noted that while women have been acknowledged as victims, particularly in African communities where society's honor is tied to women's sexuality

and womanhood, they remain targets to warring factions who dehumanize them particularly through sexual violence either to dishonor their enemies, or to destroy their enemies cultural and social structures. In view of this, it is quite difficult for women to emerge as peace builders in an environment which is dangerous for them without assistance from other like-minded stakeholders particularly men. However, women have always been represented as entities that have overcome all these challenges without assistance in their campaigns for peace.

Despite the fact that it has been acknowledged globally that peace building is only possible if all the stakeholders are included, inclusions basing on stereotypical assumptions and conceptualizations that have served to mobilize women into peace building are not a milestone towards achieving sustainable peace. It should be noted that women are not a monolithic group therefore while some of them may have unique perspectives that would enhance peace building-, others are susceptible to violence. Thus, acknowledgement of women as peace builders should not be guided by social constructions that have served as justifications to wars over the years.

Being aware of criticisms that would suggest it is better for women to embrace social constructions of being peaceful rather than that of victims, the next chapter explores the effects of viewing women as primarily peace builders.

CHAPTER THREE: THE IMPACT OF VIEWING WOMEN AS PREDOMINANTLY PEACEBUILDERS

3.0 Introduction

“In war torn societies, women often keep societies going... We must ensure that women are enabled to play a full part in peace negotiations, in peace processes, in peace missions.”

Kofi Annan, Former United Nations Secretary General

An increased focus in the plight of women during and in post conflict situations has rendered the participation of women at peace building efforts a *sine qua non* requirement. This has been accompanied by the need for global acknowledgement of women as peace builders to highlight that all women have a special interest and prowess in peace building. The main focus has been on what women can do for peace. Meanwhile, the question of what peace can actually do for women has completely been ignored. Perhaps, this might be due to the assumption that, since women are the most suffering part of the population during and after conflicts, all they need is to be free from sexual abuse and death of their loved ones. However, post conflict situations have always proved this fact wrong, particularly because even after conflict and in conflict free regions the same situations continue to flourish.

Additionally, the increasing realization of what “peace” really entails resulting to a shift of focus from negative to positive peace has also led to the acknowledgement that a focus on what women can do for peace is not really key for the realization of sustainable peace. Thus, there is need to move beyond the vision of women's peace

building during war and focus on how their activities during war can contribute to their emancipation in post conflict situations.

Nevertheless, it is not an easy task particularly due to the fact that campaigns for women's involvement in peace building at international, national, local and grassroots levels have focused on women as exclusively peace builders and emphasized on how increased participation of women in peace building is a step towards sustainable peace. Furthermore, mainstream ideas guided by ideas of women's inherent peacefulness have been widely accepted. In view of this, women continue working for peace while peace on the other hand works for them by reducing their vulnerability to gendered impacts of war but not eliminating them completely.

While there is a growing realization that a predominant focus on women as peace builders is problematic, its impacts have not been fully explored hence there has been limited focus on this topic. Additionally, the dire need for the reconstruction of women from victims to peace builders has blinded women into accepting their assigned roles. The irony in this is that, while women especially feminists campaign for the reconstruction of women from victims to peace builders, their role as peace builders also serves for the justification wars hence although it seems like a more active and attractive role for women, its impacts like that of the construction of women as victims remains the same.

The one question that baffles my mind is why there is so much need for women to be acknowledged solely as peace builders? Why can't all their experiences be brought to the table, as victims, peace builders and also as perpetrators because that way they have diverse experiences that can be indeed useful and key for the achievement of sustainable peace. To be more precise, while as peace builders they may bring insights

on how to achieve peace in war torn societies, as perpetrators in the peace building table they are able to influence policies and address concerns that led to the violence in the first place. That is, perpetrators at all levels unlike peace builders and victims often know what they are fighting for hence their knowledge might provide a good insight in the prevention of violence. Finally, as victims who have felt the full impact of war, their presence in the peace table shows their commitment to achieve peace. Moreover, men have justified their continued dominance in the peace building tables by acknowledging that they are indeed the aggressors, so what is wrong with women acknowledging the same? In Fact, this should give them an edge over men, as it shows the diversity in experiences hence more qualification.

However, women's roles have been defined for them. Although it might be argued that early women's peace activism movements had a great role in shaping these ideas, it should be noted that history was written by the victors hence they defined the roles they considered appropriate for each gender, In this regards, while women's roles in the perpetration of violence was made largely invisible, their roles as peace builders stood out because this was the role that was thought best befitting them. On the other hand, women have not only accepted but embraced this role hence they have not really explored what they really have as peace builders but rather they have reaffirmed their assigned roles and found justifications for their participation in these roles without really analyzing the impacts on their emancipation.

To this end, this chapter is aimed at assessing the impacts of an exclusive focus on women as peace builders. The chapter utilized case studies to support the issues raised.

3.1 The effect of the women and peace hypothesis on the justice system

Following illustrations from previous chapters, it is undeniable that women are indeed perpetrators of violent conflict. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, a very small percentage have been convicted by international criminal courts and tribunals. While over 280 men have been convicted by international criminal courts and tribunals, only two women have been convicted. These include; Biljana Plavsic a Serbian politician who pleaded guilty and was convicted for persecution as a crime against humanity by the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) on 27 February 2003. And Pauline Nyiramasuhuko who was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) On 24 June 2011 for her leading role in the genocide and commission of widespread rape in Butare. Making her She the first woman ever to be convicted by an international criminal court or tribunal for genocide and sexual violence. This raises a number of questions. First, is why there are so many male perpetrators and very few female perpetrators being convicted? Second, in consideration of the fact that both women convicted were political leaders, is the question as to whether only women in politics or power have capability of perpetuating international crimes.

While one of the arguments put forward to explain why there are more males than female being convicted is the fact that, women are predominantly victims of violence hence hardly participate in violence, empirical evidence has continuously shown that there are higher chances of a victim transitioning into a perpetrator. A case in point is Dominic Ongwen one of the top commanders in the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). While it is indeed clear that he was a victim of Joseph Kony's violence who later

transitioned into a perpetrator, there are demands that he should face the full wrath of the law for his actions in the International criminal court of law. Benjamin Gumpert a prosecutor at the Hague based International Criminal Court argued that; *“The tragedy of this case is the fact that Dominic Ongwen was a perpetrator but also a victim, But this is no reason to expect that crimes can be committed with impunity”* (The Guardian, 2016).

In view of this, one cannot help but wonder whether courts are more lenient on women Particularly because most women who are forced into being wives to the fighters, often embrace this role and even go an extra mile of actually perpetrating violence alongside their husbands yet none of them has been convicted alongside their husbands.

Although many may dismiss these claims arguing that many ‘ordinary’ women play minor roles in the perpetration of violence thus explaining the invisibility of women in International tribunals. Although it is indeed true that very few women in comparison to men play important roles in violence, however, it should be noted that just as women have networks in peace building, they can also mobilize and create networks for the perpetration of violence. In this regards, it can be argued that women are just as lethal as men in the perpetration of violence. Participation of women in the Rwandan Genocide presents a good case study of this phenomenon.

On the question as to whether only women in politics or in power possess the capability of perpetuating international crimes, an analysis of the Rwandan Genocide leads me to the conclusion that this assumption is indeed not true. Particularly because some women can gain power by the mere fact that their husbands are head of state. Although others do not interfere with their husbands jobs, some of them do and are

known for influencing their husbands' decisions. A prominent example is Mira Markovic, the widow of former Yugoslav and Serbian President, who is said to have been the driving force behind her husband. She spurred him on to gain more and more power at all costs.

On the other hand, there is often underrepresentation of women involved in violence. For example, while Pauline Nyiramasuhuko was the only one convicted for her leading role in the Rwandan Genocide, there were many other women who played a leading role that deserved conviction in the international court. A case in point is Agathe Kanziga, the widow of President Juvénal Habyarimana- who provided funding to a radio station as well as an extremist newspaper infamous for instigating people to commit violence (*The New Yorker*, 2010). In addition, a report from African Rights (1995) also confirmed that women participated in indoctrination meetings and as such participated in the preparation of genocide. Furthermore, the report concluded that some of the most cruel local government officials who organized the killings; especially in Kigali, were women (African Rights, 1995: 15).

In this regards, this section of the thesis argues that there is reluctance by the international courts and tribunals in convicting women. Also, it argues that gender biased constructions of women being predominantly peace builders accounts not only for the invisibility of women in international, national and local courts and tribunals, but is also the cause for lenient judgments on women.

Although women have made great strides in achieving gender equity, gender stereotypes remain pervasive. While in most cases they have impacted women negatively, sometimes, these stereotypes have benefited women particularly in the area of criminal justice. Doerner and Demuth (2014:250) in an attempt to explore whether

legal and extralegal factors have the same impact for male and female defendants, conclude that female defendants generally receive more lenient sentence outcomes than their male counterparts. Additionally, while legal factors account for a large portion of the gender differences, even after controlling legal characteristics, a substantial gap in sentencing outcomes remains. Also, despite their influence on sentencing outcomes in some instances, extralegal characteristics do not help to close the gender gap (Doerner and Demuth, 2014: 253-255).

On the other hand, Albonetti (1991) in an attempt to explain Judicial discretion observes that judges attempt to manage uncertainty in decision making by developing what is referred to as “patterned responses”. That is the product of an attribution process involving assessments of the offender's likelihood of committing crime (Albonetti, 1991: 248). While she suggests this is a great way of sentencing, she argues that this process is highly reliant on stereotypes linked to the likelihood of recidivism (Albonetti 1991: 249-252). In view of this, women are favored as they were highly unlikely to be sent to prison.

Goulette and others (2015:415) add to the debate by arguing that while court proceedings are indeed more lenient to women, they argue that judges might treat female defendants even more leniently when they conform to the traditional gender roles of housewife and mother. Furthermore, they also assess impacts of the evil woman hypothesis by examining sentencing discrepancies between male and female sex offenders. Here they conclude that, while the evil woman hypothesis would assume that women are sentenced more harshly, men still receive longer and harsher sentences than women. However, Goulette and her colleagues observe that support for the “evil woman” theory, which suggests chivalry is reserved for certain groups of women who

appear to be docile and in need of protection. In this regards, they conclude that judges treat female defendants more harshly if they believe it is in the defendant's best interest or if the tougher sentence will serve to protect the women in the future (Goulette and others, 2015: 420).

Shifting from debates on how the gender of the offender influences sentencing outcomes, Curry and others (2004) investigate whether the gender of the victim also influences sentencing outcomes. Using data for offenders convicted of three violent crimes in the seven largest metro counties in Texas in 1991, the authors find evidence that offenders who victimized females received substantially longer sentences than offenders who victimized males (Curry and others, 2004: 319-323). Results also show that, victim gender effects on sentence length are conditioned by offender gender, such that, male offenders who victimize females received the longest sentence of any other victim gender/offender gender combination (Curry and others, 2004: 324).

Based on the above illustrations, it is indeed clear that the sex of the offender and the victim are significant determinants of the length and type of the sentence imposed. While this discrimination on the basis of sex may be seen to work in favor of females, it should be noted that most of the time it actually works against them. To be more precise, although the sentence is more lenient than the one imposed on males, the misbegotten motive is chivalry or special protectiveness (Armstrong, 1977: 118). Additionally, it should be noted that this view has accounted for the regeneration of violence. In more specific terms, while it is increasingly clear that women are treated more leniently by conforming to their traditional gender roles of housewife and mother, many uphold this role and get less harsh sentences. Meanwhile, they do not face full wrath of the law for their actions and “justice” may not serve the intended purpose. On

the other hand, injustice is done to the victim thus exposing their susceptibility to violence. In light of this, there is need to go beyond the women and peace dichotomy and encourage an equal law for both men and women.

3.2 The impact of the concept of women as peace builders on women's emancipation

Despite the fact that gender roles and gender norms have increasingly been acknowledged as one of the root causes of inequality against women (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2017: goal 5), in most societies, gender roles and norms are still perceived very important hence remain largely prevalent. Following this realization, the international community has committed itself to empowering women so as to obtain an equal status with men in all aspects. Whereas this seems like a good initiative, the irony behind it is that, the empowerment of women, particularly as peace builders, in an attempt to increase their participation in peace building processes, is based on gender roles of women being mothers, nurturers and carers of the community who are more inclined to peace in comparison to men. In this regards, the empowerment and campaigns for increased participation of women in peace building processes actually strengthens gender roles. While it may be argued that these ideas works for the emancipation of women hence are credible, this exploratory section of the chapter analyses whether this hypothesis is indeed true. It argues that the a predominant focus on women as peace builders strengthens gender roles which in turn lead to the exclusion of women negotiation tables, political positions, military positions and also from the benefits of post integration programs such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs.

Notwithstanding massive campaigns to get women into peace building tables and the official acknowledgement of their roles as peace builders, women's participation in official peace negotiation deals is still very marginal. This raises the question why is there a reluctance of getting women into peace building tables? Are they not worthy enough to be in peace building tables? While it may be argued that the process of inclusion is gradual, an analysis of the stakeholders involved in peace negotiation deals leads me to the conclusion that their roles as peace builders attributes to their exclusion in peace negotiation deals.

Peace negotiation deals are dominated by warring factions. Mostly men, who put their lives on the line to "protect" and fight for the improvement of their communities. Since women have completely sidelined themselves from the idea of perpetration, they have reinforced the ideas that they are indeed the protected (anti militarists) as a result they continue to be sidelined from militaristic agendas such as negotiations for peace. Furthermore, as peace builders during war, they have also reaffirmed their roles as mothers, nurturers and carers, in this regards, their place has been confined to the home and not in peace negotiation deals which are considered 'male matters.'

Additionally, in view of the fact that to most warring factions, sometimes war is safer than peace, (*James Schear's, United Nations Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Affairs*). The one sided idea of women being predominantly peace builders undermines their presence in the peace building table. In other words, to warring factions war is always a safer bet unless you are on the losing end; it generates profit and even provides employment. Peace on the other hand, is a leap into the unknown; it is full of promises that can come undone. In this regards, effective negotiators are considered to be those who understand the art of war making

and can actually convince warring factions that peace can benefit them. In consideration of the fact that women are peace builders, they are assumed to lack expertise required in this field thus justifying their exclusion from peace building tables.

Similarly, women have also been excluded from political and military positions. Throughout history, men have dominated both in politics and military. This is due to the fact that ideas of leadership and that of a good warrior were based on characteristics that related with masculinity. However, many women have showcased their prowess in the battlefield and in leadership thus rendering these ideas untrue. Furthermore, social and political revolutions have also given women opportunities to showcase their skills in the field of which they have proven as good as if not better than men. Nonetheless, women continue to be excluded from these fields. While there are many other factors contributing to this phenomenon such as economic factors, strengthened gender roles reaffirming women as peace builders have also played a big role in the exclusion.

Galtung (1969) claims that wars fought today are as a result of structural and cultural violence, therefore, the involvement of women as exclusively peace builders may be a sign that they are contented with the existing conditions. That is why, in post-war situations they are not considered in positions of power. In other words, peace activism during the war may be interpreted as a sign of contention with previously existing conditions; therefore in post-conflict situations they are excluded from political positions which are normally established to reconcile warring factions. Furthermore, throughout history, those who have risen to power after a war, are normally those involved in the war either directly or indirectly.

Additionally, while there is increasing realization that leadership/social power is based on social skills as opposed to physical strength (Yuval, 2012). Thus, meaning that

women have an advantage over men, the fact that women are continuously socialized into being peaceful excludes them from political positions. In reference to Machiavelli's most famous work, *The Prince* (1513) about the virtues of a good leader, Machiavelli suggests that while a good leader should be merciful, peaceful, generous, and tolerant; they should also possess a "criminal virtue" necessary for the security of that state. He goes on to provide a criteria for what constitutes a criminal virtue: It must be very necessary for the security of the state, it must be done swiftly and it should not be repeated too often, lest a reputation for mindless brutality builds up. In this regards, women have all the possibilities of being leaders however, that fact that they have chosen to sideline themselves completely from the idea of perpetration of violence renders them incompetent when it comes to the protection of the state hence justifying their exclusion in political positions.

On the other hand, women have also been excluded and have also excluded themselves from military positions due to strengthened stereotypes. More precisely, while ideas of women's inherent peacefulness are widespread and have been affirmed, girls have been socialized into being peaceful, as a result, they have distanced themselves from militaristic tendencies. Degroot (2000) argues that although feminists have continuously challenged governments and military establishments for more participation of women in areas of combat, very few women actually aspire to be involved in this field. Accordingly, real wars have been fought by proxies-women who fight because they are attracted to the thrill of war. These women are considered freakish and have lost their most admired aspects of femininity.

Although this claim might be dismissed with the argument that more and more women are actually enrolling in the army, Creveld (2000:431-432) observes that there is

more and more enrollment of women into the army because the enemy has disappeared.)Therefore, women enroll into the army hoping they do not have to fight. In support of Creveld's (2000) claims, Baaz and Stern (2011) observe that the transformation of many advanced armies from making wars to peacekeeping and humanitarian interventions. They conclude that, the aforementioned has triggered focus on the need for women in peacekeeping operations. Since women are assumed to be ethically regulating presences who extend their feminine traits to the men in their proximity (Baaz and Stern, 2011:572).

Likewise, increased campaigns portraying women as peace builders has also led to the exclusion of women from military positions. As mentioned earlier, within the military being a good soldier is often linked to masculinity, therefore many militaries that intend to adequately defend its boundaries have embraced the ideal of a male identity (McKay and Mazurana, 2004:14). In this regards, despite the great strides made in trying to break stereotypes, an exclusive focus on women as peace builders strengthens notions of men being militarists and women anti militarists, thus justifying the exclusion of women from the military.

An exclusive focus on women as peace builders has also bled into the policy world where women have been excluded from the benefits of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs. DDR is a very difficult process particularly because after violence everyone is a target is and should be considered target for successive peace building. However, the acknowledgement of women as peace builders have made the process easier and cheaper. That is, by confining to their roles as peace builders, men have been identified as the targets of DDR and have enjoyed its benefits.

Consequently, a large number of female ex-combatants remain highly susceptible to engaging in violence. Although it may be argued that there is only a small number of female ex-combatants since only a few women engage in combat, hence no impact will be felt from their exclusion, it should be noted that not only combatants are susceptible to violence, but also young girls and women who were abducted as forced wives to ex-combatants. Moreover, de Watteville (2002:1) observes that though few in number, female ex-combatants are generally more vulnerable than male ex-combatants. In view of this, it can be argued that an exclusive focus on women as peace builders accounts for failed peace initiatives.

3.3 The impacts of an exclusive focus on women as peace builders on war

As mentioned earlier, in ancient history, war was a male domain, fought between men in different armies and it was confined to the battlefield. However, the end of the Cold War unleashed a new spate of wars characterized by internal conflicts as opposed to international conflicts and many different militarized units were involved. Following the high degree of complexity in these wars, there were no defined battlefronts hence the war extended to the home front resulting to many civilians (Kaldor 2006). In acknowledgment of the widespread myth that wars were fought to protect women and children, scholars such as Dunne and others (2007:193) state that women and children were categorized as the civilians. This brought an increased focus on the plight of women, thus, evoking an assumption that women were predominantly victims while men were aggressors. Along with this notion, was the stereotyped portrayal of women as peaceful beings and men as hostile creatures. While these ideas are still widespread

and have been reaffirmed by the official acknowledgement of women as peace builders, they are still very problematic and have had an impact on the targets in the new wars.

The world today faces the worst humanitarian crisis since the end of the Second World War (*The Guardian*, 2017). With East Africa threatening to close the largest refugee camp in the Region, Syria producing the highest number of refugees since the Rwandan genocide and perhaps the second world war (*UN, SBS News online: July 17th 2013*) and wars at The Congo, South Sudan, Somalia and the Middle East, North Africa and other places still at large, there are far too many deaths involved yet the virulence of the wars intensifies.

While the media has represented women exclusively as victims and peace builders, or victims transitioning into peace builders (Ahmed Ali, 2007) there is no doubt that men are indeed the aggressors. In view of this, there is a tendency to consider all males even unarmed ones as combatants (Elshtain, 1998:455). Thus, making them legitimate targets of war. A case in point is the Wagalla massacre in Kenya where more than 5,000 Somali men were brutally murdered by the Kenyan soldiers who were deployed in the region to maintain peace. Similarly, in the war against terrorism, or even local police raids, many innocent boys and men are shot dead without confirming if they are a threat. The incident in the US where police raided the wrong house and killed an innocent man presents a good example (USA today Network, 2017).

Jones (2009) concludes that while it is absolutely true that women also experience victimization during war, the differing perceptions of men and women result in differences of casualties. He further claims that the most vulnerable and consistently targeted population group, throughout time and around the world today, is non-

combatant men of battle age, roughly around fifteen to fifty-five years old (Jones, 2009: 153).

On the other hand, while men have increasingly become targets to both military and militia groups, women have become key agents in the perpetration of violence. To be more specific, the fact that women are considered as peace builders makes them useful agents as they can disguise themselves through check points or hiding ammunitions without being suspected. Accordingly, women are targets of recruitment particularly to militia groups thus explaining the increased involvement of women in terrorist activities. However, this is not a new phenomenon; Ward (1989) observes that in the conflict in Northern Ireland, it was only during the time when the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was experiencing troubles that women were allowed into it as volunteers. She adds that this shift came about as a result of both women demanding this change and men recognizing need to have some military trained women. A women's auxiliary organization was setup thereof, to support and fundraise, provide first aid and hide weapons for the IRA (Ward, 1989:259).

This trend has equally been observed in today's conflicts. On 10th October 2015, the village of Baga Sola in Chad was hit by a terror attack, while terror attacks are not new, this one was not notable for its severity but for its perpetrators: One male, two females and two child bombers (BBC News, 2015). Similarly, there are increased incidences of female suiciders blowing themselves up while carrying babies to avoid detection. On 13th January 2017, two female suicide bombers carried out an attack at a market in Madagali, in Nigeria with babies strapped to their backs. According to BBC, the women passed a vigilante checkpoint and were mistaken for civilians because they were carrying infants furthermore; two other male attackers who were not carrying

babies were stopped at the checkpoint (BBC News, 2017). This suggests that women emblematic of the peace building role are exempted from the idea of perpetration thus putting even children at risk.

3.4 Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, the main aim of this chapter was to explore the extent to which a predominant focus on women as peace builders has impacted the realization of sustainable peace. This exploratory chapter thereof analyzed the effects of assumptions of women inherent peacefulness on the justice system, war and the emancipation of women. An in-depth analysis of the aforementioned leads to the conclusion that an exclusive focus on women as peace builders is not only an obstacle to sustainable peace but also to the emancipation of women. It therefore proposes a need for women to move beyond these ideas and acknowledge their diverse roles during conflict.

Assessing the impacts of these assumptions on the justice system, this section of the chapter argued that while ideas of women's inherent peacefulness have benefited women in the area of criminal justice where they receive more lenient sentences, particularly if they conform to their traditional roles as mothers, these roles have promoted ideas have actually worked against women. In other words, although the sentences imposed on women are more lenient than the one imposed on males, the misbegotten motive is chivalry or special protectiveness (Armstrong, 1977:118).

Also, gender biased judgments have accounted for the regeneration of violence. In more specific terms, while it is increasingly clear that women are treated more leniently by conforming to their traditional gender roles of housewife and mother, many uphold this role and get lenient sentences. Meanwhile, they do not face the full wrath of the law for their actions. In view of this, "justice" may not serve the intended purpose.

On the other hand, injustice is done to the victim thus exposing their susceptibility to violence. In light of this, there is need to go beyond the women and peace dichotomy and encourage an equal law for both men and women.

In addition, these judgments have also prevented further exploration of factors that drive women into violence thus threatening peace in the community. The argument presented here is that, the under-representation of women in International Criminal Courts and Tribunals have not sparked interest for investigation of factors that drive women into violence. While ideas of women's inherent peacefulness have been transmitted into criminal justice, women have been largely invisible in International Criminal Courts and tribunals. While over 280 men have been prosecuted in International Criminal Courts and Tribunals, only two women have been prosecuted. This has reinforced ideas of the 'evil' or 'extraordinary' woman. Since these women often lack in feminine characteristics then, it is assumed that factors that influence men into violence apply to them as well. Moreover, the fact that they are in political positions reinforce these ideas.

The chapter also addressed the impacts of an exclusive focus on women as peace builders on war, and particularly on how it shifted targets of war and recruitment. In other words, widespread ideas of women as peace builders has made men legitimate targets of war on one hand, and made women targets of recruitment on the other. It argues that while the media has focused exclusively on women as peace builders, or victims transitioning into peace builders, (Ahmed Ali, 2007), where men have been categorized as the aggressors. In this regard, there is a tendency to consider males even the unarmed ones as aggressors. Men have therefore been targeted by militaries and militia groups with the intention of killing them to eliminate threat.

While men have increasingly become targets to both military and militia groups, women have become key agents in the perpetration of violence. To be more specific, since women are considered to be peaceful, they can go through checkpoints without arousing suspicion of any kind, therefore, warring factions utilize them in the concealment of arms, and even combat. Consequently, women have become more vulnerable to recruitment either willingly or through abduction. Thus explaining the increased involvement of women in terrorist groups where there is an increasing trend of women blowing themselves up while carrying babies to avoid detection. A case in point is the terror attack at a market in Madali, Nigeria where two female suicide bombers blew themselves up while carrying babies. According to BBC, the women passed the checkpoint and were mistaken for civilians because they were carrying babies. Two others, who were not carrying babies, were stopped at the checkpoint (BBC News, 2017). This suggests that women emblematic of the peace building role are exempted from the idea of perpetration thus putting even children at risk.

Finally, the chapter analyses how this one sided view on women has impacted their emancipation. It analyses women's participation in peace negotiation tables, military and post-conflict initiatives and argues that the predominant view of women as peace builders has led to their exclusion in these arenas. Bearing in mind that their inclusion in these fields will not only empower them but also provide them with an opportunity to address their needs, this section argued that mainstream ideas of women's inherent peacefulness are an obstacle to women's emancipation. The irony presented here is that while these ideas were actually meant to enhance participation of women into these arenas, they have actually excluded them thus suggesting that peace building requires more skills than just acknowledgement of women as peace builders.

While it is obvious characteristics that cuts across in almost all these fields are power and aggression, the fact that women confine themselves to their peaceful natures puts them at a disadvantage. That is, anything that involves power often requires a level of aggression or some skills in aggression by women sidelining themselves completely from aggression they are completely disadvantaged. For example, peace negotiation tables are dominated by warring factions, that is, individuals who have fought or supported wars, in this regards they have experienced the benefits of war hence war is a safer bet for them than peace which is full of promises, and involves loss of power. In this regards, those involved in peace negotiation skills must not only be experienced in peace building but should also understand the art of making war so that they can skillfully negotiate deals that can actually sustain peace. The fact that women have sidelined themselves completely from the idea of perpetration, they are considered to lack the skills necessary for negotiations.

Similarly, leadership and military positions also require some level or skills in aggression. In reference to Machiavelli's works on the Prince, Machiavelli suggests that a good leader should not only be merciful, peaceful, generous, and tolerant but they should also possess a "criminal virtue" necessary for the security of that state. By confining to their role as peace builders, women possess most of the qualities of good leader, however, the fact that they sideline themselves completely from the idea of perpetration, thus suggesting that even when the state is put at risk they cannot protect it by employing some level of violence to protect the people excludes them from leadership.

Furthermore, while it is increasingly clear that wars fought today are as a result of structural and cultural violence, women peace activism during war and denying any

involvement in perpetration of violence can be interpreted as being contented with previous existing conditions. Therefore, they are excluded in post-war situations they are not considered in positions of power as they did not participate in the struggle. Moreover, throughout history, those who have risen to power after a war are normally those involved in the war either directly or indirectly.

Military on the other hand, although not related to power, is related to aggression. Since women choose peace, they are considered unnecessary in the military which is an aggressive field. Additionally, the fact that women are socialized to be peaceful makes them repellent to militaristic tendencies. In other words, while the military has been open to women as a result of political and social revolutions, very few women actually aspire to be involved in this field. Accordingly, real wars have been fought by proxies- women who fight because they are attracted to the thrill of war. These women are considered freakish and have lost their most admired aspects of femininity (Degroot, 2000: 74).

On the exclusion of women from the benefits of post- conflict initiatives, this section argued that widespread ideas have also been transmitted into the policy world where women have been excluded from Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs. DDR is considered a difficult process particularly because, after conflict the whole community is a target of the process. However, due to lack of funds, implementers often have to identify targets to work with due to financial constraints. Since women have continuously reaffirmed their peace building roles, they have been considered less vulnerable targets, consequently, men have enjoyed all the benefits particularly economic assistance given to. In light of the fact that increased burdens are often placed on women after war since they are often the food providers,

women continue suffering. Furthermore, females who were abducted and wives to ex-combatants are also left highly susceptible to violence thus threatening sustainable development.

In light of these facts, it is indeed clear that ideas of women's inherent peacefulness have done more harm than good. In these regards, there is need to go beyond these ideas and embrace the diverse experiences and roles that women play during armed conflict. While it is indeed clear that these ideas were useful for women's emancipation in a politically regressive climate, social and political revolutions have provided women an opportunity to become leaders. For instance while in the past, leadership was dependent on physical attributes that were linked to masculinity, today leadership is dependent on social skills and if this is the case, women are advantaged since they have better social skills. However, confining themselves into peace building roles discredits them as leaders since a leader as mentioned earlier should be able to employ force in order to protect its people. In addition, most women who have risen into power have showcased some form of aggressiveness. The chapter therefore affirms that unless women move beyond the ideas that they are exclusively peace builders, the achievement of sustainable peace and their emancipation remains at stake.

CHAPTER FOUR: FIELD DATA ANALYSIS AND STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING A COMPREHENSIVE FOCUS ON WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN PEACE AND VIOLENT CONFLICT.

4.0 Introduction

In acknowledgement of the fact that a predominant focus on women as peace builders is indeed problematic and the realization that women in addition to being peace builders they are also perpetrators of violent conflict, this two-folded chapter presents findings of qualitative data generated on the study whose objective was to uniquely determine the complex interplay of factors that drive women into violent conflict, and propose strategies that can enhance a more comprehensive focus on women's involvement in peace and violent conflict.

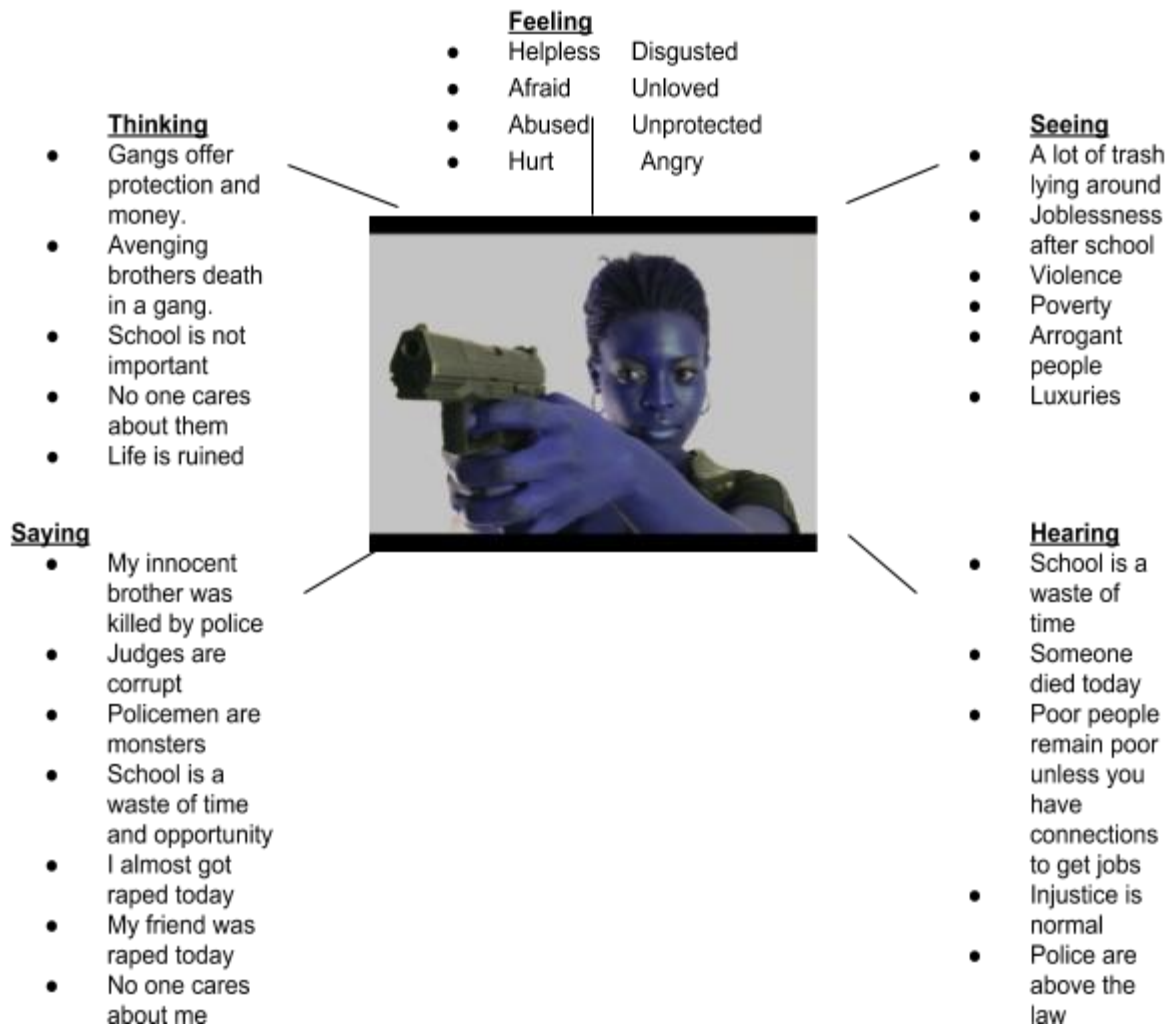
The first part of the chapter presents the findings obtained and delves into a critical discussion of the findings and their linkages to the existing literature and research in order to ascertain whether this new data supports or contradicts the existing information, while the second part focuses on proposing strategies that promote a more comprehensive focus on women's involvement in peace and violent conflict.

It should be noted that the women used in this research only serve as representatives of women perpetrators in the field, a phenomenon that exists globally. Key examples include; Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Colombia (FARC rebels) and Northern Iraq (Kurdish Women Militia). Also, although the women presented here are an example of women who have been institutionalized, this research is highly applicable to the women in the battlefield who have not yet been institutionalized hence their experiences could be helpful in the institutionalization women who are still largely active in the battlefield.

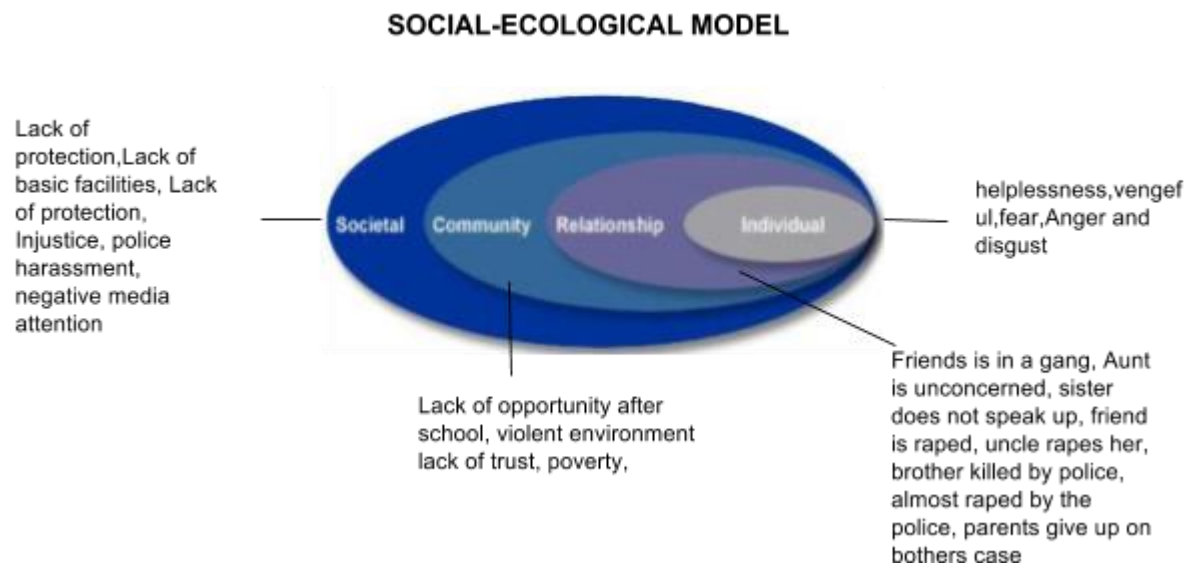
4.1 Data presentation and analysis

Once raw data was obtained from the sample population, it was checked for completeness and categorization. After which an empathy map was utilized to map out individual factors that drive women into violent conflict. The focus was trying to identify the ideas flowing through their minds. In other words, what were they seeing, saying, thinking, hearing and feeling that influenced them to showcase violent behavior.

EMPATHY MAP: DANDORA AND KAYOLE

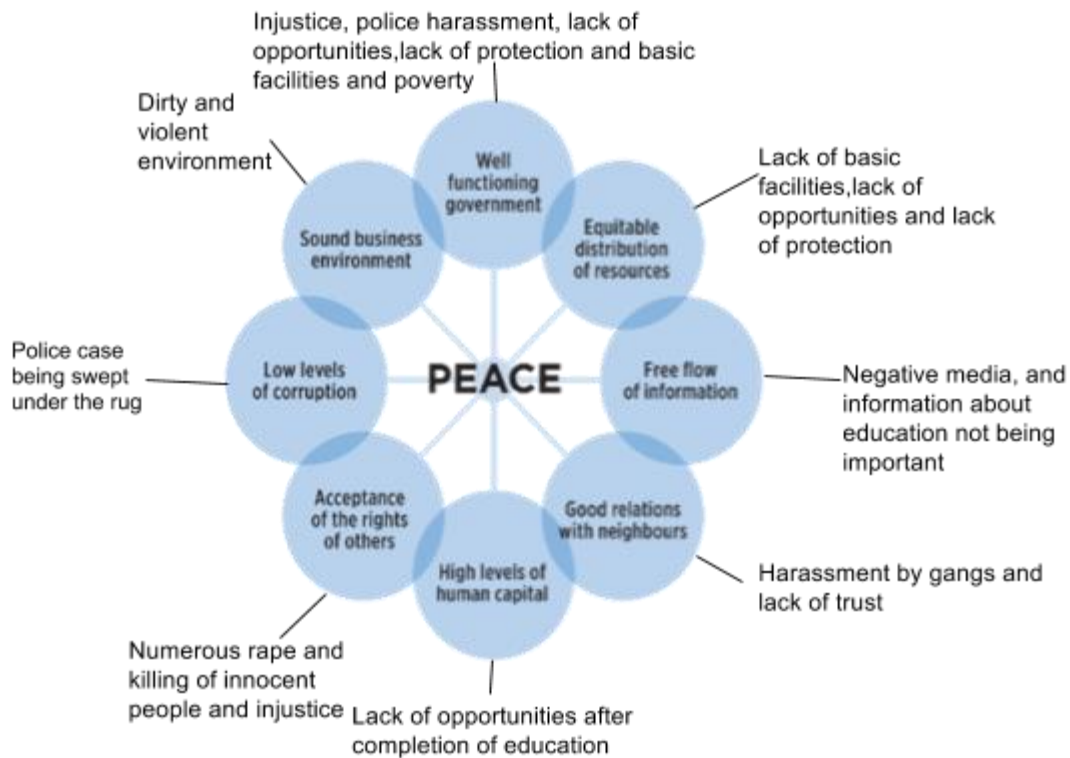


This process was followed by the four-level social ecological model, which was adapted to showcase how the identified factors contribute to the culture of violence at individual, relationship, community and societal levels.



Within this framework, the factors were broken down even further basing on the eight pillars of peace framework, as defined by the Institute for Economics and Peace. These Pillars Include: - well-functioning government, sound business environment, equitable distribution of resources, acceptance of the rights of others, good relations with neighbors, free flow of information, high levels of education and low levels of corruption. This breakdown helped in measuring and predicting not levels of vulnerability of women into violence but also crafting possible solutions aimed at producing positive behavior.

PILLARS OF POSITIVE PEACE



4.2 Discussion

Basing on the above enumeration, it is indeed clear that this research has obtained its intended objective of exploring the complex interplay of factors that drive women into violent conflict. In addition, it has also challenged the women and peace hypothesis. It reveals that women are just as vulnerable as men are to engaging in violence. Although it indicates that women are provoked into violence, it does show that they have an agency in this field. Additionally, it also indicates that there is nothing extra-ordinary about women perpetrators as observed previously in the literature reviewed which showcased that women who engage in violent conflict are extraordinary

and are therefore labeled as mad or evil. In the research, both women interviewed were fully aware of their actions and they could be categorized as “normal” women.

Data extracted from the case studies also indicate that women engaging in violent conflict are just as lethal as men perpetrating violence. This goes against ideas raised in chapter 3 of this thesis, as to why there are low numbers of women being convicted in the International Criminal Court. Whereas, low levels of conviction of women in International courts and tribunals was attributed to the fact that women as perpetrators engage in minor acts of violence which do not require convictions, data from this research reveals that women actually perpetrate violence in large scale including killing and torturing of their victims. One of the interviewees acknowledges that she enjoyed torturing and stabbing her victims. *‘I enjoyed killing my victim in fact after killing him I felt a sense of relief.’*

Analysing how individual, relationship, community and social levels influences one’s behaviour, this study strengthens arguments that arose in this thesis about human nature. In other words, it highlights the complexity of understanding human behaviour. While mainstream ideas have been limited to understanding human behaviour based on socialization, men have been seen as targets of peace building hence all peace building initiatives and policies adopted to counter violence such as counter-terrorism policies. However, tools employed in this study reveal that human behaviour goes beyond socialization and that it is dependent on other factors such as political climate, culture and religion. It observes that while socialization affects how someone perceives and experiences the world around them, ideas flowing around the community on different factors work hand in hand to shape the behaviour an individual is going to exhibit. For example, an abusive home life does not necessarily mean that a child coming out of that

situation will be violent; other factors can make the individual resilient to violent behaviour. In this case, the case studies would have been made more resilient to violent behaviour if there were positive ideas flowing around thus enabling to cope with the situations they were going through. In this regard, the thesis argues that there is need to move beyond ideas emphasizing on the differences between men and women and rather focus on transforming the different structures that allow ideas promoting violent behaviours to prevail.

Following the above realization, an exclusive focus on women as peace builders does not lead to sustainable peace; in fact it leads to increased involvement of women in conflict. More precisely, while women are continuously viewed as peace builders their usefulness in armed conflict increases. They are needed to raid or act as watchmen to a robbery. One of the interviewee reveals that: *'No one ever suspected us, the police always thought we were very vulnerable; therefore we could easily mislead them and save our counterparts.'* Furthermore, findings also revealed that women are hardly killed since they are primarily victims of sexual abuse as opposed to men who are killed on the spot.

This research also provides a new insight on empowerment. To be more specific, while extensive research has revealed that women involvement in peace is empowering, Swerdlow (2012) particularly observes that after campaigns for peace, women developed some level of self-esteem therefore, it was not easy for them to be pushed back into their domestic roles since they wanted more. Moreover, through the campaigns, they were convinced that there was need for the qualities of motherhood to be embraced in politics, for peace to prevail (Swerdlow, 2012: 122). Consequently, there were often huge numbers of women willing to volunteer in the movements to push

forward women's agendas, which in turn transformed small movements into national movements pushing for women's involvement into politics.

Similarly, case studies from this research reveal that by perpetuating violence these women felt empowered and did not want to go back to the unbearable situations they once persevered. One of the women said that: *“I felt like I had claimed my power back, no one could ever abuse me in the same way. I was a new woman”* Although this kind of empowerment is not geared towards the achievement of positive peace, there is more reason to highlight it as it may pose a threat to the community.

Also, findings from this chapter reveal that an exclusive focus on women as peace builders, have impacted women from sharing their stories since they fear that they may be judged and labeled. While women are considered peaceful in the society, the idea of them perpetrating violence is completely unacceptable. Re-integrating ex-female abductees married to ex-soldiers in the LRA in Northern Uganda reveal that any association of a woman to violence, results to high levels of discrimination (The Guardian, 2009).

Similarly, during this research study, the interviewees felt some level of judgment particularly when they were recounting their participation in violence. After speaking they often made comments like *‘Do not judge me’*. Furthermore, the last question of the interview was to describe their feeling about the whole process. Both participants confessed that they were afraid of what the interviewer would think about them particularly because they were women.

As mentioned before, the tools employed in this research were not only effective in exploring the complex interplay of factors increasing the susceptibility of women to violent conflict but were also effective in crafting effective strategies that would

enhance the role of women in peace building. These strategies are outline in the next section of the chapter.

4.3 Strategies aimed at promoting a comprehensive focus on women's involvement in peace and violent conflict.

Throughout this thesis, the key feature has been trying to highlight the problematic nature of an exclusive focus on women as peace builders. In doing so, the role of women as perpetrators has emerged as tool that could be utilized to promote sustainable peace particularly through enhancing gender equality. For example, while on one hand a predominant focus on women as peace builders has placed emphasis on the differences between men and women, the position of the women has been relegated to the home and they have been excluded from political and decision-making positions.

Conversely, the incorporation of women into rebel groups or national liberation movements often conveys the message that women are symbolically equal thus securing them positions in decision making positions (Yuval-Davis, 1997: 98). A case in point is Countess Constance Markievicz whose involvement in the Easter Rebellion in Ireland secured her a direct ticket into parliament. Although she refused to undertake this position, this marked the beginning of many more party nominations and elections into parliament. In acknowledgement of the fact that women's political participation is a fundamental prerequisite for gender equality, democracy and achieving the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development Goals, (SDGs Target 5.5), there is need to adopt better strategies aimed at enhancing participation of women in this field.

Additionally, the exploration of the complex interplay of factors driving or increasing the susceptibility of women into engaging in violence revealed that violence

is not in any way gendered thus proving that women indeed have an agency as perpetrators. In view of this, there is need to expand the experiences of women as perpetrators into peace building initiatives as it can enhance the roles of women as peace builders.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that reinforcing ideas of women as perpetrators is also dangerous as it tends to overlook men's violence. In this regard, this section attempts to provide strategies that could promote a more comprehensive focus on the roles of women in peace and violent conflict with the aim of enhancing the role of women as peace builders thus sustainable development.

4.4 Media Counter Narratives and Discourses

4.4.1 Alternative Media

As seen before, mainstream media has played a big part in discourse formation in gender and war studies. Media often depicts women as peace builders by overstating their roles in the field and withdrawing any agency from female perpetrators by depicting them as evil or mad. In light of the fact that human interest stories that most people can relate to spread fast and make greater profits as opposed to stories that different audiences find hard to relate with, ideas of women as peace builders have been the focal coverage. Unfortunately, this has not contributed positively to peace building initiatives. Particularly because women have been excluded from the benefits of pre- and post-conflict initiatives which has led to the generation of cycles of violence.

In acknowledgement of the fact that content in the mainstream media is often controlled, counteracting mainstream media presents a big hurdle. Nonetheless, it is worth attempting interaction with alternative media in trying to counteract ideas of women's pacifism. Just like mainstream media, alternative media seeks to reach out to

different audiences. Its main aim is to promote a more critical and “radical” imagination. Hence, it requires a lot of convincing. In this attempt, images and stories of female combatants or ex-combatants would be helpful as they will be used as a countermeasure to the information people receive daily on the roles of women in peace building. This would hopefully make populations and particularly women realize the extent to which ideas of women’s inherent peacefulness have impacted the peace of the community, thus causing a push for the campaign for inclusion of women in pre-and post-conflict initiatives.

While designing for strategies it is vital to consider the mainstream media to avoid people being pulled back to believing in the same ideas. Particularly because mainstream media has often demonstrated a strong ability to co-opt criticism and incorporate disaffection in ideas being presented to the population (McGuigan, 2012: 430). In view of this, finding ways of also convincing them would be an added advantage and a step towards sustainable peace.

The Kenyan population is very active technologically and particularly in using internet. With approximately 50% of Kenya’s population able to access internet, (Communications Authority of Kenya, 2016) social media and other forms of online media have increasingly gained popularity where people access for entertainment, news and networking. In this regard, alternative media can be very useful in deconstructing and reconstructing new perceptions about the role of women within the Kenyan setting. Social media particularly has showcased its strength in starting movements resulting in positive change. A case in point is reactions Kenyans had to several videos of women being stripped brutally by minibus touts. This led to a media outrage towards the touts who were stripping women of their clothes and the government who did nothing to stop

the act. The hash tag ‘#mydressmychoice’ trended worldwide. The outcome of these reactions was a women’s movement which took to the streets to protest these brutalities against women. Consequently, the government ordered for an arrest of the responsible individuals and ordered a strict warning to anyone who would be found engaging in such brutality. Additionally, people stopped perceiving grabbing and groping as a normal thing and began seeing it as a crime that could land you in prison. This case study showcases the effectiveness of social media in dissemination of ideas and changing people's perceptions thus making it an important tool in counteracting ideas of women’s inherent peacefulness.

However, it should be noted that dealing with issues that are deeply rooted in culture and have been generally accepted globally is very challenging and therefore implementing a strategy that would not inflict further damage to the image of women is key. For example, after my dress my choice campaign, although a law was passed to protect women, however, women still do not feel safe therefore they dress based on where they are going. Similarly, in trying to counteract ideas of women’s pacifism, we need to consider the men. Because, while we might be successful in promoting ideas that women are also susceptible to engage in violence, which might be posing a threat to other women particularly those whose empowerment stems from peace building as they might be denied an opportunity by their husbands to attend peace building training, and also their efforts to rebuild peace might be ridiculed.

In view of this, we must make sure that we do not undermine the work of women in peace building. This can be done by ensuring that there is a balance of stories between women working as peace builders and those who are perpetrators or ex-perpetrators this will not only showcase that women play diverse roles during conflict,

but it will also enhance the role of women as peace builders since they will have the opportunity to learn their shortcomings through communication with the perpetrators.

Regarding how mainstream media very effectively gets people to really believe the ideas being transmitted. That is, through bringing in ‘experts’ in the field who enlighten the audience on ideas of women’s pacifism by engaging in theories and concepts that support these ideas in a bid to reinforce these assumptions, it would be very necessary to work with progressive institutions and programs such as The Peace Master’s Program of the Universitat Jaume I in Spain, and United States International University-Africa, amongst others, which encourage critical thinking to enable users to have a broader understanding of the subject.

By utilizing alternative media, the population will be provided with a wide array of information and they will be able to make informed decisions particularly during debates where women are excluded based on on ideas of their inherent peacefulness. This will not only be essential in promoting a comprehensive focus on the role of women during violent conflict but will also enhance the roles of women as peace builders.

4.4.2 Broadcast Media

Although working with broadcast media is a challenge, it is certainly not impossible especially during this age when trust in media is falling at alarming levels (Edelman Trust Barometer, 2017). Due to constant criticism of the information presented on broadcast media by alternative media, news in the mainstream media has been found to be highly questionable. While this is increasingly becoming a trend, media outlets have encouraged their reporters and writers to be more critical in reporting and writing information. In view of this, we can utilize this opportunity to

promote a comprehensive focus on the role of women during violent conflict. This can be done by encouraging scholars and reporters to work together to ensure that correct information is being disseminated to the larger audiences.

While this might work as a strategy, it is important to note that even with correct information, one might be subjected to their own bias; therefore reporters may tend to rule out or manipulate the information obtained to suit their own ideas. Furthermore, in acknowledgement of the fact that scholars who tend to reinforce ideas of women's pacifism, tend to be charged with teaching broadly defined sizeable survey courses; this might still be an impeding factor to the dissemination of accurate information. In this regard, it is important to encourage journalists to critically analyze any information they receive and report. Also, feminist theorists should encourage publications showcasing the distinct roles that women play in violence to ensure wider dissemination of information regarding women's involvement in violent conflict.

4.5 Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA)

There is little doubt that women possess the capacities and capabilities in peace building. They often engage in facilitating peace sensitization forums, overseeing post-conflict development initiatives, protesting injustices and human suffering, amongst others. While these activities are extremely important in peace building, they are not enough to ensure sustainable peace. Particularly because in the campaign for peace, women do not emphasize the distinct roles that they undertake during armed conflict, in view of this, their peace activism reinforces traditional ideas of women as mothers and natural peace builders being weak and in desperate need of protection within the security discourses, instead of equal partners with transformative potential (Charlesworth and Chinkin, 2006: 940).

This realization calls for the need to Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA's) in peace building initiatives aimed at creating opportunities for populations to actively challenge gender roles and norms in the community. These approaches often strive to shift gendered community perspectives and social relationships towards perspectives of equality that allow both women and men to achieve their full potential within a society (Levack, 2010: 4-6). Therefore, they can be helpful in challenging strongly held notions of women's inherent pacifism.

GTA's have showcased their effectiveness in promoting equality in Kenya especially in reproductive health issues. The Kisumu region of Kenya presents a good case study. In 2009, it was established that men had completely denied their wives the chance to use contraceptives in the region claiming that, women who used contraceptives were promiscuous. One of the men against the use of contraceptives, Zaddock Odhiambo, a 28-year-old father of six remarked that "*Family planning is only for unmarried women. And it makes them promiscuous. I would never advise my wife to use those things [contraceptives] because the role of a woman is to give birth to children,*"(United Nations Population Fund, 2009). Following this response and many others, it was established that in most families, women wanted to use contraceptives; however, since men made all the decisions regarding health including the use of contraceptives, women were denied the opportunity to do so. In light of this, Family Health Options Kenya in collaboration with UNFPA decided to incorporate GTA's into their programs. The outcome was an increased use in contraceptives among women, both in the rural and urban areas of Kisumu where the programs were implemented. (*Daily Nation, 2016. January 27*). The report from the *Daily Nation Newspaper* also revealed that after the program, there was progress in terms of decision-making

regarding the use of contraceptives and other health issues. Most women claimed that their husbands often consulted them on the use of contraceptives and were supportive of the methods they chose thus suggesting some level of equality in the decision-making process. This example highlights that GTA's can be an effective strategy in challenging ideas of women's inherent peacefulness and promote a comprehensive focus on the role of women during violent conflict.

The key element of GTA's is to increase awareness of inequalities within the community and encourage critical assessments of how existing gender stereotypes can impede peace. Therefore, through this process, women start to realize how predominant ideas of their inherent pacifism affect peace building processes and how this impedes their struggle for equality. Men on the other hand recognize the diverse roles that women play and start appreciating women as being symbolically equal.

Notwithstanding the effectiveness of GTA's, it is not easy to implement these approaches. The fact that the association of women with peace building is deeply rooted in culture, men might not want to get involved in the programs with fear of being ridiculed by other men and some women in the community. Kenya is a very cultural community with clearly defined gender roles of which both genders are expected to adhere to. In this regard, any man who is perceived to engage in any female related activity is out rightly mocked or ridiculed. For example, in the recent hotly contested elections in Kenya, Francis Atwoli leader of the Central Organization of Trade Unions (Kenya) openly shamed his counterpart Ababu Namwamba for missing political campaigns to be with his wife during labor (NTV, 2017). While the presence of a man during his wife's labor is necessary, he was perceived to be a weak man involved in "women's issues". In view of this, there is need to come up with creative ways of

mobilizing and convincing men into training and to complete training. This can be done by offering allowances such as sitting allowances and transport reimbursements to the men targeted for the training and coming up with creative facilitation techniques and topics aimed at enhancing learning.

4.6 Building Strategic Alliances with Men

Although both men and women share a concern for the increased rates of violence in the community, rarely has there been an attempt from either group to work together towards building peace in the community. Perhaps, it is due to fear that men might override the group with their own agendas as observed in many gender sensitive programs where men look down upon women's efforts and ideas, making them shy away from making any further contributions (Morgan, 2013). While this is a genuine concern, men and their organizations can be great allies in promoting a comprehensive focus on women's involvement in violent conflict.

Men often participate in official peace processes and therefore may act as links that women can utilize to voice out their diverse experiences in violent conflict. While it may be argued that this should be left for the women allowed in the official peace processes, it should be noted that most of the women in these processes are allowed in as observers, in this regard, they are not able to voice out women's experiences. Furthermore, in acknowledgement of the fact that the recognition of women as peace builders is the key reason why women are progressively being allowed to participate in peace building processes, the women who address/or speak on behalf of women are often emblematic of ideas of women's pacifism hence they only voice out women's experiences and concerns as peace builders (Mignolo, 2009:20-24).

Establishing alliances with men provides an opportunity for diverse women's experiences to be heard without the fear of women losing their credibility as peace builders. In addition, the fact that men are often taken more seriously than women (Krauss Whitbourne, 2015) gives women, particularly those involved as perpetrators, an assurance their experiences in violent conflict will indeed be heard. Moreover, there is little doubt that women are indeed involved in rebel groups as fighters, therefore, warring factions in official peace processes can easily relate to this, therefore, they may appreciate and even campaign for the inclusion of women in peace negotiation tables.

Creating alliances will also enhance the roles of women as negotiators and mediators. A report from UN Women themed; "*Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations: Connections between Presence and Influence*", revealed that there is a great lack of knowledge among women negotiators and mediators and so for this reason their issues are not taken seriously (UN Women, 2012: 28) By establishing alliances with men, women will not only learn how they can effectively negotiate in peace building tables, but they can also learn how they can utilize their diverse roles in violent conflict to effectively negotiate. By doing this, they will be expanding their diverse experiences in peace building thus enabling the crafting of better peace-building initiatives aimed at more sustainable outcomes.

While there is little doubt that this is an effective strategy in promoting a more comprehensive focus on the involvement of women in violent conflict, the selection of participants to establish alliances with is key in ensuring its success. Women should select men who are gender sensitive, that is, men who are ready to advocate for women's equality rather than those who are opposed to it. By being gender sensitive, they can easily address the diverse experiences of women in a way that men can also

relate with thus provoking action that focuses on the recognition of women as symbolically equal partners.

4.7 Coalition Building

Over the years it has become visibly clear that social power does not rely in physical strength but rather in the ability to construct a stable coalition or coalitions of supporters. (Yuval, 2012). For example, there is no doubt that the Pope is not the strongest man in the world physically yet he possesses great power. This is attributed to his ability to build and maintain a strong coalition that is ready to spread his ideas and influence other individuals into believing his ideas. Similarly, in criminal institutions, the ‘boss’ does not go out and kill but rather he has the ability to convince his followers to kill, and recruit others based on these ideas. In view of this, coalition building with different groups can be a powerful strategy of promoting a comprehensive focus on the involvement of women in violent conflict.

There is no doubt that there are numerous women's organizations at grassroots, national and international level advocating for peace. While this extremely vital for the development of sustainable peace, these women's organizations tend to work individually. Perhaps, this is based on ideas that women have problems with large-scale cooperation. More precisely, women often need direct social connection to work in a group effectively therefore, it becomes difficult for them to cooperate or work with new or different groups they are not directly connected to (Gbowee, 2015). Nonetheless, this should not stop women from building coalitions because it would be helpful in disseminating ideas of their diverse roles in violent conflict.

Building coalitions has showcased its effectiveness in dissemination of ideas and provoking people into action. A case in point is the *Sixth Clan* women's movement of

Somalia. Although Somali women were participating in informal peace activities, they remained excluded from the formal and official peace negotiations in 2002. Only representatives of Somalia's five clans were allowed as official representatives and, traditionally, only men represent the clan. This being the case, Somali women created the 'Sixth Clan', referred to as the women's clan, consisting of all the women in the Somali community regardless of class, ethnicity or group. By coming together as the Sixth Clan, these women were recognized and were able to participate in the Somali Peace and Reconciliation Conference in Djibouti (Kasaija, 2009).

Building coalitions with different women groups of perpetrators, victims and peace builders would build a powerful network of women ready to expand their experiences into peace building processes thus enhancing the promotion of a comprehensive focus on the roles of women during violent conflict and peace-building processes. In other words, since the different women in the community are able to relate to one or even all of these experiences, they may feel directly connected to the group. This will enhance cooperation among the women hence more successful peace building initiatives. Furthermore, women protesting against injustices together as a coalition and emphasizing the different roles they undertake during violent conflict is highly likely to attract media attention. The media if well informed might help disseminate information on the diverse experiences of women during war and that women have an agency as perpetrators.

4.8 Encouraging self-reliance

Following the global acknowledgement of women as peace builders, there have been numerous initiatives aimed at enhancing capacities of women in peace building particularly in the grassroots initiatives in order to prevent conflict. These initiatives

have indeed been very successful and have resulted in numerous grassroots women organizations. Nonetheless, the rates of violence in some of the areas where women peace groups were created, has reached alarming levels. For example, Dandora and Kayole regions have been the focus of peace initiatives, with programs from World Vision, DFID, USAID and other community based organizations. However, violence in these regions has risen to unprecedented levels. (Daily Nation, 2017). This raises eyebrows as to whether the initiatives proposed to build peace in these regions are actually working. While there is no doubt that women are struggling to build peace in the community, perhaps the problem lies within the strategies being employed to empower them.

While developing strategies to be employed in a program, the key thing to consider is usually the person you are designing it for. In this case, while developing strategies to enhance women's participation in peace building, you have to study the different women and develop different strategies for them in each context. However, this is not the approach that has been employed when designing strategies to enhance women's abilities in peace building. Taking a glance through the extensive research on women as peace builders, one cannot help but notice a similarity in all the strategies that were employed in the different case studies. That is, identifying women and training them to become peace builders. Perhaps this explains the ineffectiveness of the strategies particularly because, most of the projects being employed seem to override or undercut the capacity of women to come up with strategies themselves that could really enhance their roles in peace building (Ellerman, 2007: 563). In other words, training women on peace building by giving them a set of instructions or programs of what they should be doing and activities that they should be undertaking cannot really enhance

women's roles in peace building. Although these programs are often developed by 'professionals', they not long particularly since they are basically imposing ideas on women rather than helping women develop the skills and knowledge they already have that can aid them in building peace. This will highly enhance their confidence in being involved in the projects thus making the initiatives being crafted long term. In realization of this, this thesis proposes dialogue with women before the development of strategies.

Discussion with women on what skills they think they possess that could help them being actively involved in peace building initiatives could not only be key to enhancing their roles as peace builders but also in promoting a comprehensive focus on their involvement in violent conflict. While the general assumption is that women think peacefully, some women may actually think of violence as a tool that they possess that might actually enhance peace building as in the case of women in the Central part of Kenya known for beating their men due to lack of jobs resulting in the men going out drinking and failing to provide for their wives. Although this is extreme, after numerous incidences of husband or men battering, the government realized there was a problem in the region and intervened through provision of employment to men (Dahir, 2012). From this example, there is the realization that shortsighted "professionally" crafted strategies based on assumptions regarding women may actually impede peace. For instance, if women from the central region of Kenya were labeled as evil and nothing done about violence against men in the region, then, the causes driving these women into beating their men would not have been explored and women would have continued bearing the family burden individually. In this regard, there should be an attempt to try and help women channel their different roles positively to build peace rather than imposing roles

and ideas on them. This move is very important as it can help enhance debates in feminist studies on how violence can be utilized positively to achieve peace.

4.9 Incorporating Resistance in Women's Pacifism

Women's peace activism relies on conforming pacifism. The basic idea behind this pacifism is that war is unacceptable under all circumstances. With this as the backbone of their activism, women cooperate and work with warring factions to prevent escalation of wars. Whereas, the aforementioned is extremely important particularly because it is a non-violent means of activism, some scholars have argued that this kind of activism advocates for human suffering thus raising doubt as to whether this kind of activism may promote sustainable peace. More precisely, peace can only be achieved through submission to power, in this regard, women's pacifism that advocates for cooperation plays a key role in getting populations to submit to oppressive governments. Therefore, populations continue to suffer political injustices such as mass murders, marginalization, amongst other evils for the sake of peace. Christina Howells argues that women's pacifism always supports the violent acts of injustice suffered by the weak rather than safeguarding weaker people and taking on their adversaries. In this case it often abandons the weak without safeguarding them (Howells, 2013: 58). In light of this fact, there is need to incorporate resistance in women's pacifism.

This move will be a powerful tool in promoting a comprehensive focus on the involvement of women in violent conflict. Resistance pacifism like conforming pacifism recognizes non-violent activism as an effective means of campaigning for sustainable peace. Nonetheless, it refuses to cooperate with parties that inflict suffering upon populations. In view of this, it advocates for war when necessary. While this might be seen as advocating for war, it should be noted that as appealing as the idea of

positive peace maybe, it is untenable in theory and practice (Sjoberg, 2006: 10). Resistance pacifism acknowledges that some political decisions are worse than war itself. For example, if a government decides to get rid of an entire population, the conforming pacifism option would be campaigning for peace within the community facing extinction so that they do not retaliate and make the situation worse or campaigning for peace with the government as they continue to kill an entire community. On the other hand, resistance pacifism would be focussed on mobilizing the whole community to fight against government injustices through lack of cooperation and violence if necessary. In view of this, resistance pacifism does not seek for positive peace but for imperfect peace. (Francisco A. Muñoz Muñoz, 2014).

There is a long history of women suffering during ‘peacetime’. While there have been numerous attempts to change this situation through various reforms, the position of women has not changed. Women continue to suffer many forms of oppression particularly from the government, which diverts funds for basic facilities to the military and also excludes them from key decision-making positions. Notwithstanding numerous attempts by women to push governments for change, very little is often accomplished. Consequently, women and other populations continue to lack basic services such as security, healthcare, amongst others. In light of the fact that women’s activism advocates for cooperation, women and other populations continue to be victims of state and community crime. Resistance pacifism will not only be more effective in provoking the government into action but it will also provoke a more comprehensive focus on the roles of women. In other words, since resistance pacifism requires women to expand all their experiences during war into this kind of activism, incorporating this kind of activism in women's pacifism will be helpful in challenging ideas of women inherent

peacefulness. Meanwhile, ideas and perceptions regarding women's involvement in war will begin to change.

Resistance pacifism has showcased its effectiveness in promoting a comprehensive focus on women's involvement in violent conflict in the Kurdish region of Syria and Iran, where the lack of government protection resulting in unprecedented rates of violence against women has pushed women into self-defence (Kurdish Women's Relations Office (REPAK) 2016). Recent scenes have showcased Kurdish women fighting against the Islamic State to liberate fellow women and men from harm. (Reuters, 3 November 2016). Although the activities of these women were largely criticized by western feminists and were undermined by the media who tried to fit them into a victim category,(Dirik Dilak 2014)thus undermining their resistance, there is growing realization that women in the region are not only peace builders but also are active participants in violent conflict.

4.10 Conclusion

As enumerated before, this chapter is divided into two parts. The first part focused on the presentation of findings of the raw data obtained from the exploration of factors that drive women into violent conflict. Employing human centered approaches to analyze and interpret this data, this section of the thesis provides evidence that women are not only perpetrators of violence but are increasingly vulnerable to engaging in violent conflict just like men are. While throughout this thesis, the main focus has been arguing against ideas of women's inherent peaceful natures, this chapter employs real case studies to provide factual evidence that this phenomenon exists.

Additionally, it also strengthens arguments raised throughout this thesis about human nature, impacts of an exclusive focus on women as peace builders, and whether a

predominant view on women as peace builders hence increased participation in peace and politics may lead to sustainable peace. The findings obtained from this chapter, leads to the conclusion that ideas of women's peaceful natures are not based on facts but rather are based on gender stereotypes. Therefore, for the achievement of sustainable peace, there is need for women to incorporate their diverse experiences during war into peace building initiatives and political agendas. This can be done by promoting a more comprehensive focus on the involvement of women in peace and violent conflict.

The second section is focused on discussing the strategies that could enhance a more comprehensive focus on the involvement of women in peace and violent conflict. Additionally, it provides examples to showcase the effectiveness of these strategies in challenging dominant ideas of women's pacifism and providing a more comprehensive focus on the roles of women in peace and violent conflict.

General Conclusion

Conclusion

The main concern of my research was to analyse the extent to which an exclusive focus on women as peace builders has impacted peace building initiatives. Motivated by increased rates of women engaging in violent conflict, the ultimate goal of this research was to counteract generally accepted perceptions of women as predominantly peace builders in an attempt to encourage a more comprehensive approach on the role of women. The theoretical standpoint taken in this research is that a focus on the diverse roles of women during violent conflict can enhance the role of women in peace building and women emancipation thus leading to sustainable peace.

Firstly, the research took a deconstructive approach undertaken in chapters 2 and 3. The aim was to deconstruct the ideas that women are predominantly peace builders by highlighting their roles as perpetrators and by elaborating how ideas of their inherent peacefulness have negatively impacted their efforts in peace building and their emancipation. Engagement with the aforementioned chapters led to the realization that ideas of women as peace builders are indeed social constructions based on stereotypes of being weak and in need of protection hence there is need to go beyond them because they are indeed disempowering. This realization created need for exploration of the factors that influence women to engage in violent conflict in order to provide alternatives that can enhance the roles of women in peace building.

General findings conclude that peace processes are highly complex processes of social change and in order for them to attain the transformative impact intended, there is need to focus on expanding all of the stakeholder's experiences, particularly women's, into peace building processes, as opposed to emphasizing an exclusive focus on women

as peace builders just to enhance their presences in peace negotiation tables. Furthermore, in acknowledgement of the fact that an exclusive focus on women as peace builders reinforces harmful stereotypes of women being weak and in need of protection, even if their participation in decision making processes is enhanced, they still remain in subordinate positions thus sustainable peace cannot be attained.

On a different scope, I also found out that there is no single strategy of enhancing women's participation in decision making processes because focusing on individual roles of women either as victims, peace builders or perpetrators separately is very limiting. However, combining all these roles together puts women at an advantage both in politics and in peace building initiatives. In politics, their roles as perpetrators showcase abilities to protect the state by means of war when necessary, while at the same time fighting systems of corruption and injustice that make individuals susceptible to violence.

Similarly, these roles can be helpful in their involvement in peace negotiation tables. Negotiating warring factions requires advanced knowledge not only in peace-making but also war-making since for some individuals, war is always a safer bet than peace, perhaps this is the reason why women are often excluded from negotiation tables. Regardless, acknowledgement and expansion of the roles of women to include their role as perpetrators onto negotiation tables can enhance their presences in peace building as they will be seen to be well skilled in the process.

Also, I realized that ideas of women's pacifism place emphasis on differences between men and women. In this regard, men have been considered the aggressive gender biologically predisposed to violence; conversely, women have been considered the peaceful gender. This research rejects these ideas arguing that, violent behaviour is

dependent on socialization. In addition, it also reveals that apart from socialization, there are other factors that influence an individual to engage in violent conflict such as political climate, culture and even religion. For example, an abusive home life does not necessarily mean that a child coming out of that situation will be violent, other socializing factors can make the individual resilient, but it does make them more susceptible to violent behaviour. The latter reveals that both men and women are vulnerable to engaging in violence and therefore there is need reconceptualise ideas of women's pacifism.

Finally, there is little doubt that women are indeed peace builders. Unfortunately, their activism does not equate sustainable peace. In fact, it threatens the existence of peace in the community by increasing people's susceptibility to engaging in violent conflict by getting them to submit to oppressive power. To be more precise, the fact that women's activism is primarily based on advocating for corporation, some scholars have argued that women are being used as pawns by governments to control oppressed populations. That is, while women work tirelessly to prevent conflict in local and grassroots levels, power is left to dictators and mass murderers who continue to exploit populations thus deepening structural violence which eventually blows up to direct violence. In view of this, women need to change their form of activism and embrace one that incorporates resistance against oppressive regimes and leaderships. This can be achieved by acknowledging and expanding the experiences of women during war in resistance pacifism. On the other hand, Peace studies, particularly feminist studies should try and formulate an alternative to pacifism as it does not positively impact peace.

Recommendations

Women have generally been perceived and represented as peace builders. Moreover, they have also showcased their prowess in this field. While this is true, this research reveals that this one-sided view on women has negatively impacted peace-building initiatives. Focusing on Kenya's Dandora and Kayole regions, the study reveals that women are not only peace builders but perpetrators of violent conflict; furthermore it also reveals that women are just as susceptible as men to engaging in violent conflict, thus going against mainstream ideas of women's inherent peacefulness. From the research, the following recommendations are necessary for provoking a shift from this one-sided view to a more diverse focus on the experiences of women in armed conflict.

To begin with, the discourse on women's involvement in war must change. Hegemonic discourses focus exclusively on women as peace builders, thus shaping ideas and perceptions of the individuals in the community. Although this is a good thing as women are socialized to be peaceful and thus producing a generation of women working for peace, these ideas have actually impacted negatively on peace building initiatives. Because it has led to the exclusion of women from the benefits of post-conflict initiatives such as reintegration, rehabilitation and demobilization programmes, this has left many women susceptible to engaging in violence. Additionally, these ideas have also undermined efforts of women engaging as perpetrators to break harmful stereotypes that have long been used to justify wars.

As enumerated in previous chapters, any woman who refuses to stay put in her position is contributing to the resistance against sexism and oppression. By focusing exclusively on women as peace builders, gender roles are reinforced and women

continue to occupy subordinate positions in the community. To get past these ideas, there is need to highlight the diversity of roles that women undertake during violent conflict. This will not only enhance women's roles in peace building but will also lead to their emancipation. In other words, highlighting women as perpetrators, incorporated into liberation movements, fighting alongside men, conveys the message that women are symbolically equal members of the collectivity. In view of this, this step might be helpful particularly in the Kenyan context where women are highly subordinate to men.

Moving forward, there is also need for a reconceptualization of the term perpetrator. Ideally, perpetrators have been studied by evaluating their actions on their victims rather than motivations. In this regard, women have been excluded from the debate on belligerence since they are predominantly victims. Furthermore, studying the perpetrator from the victim's perspective has prevented any further exploration of the motives of the perpetrator; as a result, a perpetrator has been characterized as a sadistic individual acting out of malice. In this regard, they have been accorded the worst punishments possible with the aim of keeping them away from the community. In fear of punishment, ex-female perpetrators have denied their roles as perpetrators. This generates a cycle of violence as they are left vulnerable to engaging in violence. A reconceptualization of the term will help understand the different motivations driving individuals into violence. This will lead to the realization that perpetrators are not only men thus leading to the formulation of better strategies aimed at sustainable peace.

For a shift from this one-sided view on women to a more comprehensive focus on the various roles women play during armed conflict, there is need to move beyond ideas of materialism emphasising that women because of their experience as mothers have a special interest in building peace as this is very limiting. If women are to

advance their roles, particularly in politics, they really need to move past ideas that have served as the basis for their exclusion. Furthermore, they also need to realize that motherhood has gone through major advancements and therefore ideas that motherhood inclines women to peace or endows women with unique abilities that can be applicable in peace building is out-dated and very misleading. This particular step will further women's inclusion in peace building processes as it will encourage women to justify their participation in peace building based on attainable skills rather than biological differences.

All in all, ideas of women's inherent peacefulness are based on social constructions of women as the weak gender in need of protection. In view of this, there is need to go beyond these ideas. Although it may be argued that these ideas are aimed towards women empowerment, discussions from previous chapters have highlighted that a comprehensive focus on the roles of women during violent conflict is more empowering. In this regard, scholars and peace actors should focus on the diversity of roles that women engage in, in violent conflict, as it will not only enhance their roles as peace builders but also work towards their emancipation and hence sustainable development.

Future Research Area

The following recommendations are made for further research area:

Researchers need to rethink approaches employed in exploring factors that influence individuals to violence. In other words, while dominant mainstream approaches are focused on providing a quick fix on the behavior being exhibited at that particular moment, factors contributing to the behavior are left unexplored; in fact, the quick intervention initiatives proposed and implemented may actually serve to escalate

the behavior even further. Hence, a reproach in understanding violence is desired. This will not only enhance intervention strategies but it will also help us move beyond ideas of gender differences that emphasize on women peacefulness and men aggressiveness thus resulting to sustainable peace.

This research also recommends to researchers to employ human centered approaches in understanding the role of women as peace builders. To be more specific, women engaging in peace building should be used as a case study with the same approaches to understand factors that influenced them into peace building. This way we can understand reasons as to why in the same circumstances, one chooses to promote peace while the other chooses to engage in violence. Furthermore, it can also be useful in crafting better intervention strategies.

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APPENDIX

GUIDING QUESTIONS: COMPLEX INTERPLAY OF FACTORS

DRIVING WOMEN INTO VIOLENCE

1. Please describe a moment in your life that stands out. (This should be a positive thing like a happy or exciting moment)
 - a) What happened?
 - b) When and where did it happen?
 - c) Who was involved?
 - d) What were you thinking and how were you feeling?
2. Please describe a negative moment in your life
 - a) What happened?
 - b) When and where did it happen?
 - c) Who was involved?
 - d) What were you thinking and how were you feeling?
3. Please identify a particular moment in your life that you see as a turning point.
 - a) What happened?
 - b) When and where did it happen?
 - c) Who was involved?
 - d) What were you thinking and how were you feeling?
4. Please describe a positive memory in your childhood
 - a) What happened?
 - b) When and where did it happen?
 - c) Who was involved?
 - d) What were you thinking and how were you feeling?

5. Please describe a negative memory in your childhood

- a) What happened?
- b) When and where did it happen?
- c) Who was involved?
- d) What were you thinking and how were you feeling?

6. Apart from the negative and positive events in your life, please describe a memory in your adulthood that stands out (positive, Negative any that has not been mentioned)

- a) What happened?
- b) When and where did it happen?
- c) Who was involved?
- d) What were you thinking and how were you feeling?

7. What do you see in the next chapter of your life?

- a) Do you have any dreams, aspirations you wish to fulfil?
- b) Please describe

8. Looking back over your life, what do you consider to be the greatest challenge you faced

- a) What is or was the challenge or problem?
- b) How did the challenge or problem develop?
- c) How did you address or deal with this challenge or problem?
- d) What is the significance of this challenge or problem in your own life story?

9. Again looking back over your life, please describe the greatest failure or regret you have experienced

- a) How have you coped with this failure or regret?
- b) What effect has this failure or regret had on you and your life story?

10. Thank you so much for sharing your story it has been wonderful to hear your story.

How has it been like for you sharing your story?

- a). What were your thoughts and feelings during the interview?
- b) How do you think this interview has affected you?
- c) Do you have any other comments about the interview process?

